

Approaches to Chan, Sŏn, and Zen Studies

Chinese Chan Buddhism and
Its Spread throughout East Asia

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**SUNY
PRESS**

Cover photograph of Jingshan Monastery outside Hangzhou by Albert Welter.

Published by State University of New York Press, Albany

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For information, contact State University of New York Press, Albany, NY
www.sunypress.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Welter, Albert, 1952– editor. | Heine, Steven, 1950– editor. | Park, Jin Y., editor. | Buswell, Robert E., Jr., 1953– other.

Title: Approaches to Chan, Sōn, and Zen studies : Chinese Chan Buddhism and its spread throughout East Asia / edited by Albert Welter, Steven Heine, and Jin Y. Park.

Description: Albany : State University of New York Press, 2022. | Series: SUNY series in Chinese philosophy and culture | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022009791 | ISBN 9781438490892 (hardcover : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781438490908 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Zen Buddhism—Philosophy. | Zen Buddhism—East Asia—History.

Classification: LCC BQ9268.6 .A67 2022 | DDC 294.3/927—dc23/eng/20220315

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022009791>

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Chapter 5

Interpreters, Brush-Dialogue, and Poetry

Translingual Communication between Chan and Zen Monks

JASON PROTASS

Introduction

This chapter examines how people from China and Japan communicated with one another, with a focus on Chan and Zen monks during the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. During this critical period in the shared history of Chan and Zen, hundreds of monks traversed the seas and left records of their encounters with one another. Below, I gather and analyze evidence under four subtopics: abilities to speak and understand spoken language; reliance on third-person bilingual interpreters; the creation and exchange of rhymed, tonally regulated Sinitic poetry between people who could and people who could not speak Chinese; and written vernacular conversations conducted in Sinitic script, or direct dialogue through writing that I call “brush-dialogue” (often rendered “brush talk”) after the well-known phrase used across early modern East Asia (C. *bitan*, K. *pildam*, J. *hitsudan* 筆談), and which some medieval sources below more literally refer to as “using the brush to speak.” With the exception of polyglottal individuals, Chinese and Japanese monks relied on one or another of these methods to communicate across languages, or “translingually.” Chinese and Japanese people who shared writing systems seldom shared a spoken language, and we can more deeply enter the history of Chan and Zen intercultural dialogue once we understand how people communicated.

All later branches of Chinese Chan, Korean Sŏn, and Japanese Zen, even today, view Bodhidharma as the twenty-eighth Indian patriarch of their awakened lineage and the founding patriarch of East Asian traditions. According to Chan scriptures, Bodhidharma, with his awakened mind, recognized the moment his Chinese disciple Huike achieved liberation. Bodhidharma bore witness to the awakened mind of his heir. No words or objects conveyed this ineffable awakening. The teacher confirms the student's realization, but one sees one's Buddha-nature for oneself. Intergenerational recognition means that each accomplished student can trace their own awakened mind, recognized by their teacher, back through generations all the way to Śākyamuni Buddha. Given this religious self-understanding, linguistic communication has a paradoxical place in Chan and Zen. The awakened mind cannot be transmitted by relying on words and letters alone, and yet spoken and written language plays a fundamental role in pedagogy. For this reason, communication barriers sometimes presented practical obstacles to the master-to-disciple transmission of the ineffable awakened mind. Despite the obvious importance of translingual communication in the meeting between Chinese and Japanese monks, the relationship between Chan and Zen has often focused on some kind of pure transmission.

Reflecting on this religious history, some Japanese historians argued for stages of evolution within Japanese Zen, from “joint practice”—a mixing of Zen with Japanese religions—to mature “pure Zen.”¹ Generally, this purification process is said to have begun with the “official” transmissions of Rinzai Zen by Eisai (榮西, 1141–1215; alt. Yōsai) and Sōtō Zen by Dōgen (道元, 1200–1253), and to have reached its final stage with the arrival to Kamakura of émigré masters from China, beginning with Lanxi Daolong (蘭溪道隆, 1213–1278; J. Rankei Dōryū), who supposedly established an uncompromising Song style of Chan. In recent decades, however, some Japanese and Western scholars have reconsidered the complexity of contact and reception between Chinese and Japanese Buddhist communities. The evidence recently recovered from the Ōsu Archive at Shinpukuji, Nagoya, has shown how monks in the circles of Eisai, Nōnin (能忍, twelfth century), and Enni Ben'en (円爾辯円, 1202–1280) resituated Chan from the continent within Japanese religious practice and thought, especially that of Japanese esotericism.² Enni Ben'en, for example, who traveled to Song China between 1235 and 1241, returned with a copy of the Song Chan rulebook *Rules of Purity for Chan Monasteries* (*Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規, preface 1103), and at Tōfukuji, Kyoto, established Song-style monastic

architecture, administration, and rituals. At the same time, however, Enni and some disciples continued to cultivate esoteric Buddhist practices (including transmission rites) and to compose expositions of Chan/Zen practice based on esoteric understandings of the body.³ Though research is still ongoing, many are beginning to regard Japanese Zen from the perspective of intercultural contact; as the creative recontextualization of Chan within Japanese Buddhist thought and practice, or a fusion of horizons.⁴ Moving forward, as scholars continue thinking about the horizons of Chan and Zen (and the relationship that inheres in between), our understanding will be enriched by understanding how translanguingual communication actually transpired.

Here is one of many cases that warrant further reflection. English language scholarship has known for several decades about language gaps and communication barriers between Chan and Zen monks, though this topic has seldom been treated in a sustained manner.⁵ Martin Collcutt, building on work by Tamamura Takeji, noted that when Chinese master Wuxue Zuyuan (無學祖元, 1226–1286; J. Mugaku Sogen) met the powerful Japanese regent Hōjō Tokimune (北条時宗, 1251–1284), they relied upon an interpreter.⁶ In this example, the body language of each man could be observed by the other readily enough, but significance still required an interpreter. According to our records, after some verbal back-and-forth through an interpreter, Hōjō Tokimune responded to one of Zuyuan's questions by raising a fist high in the air. Tokimune appears to have mimicked what he imagined a Chan master would do. His gestural response, however, was not a meaningful response to the moment of dialogue and revealed his misunderstanding. Zuyuan wished to give Tokimune a blow, a typical response by a Chan master to guide a student. However, Zuyuan could not assault Tokimune, the *de facto* ruler of Japan. Instead, Zuyuan "struck the interpreter once and said '[Tokimune] spoke in error'" (師打通事一下, 云: 錯下名言).⁷ Just as he relied on the interpreter to speak, Zuyuan likewise struck the interpreter to convey his teaching. Zuyuan's response indicates that the regent had failed to understand the ultimate truth that transcends speech and silence, movement and stillness. It is not recorded whether the regent gained any insights from witnessing Zuyuan's physical response. Any oral interpretation for the regent is also not recorded, and we can only wonder whether the interpreter provided Tokimune with an interpretation of Zuyuan's spoken words only, or if he interpreted the meaning of the blow itself. Either way, Zuyuan's striking his interpreter presents us a lovely metaphor for understanding how even shouts and

blows (let alone spoken and written language) are not comprehensible beyond the available horizons of meaning. The interpreter here likely was the Zen monk Mukyū Tokusen (無及徳詮, n.d.), who had studied in Song China and returned to Japan able to understand and speak Chinese.⁸ (Not all interpreters were monks, as discussed later in this chapter.) Interpreters like Mukyū Tokusen played a critical role in explaining Chan to Japanese audiences. In addition to third-person interpreters like Tokusen, some situations in the shared history of Chan and Zen called for translingual writing (including brush-dialogue and poetry exchange) as a supposedly more direct form of communication. However, misunderstanding was still possible even with these forms of untranslated written communication.

Building on recent Japanese scholarship (especially that of Tachi Ryūshi and Enomoto Wataru), I wish to revisit the topic of communication among Chan and Zen monks. My goals are to construct a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the kinds of communication that were most common, as well as to introduce some previously unexamined examples related to poetry (focusing on composition and orality) and thereby consider their potential significance in the history of communication between Chan and Zen monks. Of course, the history of the communication between Chinese and Japanese people is a larger historical topic, one not limited to Chan and Zen monks. The first half of this essay reviews some of this broader context. Given my emphasis on monks, and because interpreters, brush-dialogue, and poetic exchange did not begin with Chan and Zen monks, precedents are drawn from the travelogues of Japanese Tendai monks. After this extensive review of contexts and precedents, the second half of this chapter proceeds to examples of communication between Chan and Zen monks from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century.

Contexts and Precedents

The period between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries spans multiple political eras: China's latter Southern Song (1127–1279), Yuan (1279–1368), and early Ming (1368–1644), and Japan's Kamakura (1185–1333) and early Muromachi (1336–1573) eras. During this period, Chinese émigré monks traveled to Japan, some by invitation, others to escape deteriorating political conditions; and Japanese travelers went to China to engage in pilgrimage and formal study. Monks also facilitated commerce, engaged in diplomacy, and conveyed texts, objects, and ideas. As a result, new sacred architec-

ture and patronage patterns took root on Japanese soil. Collcutt imagined how the built environments of Zen monastic institutions in the thirteenth century and early fourteenth century, “outposts of Chinese religion and culture,” inculcated novel bodily dispositions, active soundscapes, and liturgical routines—new habits to be learned by observation and doing.⁹

Our archive for the hundreds of monks who crossed the seas is fragmentary. Enomoto Wataru recently compiled an inventory of the various detailed records that survive for 106 Chinese or Japanese Buddhist monks who sailed across the sea during the Southern Song and Yuan periods.¹⁰ Many dozens more names are known from the early Ming, too.¹¹ Even the names of most travelers are, however, lost to us. Nonetheless, we know these monks frequently journeyed on privately owned merchant vessels. Monasteries also managed large amounts of capital, and occasionally Zen temples took stakes in ocean-going vessels to finance temple construction, such as the famous “Kenchōji ship” (建長寺船) that sailed out in 1325 and back the next year. In addition to generating revenue for the temple, this temple-financed ship transported the important émigré monk Qingzhuo Zhengcheng (清拙正澄, 1274–1339) to Japan together with several returning Zen pilgrims.¹²

In many regards, the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries were a lively period of international activity across East Asia. Texts and objects, as well as attendant material cultures, were also in movement in earlier periods. Moreover, the direction of intercultural exchange between Chinese states and their neighbors did not flow in only one direction.¹³ The Tendai pilgrim Jōjin (成尋, 1011–1081), for example, brought hundreds of fascicles of texts with him to China, which he presented and lent to Chinese monks; he then purchased hundreds of fascicles to carry back to Japan.¹⁴ Nontextual objects were also significant and could serve as a locus for literary embellishment. The Chinese scholar-official Ouyang Xiu famously composed “Song of the Japanese Sword,”¹⁵ and Chinese tea wares were frequently eulogized in Japanese monks’ verse.¹⁶ Monks’ poems did not focus exclusively on religious topics. Poetry was a prestige genre and a regular part of social interactions. Poetic competence was a fundamental skill for establishing social standing, and most Japanese monks aspired to master Sinitic verse.

Similarly, the imitation of Song dynasty temple architecture was a significant medium of cultural transmission.¹⁷ The Chinese monastery as a *mise-en-scène* together with then current poetic practices was extended to Japan, and popular Chinese poetic topics were projected onto the Japanese

landscape. Based on the common trope of “ten scenic spots” in Chinese poetry, Qingzhuo Zhengcheng created a Japanese poetic suite, “Ten Scenic Spots of Higashiyama” (J. *Higashiyama jūkyō* 東山十境); likewise, Mingji Chujun (明極楚俊, 1262–1336) wrote “Ten Scenic Spots of Kenchōji” (J. *Dai Kenchōji jūkyō* 題建長寺十境).¹⁸ Similarly, the Japanese reception of the poetic suite “Eight Scenes of Xiao and Xiang” was mediated through Zen monks and proliferated new religio-literary landscapes.¹⁹ Adaptations of Song and Yuan monastic and literary cultures reconfigured Japanese sacred spaces.

This period also marks the spread of an international print culture across East Asia. Among others, Song dynasty woodblock printed “recorded sayings” (C. *yulu*, J. *goroku* 語錄) texts were brought to Japan, where high-fidelity reproductions of *yulu* were issued and indigenous *goroku* were compiled. In some instances, new Zen texts circulated to China.²⁰ In addition to such orthodox Chan/Zen texts, mainstream Chinese poetry also circulated to Japan, whereupon Zen monks composed religious interpretations.²¹ Chinese poems were given “Zen” glosses by Japanese readers—especially poems by Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037–1101) and Huang Tingjian (黃庭堅, 1045–1105)—yet another example of the fusion of horizons. Similarly, Southern Song anthologies of Chinese monks’ poems appear to have received more attention in Japan than in China; *Collection of Wind and Moon [Poems] from Rivers and Lakes* (*Jianghu fengyue ji* 江湖風月集) continues to enjoy Japanese commentarial exposition up to today, whereas the text was all but lost in China.²²

Print culture was important, and its significance can be overstated. Manuscript and print cultures cohabit readily. Manuscript cultures remained ubiquitous in East Asia into the modern period. Further, print culture was geographically uneven. Important Chinese centers of printing during the Song and Yuan were in a few cities, including Hangzhou; in Japan, print culture flourished in the city of Kyoto especially. Finally, the print culture of this period pales in comparison with the seventeenth-century explosion of printed materials, which included new book formats as well as greater varieties of texts, like vernacular Chinese novels.²³

Commercial, social, and textual histories of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries provide us context for understanding interpreters, brush-dialogue, and poetic exchange. These broader phenomena also predate the Chan and Zen monks. Precedents can be found in the travelogues of Japanese Tendai monks, which, in part, mitigate against our interpreting

translingual communication as a unique Zen phenomenon. The following examples provide points of reference for the second half of this chapter.

A) EXCHANGE POEMS

We turn now to the historical background of cross-cultural and translingual written exchange with a focus on poetry. By “translingual” in the context of exchange poetry I am referring to communication through written Sinitic characters without translation per se; Chinese and Japanese people read the same Sinitic characters but from different language cultures.²⁴ The shared written system is sometimes referred to as the *scripta franca*, and the region of East Asia in which peoples could read and write in this shared logographic system the “Sinosphere.”²⁵ Comparisons to Latin as a lingua franca shared by people with distinct vernacular languages make for imperfect analogies.²⁶ Nonetheless, one can readily discern a shared writing system and its entanglements with disparate spoken and written languages.

The exchange of Sinitic poetry was not unique to Buddhist monks. Sets of response poetry were customary in learned society. Murai Shōsuke and others have demonstrated that written Sinitic poetry was a diplomatic language across the East Asian maritime world. Especially without a mutually intelligible spoken language, as Murai artfully explains, “poetry and tea came as a set for mediating friendship.”²⁷ Sinitic poems, known in Japanese as *kanshi* (漢詩), are the same form as standard regulated *shi* (詩) poetry of mainstream Chinese literature. Examples of envoy poetry survive from Japan, Korea, China, Ryūkyū, and Vietnam.²⁸ Though early examples come from the eighth century, most of the extant envoy poetry and brush-dialogue are from the fifteenth century onward.²⁹ By contrast, written exchange between monks are numerous and well documented in earlier periods.

Numerous non-Chinese monks traveled to Tang (618–907) China. The Japanese monk Ennin (圓仁, 794–864) in his travel diary records a poem written by another foreign monk Ch'ōngso (貞素, n.d.) from Balhae Korea (渤海) to commemorate a fallen Japanese pilgrim.³⁰ At the end of Ennin's expedition, the Chinese monk Qibai (栖白, n.d.) composed the poem “Sending off Tripiṭaka Master Ennin as He Returns to His Country.”³¹ More examples of ninth-century Chinese poems written to send off Japanese pilgrims can be found in the translations of Edward Schafer.³²

The first Japanese monk to travel to the Song was Tōdaiji monk Chōnen (齋然, 938–1016), who began his three-year mission in 983 as a personal religious quest to visit Mount Wutai.³³ In Song China, he was twice fêted by the emperor as a state guest, and the second time was gifted with the recently printed 5,048 fascicle Kaibao Buddhist canon plus recently translated texts. During this expedition, Chōnen exchanged written poetry with his hosts—some recorded in his travelogue.³⁴ Here again we see that the exchange of envoy poetry between Japanese and Chinese monks did not begin with Zen pilgrims. When the Chan and Zen monks of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries wrote poetry to one another, they were renewing a longer tradition of written poetic exchange.

B) INTERPRETERS AND BRUSH-DIALOGUE: JŌJIN (1011–1081)
AND HIS INTERPRETER CHEN YONG

If a Chinese monk and a Japanese monk did not share a mutually intelligible spoken language, they either would rely on an interpreter or engage in “brush-dialogue”—written communication via Sinitic characters. Ennin records at least nine times he engaged in brush-dialogue, which he describes, for example, as “with brushes spoke, and communicated our feelings.”³⁵ To my knowledge, Ennin’s diary is the earliest text that purports to record the contents of a face-to-face brush-dialogue between monks.³⁶

These two modes of Sino-Japanese translanguing communication, interpreters and brush-dialogue, predate the Chan and Zen monks of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries and also continue today. Regarding Buddhist monks, after a brief lull, international movement suddenly increased in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and with it also greater translanguing communication—including brush-dialogue conversations, acts of interpretation, and spoken Chinese in Japan. Recent studies on interpreters of this latter period offer a useful point of context.

For simplicity, I use “interpretation” to refer to acts across spoken languages and “translation” for acts across written languages (e.g., the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese). Historically, professional interpreters resided in international port cities, such as Ningbo, China, and Hakata (modern Fukuoka) and Nagasaki, Japan. The history of interpreters in Japan is well documented from the seventeenth century onward, when there was a glut of printed materials.³⁷ Teams of Japanese interpreters of Chinese language included individuals that specialized in southern dialects, as indicated by a record from 1716 that documents a single team’s able

handling of Fuzhou 福州, Zhangzhou 漳州, and Nanjing 南京 dialects.³⁸ The diversity of Japanese dialects—both of region and social class—must be acknowledged, although it will not be of significance to my narrow argument here.³⁹ Rebekah Clements and Jiang Wu have documented cases in which émigré Chinese Ōbaku school monks relied on interpreters to communicate with their Japanese patrons.⁴⁰ The history of interpreters in East Asia before the seventeenth century is not as well documented, but a few examples can illustrate the central role of interpreters in communication between Chan and Zen monks.

Some Japanese Zen pilgrims who lived in China for many years learned spoken Chinese, such as Mukyū Tokusen discussed at the start of this chapter. Other Japanese pilgrims relied on interpreters. An example of the latter, Japanese Tendai pilgrim to Northern Song China, Jōjin (成尋, 1011–1081) in his travelogue *Record of Pilgrimage to Mount Tiantai and Wutai* (*San Tendai-Godaisan ki* 參天台五台山記) recorded numerous details about his Chinese interpreter, a merchant named Chen Yong (陳詠, eleventh century).⁴¹ Jōjin noted his positive first impression of Chen “who had five times traversed the sea to Japan, and excelled in his knowledge of Japanese language” (五度渡日本人也, 善知日本語).⁴² During these visits, Chen likely remained in Japan for some duration.⁴³ Jōjin recorded Chen’s handling of official documents (e.g., travel permits), verbal discussions (arranging purchase of newly printed Tiantai texts), and occasionally serving as native informant to explain an unfamiliar Chinese custom. Chen stayed with Jōjin for the entire voyage to Mount Wutai and back. The relationship between Jōjin and his interpreter seems to have been amicable—Jōjin sometimes shared gifts with Chen.⁴⁴ Before the end of this expedition, Chen petitioned his government to permit him to ordain as a monk under Jōjin’s tutelage.⁴⁵ Jōjin records details of the special ordination procedure (because Jōjin was a foreign teacher), that Chen adopted the dharma name Wuben 悟本, and that they then prepared to sail to Japan together.⁴⁶

Although Jōjin relied on interpreters for verbal communication, throughout his journey he also “used his brush to speak.” At one memorable encounter early on, he writes that “I had an intelligible discussion through writing with a merchant from Yuezhou [modern Shaoxing]. Later, on account of drunkenness, he and another merchant got into a fight.”⁴⁷ This is an example of mundane brush-dialogue. Other conversations concerned doctrinal tenets and practice: Jōjin once had “questions and answers piled up, filling nearly two sheets of paper.”⁴⁸ Jōjin notes how conversing in this manner required materials.

Somewhat unusually, Jōjin's written communications appear to have been almost entirely in prose. This was because Jōjin had sworn off poetry as an idle pursuit. Such vows of abstinence from poetry were not unheard of for monks in China, though not very common.⁴⁹ However, given that Jōjin could not speak in Chinese, his refusal to exchange poetry must have been striking. Jōjin still received numerous poems from Chinese monks, government officials, and other elites—as well as from fellow Japanese pilgrims he encountered. A total of thirty-six poems by twenty-three different people are recorded in the travelogue.⁵⁰ As was customary, these were mostly social poems written by hosts when Jōjin arrived at or departed from a station on his journey (only a few poetic encounters concerned Buddhist teachings). At least twice, when Jōjin was presented poems by Chinese monks, he had his interpreter explain that he, Jōjin, would refrain from writing a poem in response.⁵¹ It is difficult to know if Jōjin's poetic abstinence was perceived as piety or rudeness. We might also wonder if Jōjin was especially untalented at Sinitic poetry, and if this vow was a polite excuse to conceal an inadequacy.

Between Chan and Zen Monks

A) MATCHED RHYME POETRY: ZEN MONK MUSHŌ JŌSHŌ (1234–1306) IN CHINA, ÉMIGRÉ MONKS IN JAPAN

In contrast to Jōjin, most Japanese monks who traveled and studied in China, including the Zen pilgrims, participated in the Sinitic poetic culture. To illustrate the dynamics of poetic exchange between monks, I will focus on one among numerous examples, the pilgrim Mushō Jōshō (無象靜照, 1234–1306) who traveled to China in 1252, studied with several famous Chan teachers, and returned to Japan in 1265.⁵² After returning to Japan, Mushō Jōshō served as the “head seat” for Zuyuan, and likely was an interpreter—indicative of his proficiency with spoken Chinese.⁵³ A few years before returning, in 1262 Mushō Jōshō climbed Mount Tiantai 天台山. He reached the famous stone bridge where he gave obeisance to the supramundane arhats thought to dwell there. A distinctive, naturally formed stone bridge in the Tiantai mountain range was the subject of intense literary and religious imagination as early as the fourth century CE, and the stone bridge was understood to link this ordinary world to realms of liberation. Veneration of arhats, disciples of the Buddha, expanded greatly in the Song.⁵⁴

Not unique, Mushō was one of many Japanese pilgrims who climbed the mountain to make an offering of tea.⁵⁵ After reaching the bridge, Mushō Jōshō rested and soon fell asleep. According to his prefatory note, “I was dreaming of traveling through numinous caves, but the experience was no different from being awake. I suddenly heard the peal of a frosty bell⁵⁶ and could not determine from where the sound had come—I stitched together these minor *gāthā* to commemorate this glorious event” (夢遊靈洞, 所歷與覺時無異. 忽聞霜鐘, 不知聲自何發, 因綴小偈以記勝事).⁵⁷ A vision was granted to him in a dream, a sure sign that his pilgrimage to Tiantai was a success. He composed two verses that he could later show to others.

In order to discuss the social significance of such verse, I will first illustrate the mechanics of poetry, then analyze each poem’s contents. The sequence of tones in each line follows a set pattern. The proper sequence of each subsequent line is derived from the one before. Here, the tones for each word—using ● to mark a word with a “deflected” tone and ○ for a “rising” tone—follow the *Guangyun* (廣韻) rhyme dictionary of Song-era standard phonetics (compiled 1008).⁵⁸ The first of Mushō’s two verses strictly adheres to standard tonal patterns and sequences.

| | |
|---|----------|
| Amid the crags expressly to offer infused tea, when | 崎嶇得得為煎茶 |
| | ○○●●○○○ |
| Five hundred śrāvaka emerged from dusky clouds, | 五百聲聞出晚霞 |
| | ●●○○●●○○ |
| I bow thrice and rise, open my dreaming eyes, | 三拜起來開夢眼 |
| | ○●●○○●● |
| Then I know dharma after dharma are all sky blossoms. | 方知法法總空花 |
| | ○○●●○○○ |

The end rhymes above correctly follow a standard pattern (here with optional first-line rhyme) and each individual line internally adheres to a standard tonal sequence. Because Mushō Jōshō arranged these four regulated lines into a regulated sequence, the tones are balanced within each couplet (tones alternating in second, fourth, and sixth positions) and adhere between couplets (in the second, fourth, and sixth positions of lines two and three). Although additional aural considerations also influenced what was considered a mellifluous sonic texture, the correct patterns would generally prevent a jarring sequence of tones. Mushō Jōshō was a competent writer of Sinitic poetry. His Chinese monastic hosts would have noted this foreigner’s ability to compose a proper verse.

Mushō's second poem is technically interesting. The clean execution of the first poem in the pair provided him license to engage in creative tonal violations in the second. Minor tonal violations occur in the latter half of lines two and four (indicated by a square □ or ■). Despite these minor violations within two lines, the overall pattern is still regulated.⁵⁹ Moreover, for a listener, the two phrases in lines two and four would stand out as variations from the expected tonal pattern. They also appear to be purposeful. The variations result in phrases that are grammatically parallel (adj. + noun + verb) and situate an echo at the conclusion each couplet (○●○). This artful echo suggests these violations were intentional, and either meant to draw attention to these phrases or to display a further competence.

| | |
|---|---------|
| Waterfall flying from twin brooks, thunderous rush, | 瀑飛雙澗雷聲急 |
| | ●○○●○○● |
| Clouds gather in the thousand peaks, Golden Pavilion opens. ⁶⁰ | 雲斂千峰金殿開 |
| | ○●○○□●○ |
| The teaching of the worthies is just this! | 尊者家風只如是 |
| | ○●○○○●● |
| What was the point of misleading me across the Eastern Sea? | 何須賺我東海來 |
| | ●○○●□■○ |

Turning to content, these poems written in the thirteenth century by Mushō join a venerable religio-literary tradition of depicting the environmental wonders—the stone bridge and waterfalls—of the Tiantai range as scenes of revelation. Mushō situates himself as a knowledgeable participant in the living history of the important cultic center. In the first verse, his fleeting vision of arhats in the clouded peaks leads to an insight—all phenomena in this world are like clouds that gather and disperse. “Sky blossoms” refers to seeing spots in one’s vision when gazing at the sky, which one should not mistake for being really there. The vision of arhats emerging from mist, the experience of climbing the mountain, all pass like a dream—all are empty.

Mushō's second poem recapitulates his vision, adding a kind of Chan humor. The Buddhist truth revealed to him atop Tiantai is a universal truth, and therefore was equally present and accessible in Japan, too, and might have been revealed to him before he ever set off across the sea. Similar religious humor about a search for “nothing” can be found in Chinese

monks' poems written at this time in the Jiangnan region.⁶¹ Mushō's ability to create a poem that properly deployed this Chan humor demonstrated his fluency with the contemporary monastic literary culture. His poems were a performance of literary ability, as well as a demonstration of his thoroughgoing understanding of Buddhist doctrines.

Poems were public texts and would be freely shared with associates. Mushō Jōshō showed his poems to numerous Buddhist monks in China. In the three years before his departure home in 1265, a total of forty-one Chinese monks composed new poems directly in response to Mushō, who collected them on a single long scroll. The Chinese monks' poems also survive today, and all (except one) repeat Mushō's exact rhyme words. This poetic practice of replicating end rhymes from an interlocutor's poem was known as "matched rhyme poetry" 次韻詩. Each new poem responded to the meaning and story behind the original, and responded with either lavish praise, enlightened humor, or a further intellectual challenge. As Mushō traveled home, the scroll of linked poems served as proof that he had met and impressed these Chinese monks.

"Matched rhyme poetry" was the strictest of the three types of response poetry that echoed someone else's rhymes. These widely quoted comments by Liu Ban (劉攽, 1022–1088) give a concise, standard definition:⁶²

As for "extending and responding" in Tang poetry, there is: matched rhyme (the sequence of rhyme-words is unchanged); relying on the rhyme (within the same rhyme-family); and using the rhyme (using the other's rhyme-words, but not necessarily in matching sequence).

唐詩廣和有次韻 (先後無易), 有依韻 (同在一韻), 有用韻 (用彼韻不必次).

The earliest extant example of matching sequenced rhyme words, to my knowledge, is a response to Xiao Ziliang's first wife's poem scolding him; his new wife wrote a matched rhyme in his defense.⁶³ Writers in the Song regarded matching works by Yuan Zhen with Bai Juyi, and Pi Rixiu with Lu Guimeng, to be the model for their practice of matched rhyme poetry. Matched rhyme poetry became extraordinarily popular from the eleventh century onward—constituting roughly one out of every six poems by major poets like Su Shi, Su Zhe, and Huang Tingjian. This form of

poetry served important social functions. For these mainstream poets, interlocking rhymes wove together their poems into a textual fabric that recorded relationships. Chinese monks also composed social poems with matching rhymes, often when traveling together, at social gatherings, or in epistolary poetry. These poetic practices were adopted by Japanese Zen monks. Extensive examples survive.⁶⁴

Matched rhyme poetry was also an important vehicle for translingual communication, especially when talking was not possible. Perhaps the repetition of rhyming words felt like a firm handshake. For example, when Chinese émigré monk Dongling Yongyu (東陵永輿, 1285–1365; J. Tōryō/Tōrin Eiyo) came to Japan in 1351, he arrived in Hakata and stayed in Sōfukuji (崇福寺) for nearly three months while waiting for his further travel documents. Yongyu wrote a poem when he met Getsudō Sōki (月堂宗規, 1285–1361), former abbot of Sōfukuji, and then abbot of the newly built Myōrakuji (妙樂寺). Myōrakuji was located directly on the Okinohama port of Hakata, and the site of the Donpekirō (吞碧樓) tower that also served as a lighthouse—a potent metaphoric symbol, and topic of Yongyu’s poem. Getsudō offered a friendly poetic response that matched Yongyu’s rhyme, followed by eleven other monks. A fourteenth century record noted that poems by Chan monks covered the walls of Donpekirō—a beacon of light covered in poems of friendship.⁶⁵

Japanese monks also adapted a related continental poetic practice, a distinctive form of matched-rhyme poetry that emerged during the Song dynasty: matching rhymes with the dead. The first significant poet to do so was Su Shi, in poems echoing Tao Yuanming (陶淵明, 365?–427).⁶⁶ Su, during a period of political exile, engaged Tao, an icon of hermeticism, as his poetic interlocutor. The practice of matching rhymes with the dead was soon adopted by Chan monks. A living master could place himself in direct dialogue with a Chan ancestor, borrowing the latter’s charisma by literally echoing his words in new contexts. Poems set to the famous Ten Ox-Herding Pictures were well known for this poetic practice. One set of rhymes was brought to Japan by Yishan Yining (一山一寧, 1247–1317; J. Issan Ichinei), who composed a matching set of ten poems. In his preface he explained: “many worthies wrote verse and matched [rhymes], and now I, though a mere mountain monk not up to the task, append my doggerel after many worthies” (諸老頌者和者頗多，今山僧不揣續貂於諸老之後).⁶⁷ Yishan extended the rhyming sounds of Song and Yuan masters into Japan.⁶⁸ The practice of rhyming to the words of one’s spiritual ancestors proliferated in Japan over centuries.

For example, Ryōkan Taigu (良寛大愚, 1758–1831) composed rhyming responses to his Sōtō Zen ancestor Gida Daichi (祇陀大智, 1290–1366).⁶⁹ This kind of poetic dialogue with one's own tradition was learned by imitating Song and Yuan Chan monks.

B) RHYMED SINITIC POETRY WITHOUT SPOKEN CHINESE IN THE DIARY OF GIDŌ SHŪSHIN (1325–1388)

Although some Japanese Zen monks in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries understood spoken Chinese, such as the aforementioned Mushō Jōshō, spoken Chinese was not a prerequisite for skillfully composing Sinitic poetry. Virtually all educated Zen monks wrote Chinese-style poetry, but, similar to other medieval Japanese writers of poetry, seldom spoke Chinese. The danger of false cognates—pronunciations that rhymed in medieval Japanese but not in medieval Chinese—was widely understood among the well educated, and so it was not insignificant when Japanese Zen monks wrote Sinitic poems using technically correct Chinese end rhymes. More impressive still, Japanese-authored poems generally adhered to the strict patterns of Chinese tones. The Japanese language is not tonal. For a Zen monk, facility with Chinese tones required effort. It seems that getting both the rhymes and tones right was one criterion for studying and correctly performing Chan/Zen.

Learned Japanese had more than one method for reading and performing a poem written in Sinitic characters. The method known as “reading by gloss” (*kundoku* 訓讀) began by the seventh century and played an important role in the spread of literacy.⁷⁰ Put simply, reading by *kundoku* substituted Japanese lexical equivalencies, rearranged the word order to match spoken Japanese, and added Japanese conjugation, particles, and other grammatical elements. This style of reading was closer to colloquial Japanese, nonetheless, excellence in oral *kundoku* performance required talent and training. The oral recitation of Sinitic poetry most often, it is assumed, took the form of “reading by voice” (*ondoku* 音讀), whereby the written characters were recited aloud using a pronunciation that approximated medieval Chinese and in the same order as written. Intoning in an *ondoku* manner could be accompanied by *kundoku*. By the tenth century, the oral performance of Sinitic poetry in the *kundoku* or “reading by gloss” style was widespread, and some sources make clear that a Sinitic poem was prized if it was amenable to both *ondoku* and *kundoku* style performances.⁷¹ The ability to compose Sinitic poetry and perform

it aloud in the *ondoku* manner that approximated Chinese pronunciation did not prepare a Japanese person for conversation in spoken Chinese.

Zen monks who traveled to China often gained some degree of fluency in spoken language. Some Zen monks also visited the Chinese sections of port cities to practice conversation—though this was of limited utility. An Edo-period manual for the study of Chinese language insisted that starting at the age of seven or eight was already too late for developing an ear for the colloquial language and that foreign languages education should begin at age two or three.⁷² This Edo-era manual, though written some centuries later, provides a sense of the distance between spoken Japanese and spoken Chinese languages. Some Zen monks developed advanced Chinese language skills through years—sometimes decades—of study abroad and language immersion.

Zen monks who did not study abroad could memorize the rhyme category and tones of Sinitic words for the purposes of poetry, even if they could not produce or understand spoken Chinese. This seems to be the purpose of Kokan Shiren's (虎関師鍊, 1278–1346) *Shūbun inryaku* (聚分韻略) rhyme dictionary completed in 1306—not the earliest poetic rhyme book in use in Japan but one based largely on the Song dynasty rhyme book. For Zen monks, just as for earlier courtiers, the ability to produce metered Sinitic poetry does not equate to command of the spoken Chinese language. Indeed, this was exactly the case for at least some of the monks in the community of the talented Zen master Gidō Shūshin (義堂周信, 1325–1388). Gidō was a lifelong student of Sinitic poetry and twice produced a personal selection of several thousand quatrains by Song and Yuan monks. His first compilation was lost in a fire, and he spent his remaining years reconstituting the lost collection, stopping work only weeks before his death. Gidō also kept robust diaries, from which his disciples compiled fragments under the title *Excerpts from Master Kūge's Daily Efforts* (*Kūge rōshi nichiyō kufū ryakushū* 空華老師日用工夫略集), from which the following events are drawn.⁷³

As the end of the first year of the Eitoku regnal period (永徳, 1381–1384) drew to a close, Gidō busied himself with New Year's rituals and customs, which in the Zen temple included seated meditation. This event called for a poem. In his last diary entry for the year, Gidō records that after he talked about a famous Chan story (summarized below), he then presented a verse to the monk in the “head seat” (J. *shuso* 首座), who seems to have been frantically completing arrangements in the monk's hall. This poem illustrates Gidō's mastery of medieval Chinese tones—as

found in the *Guangyun* rhyme dictionary.⁷⁴ The rhymes and patterns are technically excellent.

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| The samādhi of evenly sustaining ⁷⁵ is our ordinary, | 等持三昧是家常 ●○○●●○○ |
| As we sit up until midnight, why are you suddenly busy? | 分歲何須特地忙 ○○○○●●○○ |
| If [Beichan] fried up a white ox, you surely wouldn't discern it. | 烹箇白牛應不辨 ○○●○○●●● |
| At the deepest moment of the night, try a drop of citrus-peel tincture. ⁷⁶ | 夜深且點橘皮湯 ●○○●●○○ |

This is a technically proficient poem, though it is not especially literary. In terms of diction, Gidō incorporates the name of his own temple and foreign-sounding Buddhist language in line one, then alludes to a Chan story in line three. These allusions display his Zen learning but not the classical learning or refined language of high Sinitic poetry. His end rhymes are correct (with first-line rhyme), and his arrangement adheres to tonal patterns. Gidō has composed a religiously meaningful verse in standard poetic form. Through his command of poetic technique, Gidō establishes himself as a member of the cultural elite and a worthy heir of Song-style Chan.

As for meaning, given the limits of space, I focus on Gidō's allusion to a classic Chan story in line three. This will also illumine his first couplet as a clever recapitulation of the story's pith. This story was especially appropriate for the end-of-year seasonal event. According to our texts, the Northern Song Chan master Beichan Zhixian (北禪智賢, eleventh century) met with his pupils on the last evening of the year, when they would feast and sit together into the night to welcome the new year (a custom known as *fensui* 分歲). Master Zhixian inverted the usual themes of this feast and turned it into a metaphor for the dharma. "Although the year is almost out, I have nothing to share with you to welcome the new year—I, an old monk, have fried up the white ox on the bare ground, cooked a simple local rice, boiled wild vegetable soup, and made fire from meager wood chips—everyone, gather around the hearth and sing local songs. Why are we doing this? I avoid depending on the gates of others and leaning against their walls—and as a result people call me a gentleman." (年窮臘盡，無可與大眾分歲。老僧烹一頭露地白牛，炊土田米飯，煮野菜羹，燒槽樅火。大眾圍爐，唱村田樂。何以如此？免見倚他門戶傍他牆，致使時人

喚作郎。)77 This is a sermon about a life of material poverty and spiritual richness. Zhixian had nothing but humble food, and yet offered to his disciples a new year's feast consisting of religious sustenance. A Chinese Buddhist teacher would not cook meat—cooking an ox is an allusion. The images of the white ox and bare ground originate in the *Lotus Sūtra*, and were charged with philosophical meaning in a Tang-era commentary by Li Tongxuan (李通玄, 635–730; alt. 646–740)—the bare ground is the suchness of reality, and the white ox is the manifestation of wisdom and compassion, or the dharma.⁷⁸

Here, Zhixian has stated that his everyday fare—the ordinary vegetables and soup (that is, his instruction throughout the year)—have always been the revelation of ultimate reality (the metaphoric ox). In other words, the realm of awakening is not something special or separate from this present reality—and any ideas about awakening being special belong to deluded thinking. This is the meaning Gidō wished to convey to the “head seat” monk in the above poem's first lines. Although the last night of the year may seem special, one should sustain the same samādhi cultivated every day. Gidō selected this apposite story at the end of the year, sermonized about it, and then further explained its profound relevance to one of his disciples through a Sinitic poem. Several days later, on the third day of the new year, Gidō received guests, and the group composed a total of seventeen more verses with rhymes matching this poem. On that day, he also recognized the “head seat” as a dharma heir. Gidō rightly was celebrated for such religio-literary skillfulness.

Although Gidō composed the above verse with end rhyme and tonal prosody, he does not in his diary allude to his own speaking Chinese. It is unclear, at least to me, the extent of Gidō's comprehension of spoken Chinese—however, it is clear that he did not deliver his sermons in Chinese and that at least some monks in his Zen temple did not understand spoken Chinese. These facts are revealed to us from the subsequent diary entry on the fourth day of the new year. Gidō welcomed three of his disciples back from the Kenninji (建仁寺) Zen temple, where he sent them to listen to a sermon by the abbot Gesshin Kei'en (月心慶圓, fourteenth century). Gesshin Kei'en was a Japanese Zen monk who had traveled to Yuan China to study, where he became proficient in spoken Chinese. After he returned to Japan, he became abbot of several prominent Zen temples.⁷⁹ Gesshin delivered his sermon in the usual format, however, the three monks did not understand it. Gidō recorded this event in his diary.

Fourth day, in a light snow we chanted scriptures and then sat meditation, per usual. I took a bath, and afterward a driving snow arrived suddenly. Those who entered the bath-hall in the two evening sessions likely had cold water. My three students, Bonsei, Shūnan, and Chūshuku,⁸⁰ returned from Kenninji. I asked them, “The venerable head of that hall to mark the auspicious start of the year raised an ancient case to instruct the assembly, but you have not yet told me what he said.” They replied, “That is because he preached the dharma in Chinese. We could not hear it, and could not retain it.”

四日、小雪、看經・定坐如例。入浴、々後忌風雪、是夜初後兩次入堂者、怕浴寒也。成・南・叔三子自建仁來。余問、堂頭和尚歲節示眾古則、未審有甚麼言句。答曰、唐語說法故、聽不得、記不得。⁸¹

Gidō's students had not been able to follow Gesshin's sermon. Only days later, on the ninth day of the year, this same student Chūshuku (中叔) asked for instructions about a poem by Du Fu, and requested Gidō inscribe a poem. Within the space of a single week, Gidō had written a technically perfect Sinitic poem rich with allusions to Song Chan texts, and then three of his students attended a lecture delivered in Chinese and could not understand what was said. At this time, one of those students sought Gidō's explanation of a Tang poem. From this we know that a Zen monk's engagement with Sinitic poetry did not depend on (and is not proof of) the ability to speak Chinese.

It is remarkable that Gesshin, a Japanese monk, delivered Chinese-language sermons to a Japanese audience. Perhaps he and his patrons thought the Chinese language had more ritual efficacy; or perhaps it was a means to distinguish himself as a ritual specialist with rare abilities. Chinese émigré monks delivered their sermons in Chinese, too, addressed in section C.

Before turning to discuss émigré monks, I add here some brief notes regarding Dōgen and his Chinese language skills. Dōgen composed rhymed and tonally regulated Sinitic poetry, but as we have just seen, poetic competence is not sufficient evidence of the ability to speak or comprehend Chinese. According to some of his early biographers, Dōgen had a profound awakening in Song China when his Chinese master Rujing (如淨, 1162–1227) admonished a fellow meditator who had fallen asleep.⁸² Dōgen heard Rujing say “slough off body and mind” (C. *shenxin tuoluo*; J.

shinjin datsuraku 身心脱落). Then, it is said, Dōgen sloughed off his body and mind—an event of great significance to Sōtō Zen traditions. However, the erudite Takasaki Jikidō in 1969 noted that the phrase Dōgen heard is not found in writings attributed to Rujing. Today, a search in our databases shows that this phrase Dōgen attributes to Rujing does not appear anywhere in the voluminous collections of Chinese Buddhist writing. At the same time, a suspiciously similar phrase, “the dust of the mind is sloughed off” (C. *xinchen tuoluo*; J. *shinjin datsuraku* 心塵脱落) does appear in the collected teachings of Rujing. These phrases are homophones in Japanese, and Takasaki suggested Dōgen misheard Rujing’s “dust of mind” (*shinjin*) as “mind and body” (*shinjin*), which sound the same in modern Japanese.⁸³ Others countered that while the Japanese *shinjin* suggests these words are homophones, the modern Mandarin initial consonants of *chen* (塵) and *shen* (身) are not identical. Dōgen, of course, was not hearing Mandarin. Rujing, a native of Ningbo, was likely speaking the local dialect (which had been transformed by the southern exodus of Kaifeng residents), which were not identical to the artificially standard pronunciations of the Song-era rhyme tables. Nonetheless, for heuristic purposes, we can see that the reconstructed medieval Chinese pronunciations, *drin* (塵) and *syin* (身), are very close on the rhyme tables.⁸⁴ The difference is that one initial is voiced (*zhuo*, 濁), and the other initial is unvoiced (*qing*, 清). In two-word phrases like these, a voicing sandhi transformation may occur to the initial of the second word. In other words, Dōgen could have heard the second word *drin* (as voiced) and assumed that a voicing sandhi transformation had occurred from *syin* (as unvoiced). Nonetheless, if we take these historical pronunciations as a guide, they support the possibility that Dōgen misheard *xinchen* (心塵) as *xinshen* (心身), and sometime later the word order was transposed to the far more common *shenxin* (身心). Though this is possible, phonology will not settle the animated debates about Dōgen and his Chinese language skills. On the one hand, perhaps Dōgen’s spoken Chinese was not quite fluent.⁸⁵ On the other hand, perhaps Dōgen heard Rujing correctly, and then in an act of profound religious insight thought of a near homophone—a creative act of intentional mishearing.⁸⁶

C) ÉMIGRÉ MONKS ON THE GROUND IN JAPAN

Many émigré monks did not learn spoken Japanese. The majority of Japanese monks did not understand Chinese. Recent Japanese scholarship, especially by Tachi Ryūshi, has brought to light the multilingual cultures

of early Gozan Zen monasteries. I will introduce some illustrative examples of translingual communication between Chinese Chan monks and Japanese Zen students.

The Zen monastery of Kenchōji (建長寺) in the city of Kamakura became a bastion of Chan/Zen learning administered by Chinese monks. So much Chinese was spoken within the monastery precincts that the Japanese monk Mujū Ichien (無住一円, 1226–1312) wrote that the space of Kenchōji “was like China” (如唐國).⁸⁷ The first several émigré abbots negotiated Kenchōji’s translingual culture differently.

Lanxi Daolong, the first Chan émigré monk, arrived at Hakata in 1246, was appointed the founding abbot of Kenchōji, under construction from 1249 until 1253, and resided in Japan until his death in 1279. Steffen Döll details Daolong’s career in the next chapter. Here I emphasize that Daolong performed rituals and delivered sermons in spoken Chinese, though he was also able to speak Japanese. Another émigré monk, Wuxue Zuyuan, who became abbot of Kenchōji following Daolong’s death, memorialized the late Daolong for his being “completely fluent in conversational Japanese” (打盡日本鄉談).⁸⁸ Daolong is thought to have given some face-to-face instruction in spoken Japanese.⁸⁹ Tachi Ryūshi speculates Daolong may have added Japanese explanations during his sermons delivered in Chinese.⁹⁰ (By contrast, Zuyuan once inscribed on a portrait of himself that “My head is short and face narrow, / with three points and five holes; although my belly is full of Buddha-dharma, / I cannot understand spoken Japanese language.”⁹¹) Regardless, Daolong delivered formal sermons and sūtra recitations in Chinese.

Whereas Daolong learned to speak Japanese during his long stay, his successor Wu’an Puning (兀菴普寧, 1198–1276; J. Gotten Funei) was never able to communicate fluently in Japanese. Puning arrived at Hakata in 1260 and there served as abbot of Shōfukuji 聖福寺. In 1262, when Daolong was sent to Kyoto’s Kenninji, Puning was summoned to head Kenchōji. After the Shogun died in 1263, Puning sought to retire. He returned home to Song China in 1265 where he served as an abbot again.⁹² It seems Puning did not find satisfaction in expatriate religious life. His sermons suggest he was frustrated by language barriers. During one sermon at Kenchōji, first he intoned a verse in Chinese,⁹³ then said, “When spoken words are not understood, dialogue is even more challenging—for speaker and listener alike, challenge after challenge—so I can only rely on this plain wooden staff. Whether one is from the south or the north, all suffer [a blow from my] staff.” (語音未辨, 酬酢猶艱, 說者聽者難復難, 只據一條白棒.

南來者北來者，俱與痛棒。)⁹⁴ During another lecture, Puning referred to the possibility of body language to communicate. “Although my spoken words are not understood, our stillnesses and movements, comings and goings are silent conversations and are illuminated in our mind’s eyes . . . so the mind of the speaker and the mind of listener know one another, their eyes illumine one another’s.” (雖語音未通，凡動靜往來，語默酬酢，心眼相照 . . . 說者聽者，心心相知，眼眼相照。)⁹⁵ Puning acknowledged the things he could recognize by being present with others without resorting to talking. Recently commenting on related phenomena, Steven Heine noted that cases in which Chan teachers revealed a self-awareness of these challenges “could ironically enhance mutual understanding.”⁹⁶ This observation may be true in some cases but perhaps not all situations.

Despite Puning resorting to body language, it appears that meaningful communication was often difficult. Another lecture ended with a question to the assembly of monks, and when no one responded, our texts note that “[Puning] used vernacular Japanese to remark, ‘o-so-ro-shi.’” (操日本鄉談云，和蘇嚕之。)⁹⁷ This final phrase was the Japanese word *osoroshii*, “how dreadful,” here written out phonetically to show that Puning was able to add one word in Japanese. Presumably, no one present understood his Chinese sermon. In response, he dismissed the assembly in their native tongue.⁹⁸ Puning’s own spoken Japanese apparently did not exceed single words like this. Most of the existing correspondence between Puning and others at Kenchōji appears to have taken place through writing and body language.

Another example of a language barrier shows how miscommunication could lead to creative interpretations. According to the mysterious Imai Fukuzan (今井福山, 1854–1945),⁹⁹ a manuscript from Zenkōji (禪興寺) preserved an utterance delivered by Wuxue Zuyuan in response to Hōjō Tokimune. It seems no one present understood what Zuyuan said, and so the sounds of his Chinese were transcribed phonetically (like the “o-so-ro-shi” above). By the nineteenth century, when this written record was viewed by Japanese readers, they thought it was a mysterious *kōan* (公案), a powerful phrase that could disrupt ordinary discursive thought. Only the rediscovery of a Zen text entitled *Manuscripts from Cold Pine* (*Kanshōkō* 寒松稿), collected writings by Ryūha Zenshu (龍派禪珠, 1549–1636), finally revealed the meaning of Zuyuan’s utterance. It read: “Come in, come in! I have something to say to you.”¹⁰⁰ This ordinary, mundane greeting through layers of misunderstanding became a site for Zen speculation.

Lest my examples focus only on miscommunication, here is one example that demonstrates multilingual dialogue could succeed. The Chinese émigré monk Zhuxian Fanxian (竺仙梵僊, 1292–1348; J. Jikusen Bonsen) with time was able to engage in spoken Japanese. The following dialogue, a question-and-answer following Zhuxian's sermon, was with Chintei Kaiju (椿庭海壽, 1318–1401). At first, Kaiju asks his question in Chinese, and Zhuxian answers in Chinese. Then, the two men switch to Japanese. The content of the exchange itself concerns the very question of language and is translated here in full.

Kaiju again stepped out and said, “When Bodhidharma came from the west he could not communicate in spoken language, and yet he transmitted the dharma! I, a student, approach you. What will the master do?”

The master [Zhuxian Fanxian] said, “So, have you already obtained the dharma or not?”

At this point, Kaiju turned to his mother tongue and spoke in a vernacular Japanese, saying “What is the point of Bodhidharma's come from the West?”

The master answered speaking in Japanese, “The cypress in the front of the garden!”

The student continued, “That's the stuff of the ancients, what is your stuff like?”

The master said, “If this is ancient stuff, then how is it coming out of my mouth?” Kaiju then prostrated. The master then said, “The large bell waits to be struck, its sound resonates with the boundless firmament.¹⁰¹ The precious mirror suspended on high will reflect the ten thousand things that face it. If a Chan/Zen student asks me about Chan in a Chinese manner, I will answer with words in a Chinese manner. If a Chan/Zen student asks me about Zen in a Japanese manner, I will answer with words in a Japanese manner. This matter is now set aside. ‘One hauls rock, a second moves earth.’¹⁰² Ha! That

brash fellow [Xuedou] would also leave like this.” The master stepped down from the high seat.

壽再出云：「達磨西來言語不通，已曾傳法。學人上來，和尚如何？」

師云：「汝還得法也未。」

是時壽却轉其舌音，作日本鄉談云：「如何是祖師西來意。」

師答亦操日本音云：「庭前柏樹子。」

進云：「此是古人底，如何是和尚底？」

師云：「既是古人底，因甚却在山僧口裏出？」壽乃禮拜。乃云：「洪鐘待扣聲應長空，寶鑑當軒影臨萬像。禪客唐樣問禪，山僧唐樣答話。禪客日本樣問禪，山僧日本樣答話。此事且置。一拽石二搬土。喝！孟八郎漢又恁麼去。」下座。¹⁰³

In this example, both the Chinese master and his Japanese pupil exhibit bilingual abilities. After Zhuxian's death in 1348, Kaiju set out for Yuan China in 1350 and returned in 1372. He survived the destructive fall of the Yuan dynasty and was called to the new Ming imperial court in Nanjing on account of his excellent bilingual language skills.¹⁰⁴ The above dialogue occurred before his travel to China, however. Although Kaiju may have been an exceptional student, he is proof a Japanese monk could gain some proficiency in spoken Chinese inside the Japanese Zen temple run by an émigré teacher. This lends some credence to the statement by Mujū Ichien that Kenchōji “was like China” and was also an immersive learning environment.

In the examples above, sermons to Japanese audiences were delivered in the Chinese language. Even Gesshin Kei'en, a Japanese Zen monk who had studied in Yuan China, delivered his sermon in Chinese. However, as Wu'an Puning lamented, few people (or no one) in the audience understood what was being said; and the misbegotten transcription of Wuxue's simple statement “Come in!” led to profound miscommunication. We may wonder why sermons to Japanese audiences were delivered in Chinese. Chinese-language sermons may have been culturally desirable to elite Japanese patrons and students. For teachers, perhaps this was a way to be mysterious and generate curiosity in students and patrons. Alternatively,

it is also likely that the ritual efficacy of a Chan/Zen sermon depended on the expression of the awakened teacher and not on the understanding of a student. One might compare this to Latin sermons. Closer cultural referents can be found in other Buddhist texts, like *dhāraṇī*. Even discursive content like sūtras were recited in Japan in a manner unlikely to be understood by a listener not already familiar with the text. Future research might show what meaning Japanese audiences attributed to incomprehensible Chinese sermons and whether this is another site for thinking about the fusion of horizons. However, mitigating against a purely functional analysis of Chan/Zen sermons, some records show self-awareness of these communication barriers. If Wu'an Puning was frustrated, it was because he desired his audience to understand. Zhuxian and Kaiju had a seemingly fluent bilingual exchange. Overall, one finds in the records of émigré monks both the ritual expression of awakening as well as a pedagogical attitude toward communication with students. Even clearer evidence of face-to-face pedagogy is found in records of brush-dialogue.

D) BRUSH-DIALOGUE: YISHAN YINING

A few émigré monks could speak some Japanese. More often, however, émigré monks relied on bilingual interpreters or engaged in brush-dialogue with their Japanese pupils. Some (but certainly not all) of these written exchanges took poetic forms. Written conversations permitted direct communication without relying on an interpreter, but the limitations of this medium are also clear in the historical record.

Following Yishan Yining's appointment to Kenchōji, Zen monks throughout Japan sought to study with him. In 1299, Yishan decided to hold a contest for composing *gāthā* (J. *geju*, C. *jisong* 偈頌) to select the most talented students. I am unaware of any record of such a contest ever taking place in a Song or Yuan Chan monastery—the idea seems to come straight from the *Platform Sūtra*. I would speculate that Yishan creatively devised this contest out of necessity, given his own linguistic situation. Each verse would be short enough to allow Yishan to quickly ascertain the student's capacities for brush-dialogue. Those monks who could compose a Sinitic poem—with proper rhythms and allusions demonstrating their competence as readers and producers of Sinitic text—would be allowed to enter his monastery. This was a requirement because Yishan interacted with students through writing. Yishan at first had only forty or so Japanese students, but soon several hundred were living in his monastery.¹⁰⁵

Among the initial contestants in 1299 was Musō Soseki (夢窓疎石, 1275–1351).¹⁰⁶ On the day of the contest, several dozen monks entered the abbot's quarters, each presenting a verse. Successful candidates were sorted into three categories, and only two were ranked in the highest category—one of whom was Musō.¹⁰⁷ Following his poetic success, Musō studied Chan texts under Yishan until 1303, when he grew frustrated that he had not progressed beyond book learning. Yishan offered terse comments to assist Musō, who could not grasp their purport. According to his biographers, Musō concluded that “because [Yishan and I] cannot communicate in spoken language I cannot inquire of him in detail (Master Yishan was from Taizhou).” (直是語言不通，故不能子細詳問。一山乃台州人。)¹⁰⁸ Frustrated with this situation, Musō left Yishan and sought out the Japanese Zen teacher Kōhō Kennichi (高峰顯日, 1241–1316). Kennichi spoke in Japanese and offered Musō constructive interpretations of Yishan's comments. Musō at once had an insight, and a year later Musō reached a profound understanding approved by Kōhō Kennichi, whom Musō then regarded as his teacher. We might say that Musō's years of textual study under Yishan were necessary but insufficient: all preparation for spoken dialogue in his mother tongue with Kōhō Kennichi. Although communication between Musō and Yishan Yining was stymied despite brush-dialogue, by contrast, Kōhō Kennichi's brush-dialogue with his Chinese master is an example of successful communication.

E) BRUSH-DIALOGUE: WUXUE ZUYUAN AND KŌHŌ KENNICHI

In this final example, brush-dialogue culminated in the Chan teacher's recognition of his Zen student's understanding of the dharma. In 1281, the Chinese master Wuxue Zuyuan and his future heir Kōhō Kennichi used brush-dialogue to communicate. Three of the manuscripts from that very dialogue survive today. Kōhō Kennichi's disciple Tengan Ekō (天岸慧廣, 1273–1335) later collected and compiled an edited record of the encounter. Ekō's edited text was included in printed editions of Kōhō Kennichi's teachings, known as *Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Bukkoku* (*Bukkoku zenji goroku* 佛國禪師語錄), including the early Gozan editions. Ekō's textual interpolations make it seem as though the Chan teacher and Zen student might have conversed orally with one another—such as adding the ambiguous verb “said” (both 云 and 曰). However, the extant manuscripts show that theirs was a written conversation, passing paper back and forth, lines of brushwork in two different hands. Scholars from

both Zen studies as well as art history have noted the existence of these manuscripts and at times studied the three pieces together.¹⁰⁹ However, at least one scholar has treated the manuscripts as a secondary document, a record created after a spoken conversation.¹¹⁰ This is a mistake. One of the manuscripts is reproduced here as figure 5.1.

In his brief review of the manuscripts, Kinugawa Kenji recently concluded that “one can see clearly that these two people are failing to communicate, though it is difficult to say why.”¹¹¹ Indeed, reading the contents of figure 5.1 only, clearly the two men did not yet have a mutual understanding. Only when we read the more complete record preserved in Ekō’s printed edition do we learn that this brush-dialogue culminated with Kōhō Kennichi earning recognition from Zuyuan as his spiritual heir. This manuscript was treasured because it was associated with Kennichi’s achievement.¹¹²

The brush-dialogue between Wuxue Zuyuan and Kōhō Kennichi reminds us that mutual understanding is often arrived at by moving toward miscommunication. According to Ekō’s text, a series of written conversa-

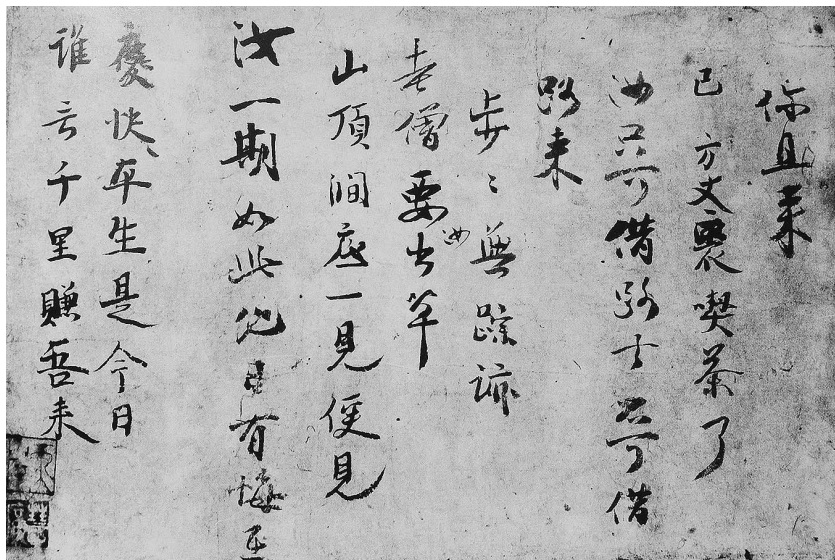


Figure 5.1. Brush-dialogue between Wuxue Zuyuan and Kōhō Kennichi, 1281, collection of Rokuonji. Source: *Kokuhō jūyō bunkazai taizen* 国宝・重要文化財大全, vol. 8 (Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1999).

tions occurred over several days. In the moments before the manuscript reproduced as figure 5.1 was created, Zuyuan invited his student Kennichi to explain the concept “guest and host.” When Zuyuan rebuffed Kennichi’s explanation, Kennichi grew frustrated and “left with a sweeping jerk of his sleeves.” In response, Zuyuan shouted across the room, and Kennichi walked back. Figure 1 picks up at that moment, reading: “Come here you!” From this we glean that brush-dialogue was not a hushed affair. If Kennichi had stood up in a huff, Zuyuan needed to shout to get his attention and beckoned him with exaggerated body language. Only when Kennichi was close enough to see what Zuyuan wrote would he be able to read “Come here you!” Brush-dialogue was not necessarily silent conversation. Due to limits of space, a fuller analysis of the contents of this brush-dialogue must await future research. The example here is of a brush conversation in which Kennichi had an insight that was affirmed by Zuyuan. Zuyuan later wrote that to Kennichi “the way of the dharma has flowed, the true lineage has been extended” (流通法道，接續正宗).¹¹³ This is a complex example in which a historically significant religious transmission between Chan master and Zen student was not only a meeting of minds but also a face-to-face encounter involving their physical presence and written words.

Conclusion

This examination of historical contact between Chan and Zen monks shows the critical roles played by interpreters, brush-dialogue, poetry, and body language. In addition to moments of success, communication barriers and linguistic challenges thwarted students and teachers alike. These numerous acts of communication may have been the necessary grounds for creative interpretations and the birth of Zen as a Japanese religion.

The history of interpreters, brush-dialogue, and poetry among Chan and Zen Monks raises many more questions about both Chan and Zen. For example, we might find instances in which our understanding of Song and Yuan Chan has been influenced by Japanese perspectives. I would underscore how Chinese Buddhist monks’ attitudes toward poetry often differed from those of Japanese Buddhist monks. In general, in medieval Japan the way of poetry was not separate from the Buddhist path.¹¹⁴ The monk Mujū Ichien in his *Shasekishū* calls poetry “a means to religious realization” and says Japanese poetry is itself *dhāraṇī*, or language with salvific power.¹¹⁵ Even *waka*, short works of the indigenous Japanese

poetic tradition seldom associated with Zen were in fact important to the dissemination of difficult continental concepts and incorporated into Zen rituals.¹¹⁶ Such religious interpretations of poetry were normalized by earlier Tendai traditions, which predated Zen and shaped the distinct landscape within which medieval Zen monks read, thought, and practiced. It is possible that even when Chan and Zen monks met face-to-face, they were reading the same texts within different horizons.

Understanding and reflecting on the details of translingual communication will likely remain critical as we refine our understanding of the horizons of Chan and Zen. The examples in this chapter illustrate different kinds of linguistic abilities for both Chinese and Japanese monks. Some Japanese monks learned spoken Chinese: Mukyū Tokusen traveled to China and returned a competent interpreter; Gesshin Kei'en delivered sermons in Chinese; and an exceptional Japanese monk like Chintei Kaiju learned a significant amount of spoken Chinese from émigré teachers inside a Zen monastery without travel to China. Most Japanese monks, however, did not possess the ability to speak Chinese and yet became talented readers and producers of Sinitic texts, including the written vernacular of Chan sermons and dialogues. Kōhō Kennichi was knowledgeable of Chan texts, able to participate in brush-dialogue and, with effort, communicated meaningfully with his Chinese teacher Wuxue Zuyuan. Gidō Shūshin, a talented Zen monk, was a prolific reader and writer of rhymed and tonally regulated Sinitic poems—even though there is no evidence that he understood spoken Chinese. Similarly, Musō Soseki won a prestigious poetry-writing competition but could not talk directly with Yishan Yining. Medieval Japanese elites prized continental literature, and Sinitic poetry was the most prestigious genre. Chan records, too, enjoyed the allure of continental charisma for Japanese monks and patrons. Turning to Chinese emigrants, some Chan teachers learned spoken Japanese after arriving in Japan and engaged in banter and private instruction in Japanese. Other teachers relied on bilingual interpreters to provide explanation. At the same time, émigré teachers, including Lanxi Daolong, delivered Chinese-language sermons to Japanese audiences, even when few people understood what was said. This raises important questions about sermons as rituals and the Japanese patronage of continental practices. Despite barriers to translingual communication, and differences of understanding and practice, the histories of Chan and Zen are inextricably connected, and our understanding of both traditions is impoverished when we fail to study Chan and Zen together. Our thinking through the realities of translingual

communication will allow us to refine our understanding of Chan, Zen, and the relationship that inheres in between.

Notes

My thanks to Kevin Buckelew, Chris Byrne, Steven Heine, Michaela Mross, and Morten Schlütter for their careful reading and discussion of this chapter during a meeting of our Chan Studies Workshop, and to the editors of this volume for including my piece here. I owe a debt of gratitude to Brian Steininger for catching several errors shortly before this chapter went to press and to Jeffrey Niedermaier for advising me on a particular section. My earlier interpretations of materials were refined thanks to feedback from erudite audiences at presentations I delivered to the Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture at University of Southern California, and the Buddhist Studies Forum at Harvard University.

1. Paraphrasing Carl Bielefeldt, “Filling the Zen Shū: notes on the *Jisshū yōdō ki*,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asia* 7 (1993), 224–25. These terms are dealt with extensively by contributions in Steven Heine, ed., *Dōgen: Textual and Historical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

2. See the explanatory appendices to materials reproduced in the series *Chūsei Zenseki Sōkan* 中世禪籍叢刊 (Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 2013–2019). For an overview, see Sueki Fumihiko 末木 文美士, “Shinpukuji Ōsu bunko shiryō ni miru Nihon Zen no keisei” 真福寺大須文庫資料に見る日本禪の形成, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 65, no. 2 (2017): 667–74; and Sueki Fumihiko, “Nihon ni okeru Rinzaishū no keisei—shin shiryō kara mita Zenshū to Darumashū” 日本における臨濟宗の形成—新資料から見た禪宗と達磨宗, in *Rinzairoku kenkyū no genzai* 「臨濟録」研究の現在 (Kyoto: Zen Bunka Kenkyūjo, 2017), 409–28.

3. See especially the essays in *Chūsei Zenseki Sōkan*, *bekkan*.

4. For more on the significance of situating Zen among its contemporary Japanese intellectual history rather than as a pure extension of Chinese Chan, see Stephen Licha, “Separate Teaching and Separate Transmission: Kokan Shiren’s Zen Polemics,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45, no. 1 (2018): 87–124; Molly Vallor, “Waka and Zen in Medieval Japan,” *Religion Compass* 10/5 (2016): 101–117; and Molly Vallor, *Not Seeing Snow* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 1–4.

5. For example, David Pollack, *The Fracture of Meaning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 122; and Kenneth Kraft, *Eloquent Zen* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1992), 52–53.

6. Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 66 and 72.

7. “Explanation given to Venerable Kōfuku” (示光福長老), *Bukkō Kokushi goroku* 佛光國師語録 (T80.2549.234c). I have changed the punctuation from *Taishō*

Daizōkyō, and read this four-character phrase as the colloquial expression that appears often in Song Chan texts.

8. I follow Tachi Ryūshi 館隆志, “Kamakura-ki no Zenrin ni okeru Chūgokugo to Nihongo” 鎌倉期の禅林における中国語と日本語, *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gaku bu ronshū* 45 (2014), 269 and 283, no. 53. Mukyū Tokusen is named as an interpreter for Tokimune and Wuxue elsewhere in *Bukkō Kokushi goroku* (T80.2549.195b). For a stronger assertion, that Tokusen was Wuxue’s regular interpreter until his death, see page 290 of Nishiyama Mika 西山美香 “Nihon gozan to Goetsu-koku, Hokusō, Nansō” 日本五山と吳越国・北宋・南宋, in *Higashi Ajia no naka no Kenchōji* 東アジアのなかの建長寺, ed. by Murai Shōsuke 村井章介 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2014), 276–93.

9. Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 172.

10. Enomoto Wataru 榎本渉, *Nansō Gen-dai Nitchū tokōsō denki shūsei* 南宋-元代日中渡航僧伝記集成 (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2013).

11. An inventory of monks’ names and texts corresponding to the Ming period are given in Yu Iji 俞慰慈 [Yu Weici], *Gozan bungaku no kenkyū* 五山文學の研究 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2004), 153–56.

12. Regarding “Kenchōji bune,” see Nishio Kenryū 西尾賢隆, *Chūsei no Nitchū kōryū to Zenshū* 中世の日中交流と禅宗 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999), 117; and Enomoto Wataru 榎本渉, “Kenchōji-bune no haken to sono seika” 建長寺船の派遣とその成果, in *Higashi Ajia no naka no Kenchōji*, 200–212. For additional temple-sponsored missions, including the “Tōfukuji bune” to rebuild that Zen temple after a fire in 1319, see Murai Shōsuke 村井章介, “Jishazō eiryō tōsen o minaosu” 寺社造営料唐船を見直す, in *Minatomachi to Kaiki sekai* 港町と海域世界, ed. by Murai Shōsuke (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 2005), 128–29.

13. Consider the significance of the importation of doctrinal texts from Korea to China, described by Benjamin Brose, “Crossing Thousands of *Li* of Waves: The Return of China’s Lost Tiantai Texts,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008), 21–62.

14. Lending and borrowing texts described on pages 389–90 of Robert Borjen, “Jōjin’s Travels from Center to Center (with some periphery in between),” in *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries*, ed. Mikael S. Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 384–414.

15. “Ribēn dao ge” 日本刀歌; Burton Watson’s translation plus exposition by Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *An Introduction to Sung Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 10–11.

16. On the international significance of Jiangnan paintings, tea wares, and other objects, see Ide Seinosuke 井出誠之輔, “Nihon no Sō-Gen butsuka” 日本の宋元仏画, *Nihon no bigaku* 418 (2001), 1–98; and the exhibition catalogue of Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan 奈良國立博物館 (Nara National Museum), *Seichi Ninpō* 聖地寧波 (Nara: Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2009).

17. Nomura Shunichi 野村俊一, “*Kenchōji sashizu to butsudē, hattō, shuryō*” 『建長寺指図』と仏殿・法堂・衆寮, in *Higashi Ajia no naka no Kenchōji*, 329–45.
18. *Zengoshū* 禪居集, *Gozan bungaku zenshū* 五山文学全集, vol. 1, 462–63; the latter in *Minki Soshun ikō* 明極楚俊遺稿, *Gozan bungaku zenshū*, vol. 3, 2029–31. For a thorough documentation of the proliferation of topographic poetic suites across Kyoto Zen temples, see Cai Dunda 蔡敦達, “Nihon no Zen’in ni okeru Chūgokuteki yōso no sesshu: Jikkyō o chūshin to shite” 日本の禪院における中国的要素の摂取—十境を中心として, *Nihon kenkyū: Kokusai Nihon bunka kenkyū sentā kiyō* 23 (2001): 13–51.
19. On the Japanese reception and extensive adaptations of “eight scenic spots,” see Asakura Hisashi 朝倉尚, *Zenrin no bungaku: Chūgoku bungaku juyō no yōsō* 禪林の文学: 中国文学受容の様相 (Osaka: Seibundō, 1985), 3–58.
20. On Gozan printing, see Kawase Kazuma, *Gozanban no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Nihon koshosekishō kyōkai, 1970). One example of a Zen text in China, known as *Kigen mondo* 機緣問答 and bearing colophons by Chinese masters, is preserved as the final section in a fourteenth-century edition of *Bukkoku roku* 佛國錄 (Tochigi-ken, Nasu-gun, Kurobanemachi: Tōzan Unganji, 1965), discussed in more detail below.
21. Asakura Hisashi 朝倉尚, *Shōmono no sekai to Zenrin no bungaku* 抄物の世界と禪林の文学 (Osaka: Seibundō, 1996), 373–92.
22. Numerous editions with commentary include the Edo period *Gōko fūgetsu shū ryakuchū shusha* 江湖風月集略註取捨 and *Gōko fūgetsu shū shō* 江湖風月集抄, and the modern translations by Katsuhiko Yoshizawa, *Gōko fūgetsu shū yakuchū* 江湖風月集訳注 (Kyoto: Zen bunka kenkyūjo, 2003; rpt. 2012).
23. The Edo period Japanese reception of the vernacular story of *Shuihuzhuan* (水滸傳) and its importance for the development of a poetic ear are discussed in Ishizaki Matazō 石崎又造, *Kinsei Nihon ni okeru Shina zokugo bungakushi* 近世日本に於ける支那俗語文學史 (Tokyo: Kōbundō Shobō, 1940; 1967 rpt.), 170–74.
24. A useful review from the perspective of translation studies, Wiebke Denecke, “Worlds Without Translation: Premodern East Asia and the Power of Character Scripts,” in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 204–16. Note that I do not use “translingual” in the same manner detailed by Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).
25. See for example, Joshua Fogel, *Articulating the Sinosphere* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); and more recent contributions in Nanxiu Qian, Richard J. Smith, and Bower Zhang, eds., *Rethinking the Sinosphere: Poetics, Aesthetics, and Identity Formation* (Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2020).
26. Benjamin Elman, “Introduction,” in *Rethinking East Asian Languages, Vernaculars, and Literacies, 1000–1919* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1–28; especially where building on work by Peter Kornicki.

27. Murai Shōsuke, “Poetry in Chinese as a Diplomatic Art in Premodern East Asia,” in *Tools of Culture: Japan’s Cultural, Intellectual, Medical, and Technological Contacts in East Asia, 1000–1500s* (Ann Arbor: Association of Asian Studies, 2009), 64. This comment about Japanese reception of a Korean envoy also applies well to Song and Yuan China.

28. Examples (excepting Vietnam) found in Murai Shosuke 村井章介, *Higashi Ajia ōkan: kanshi to gaikō 東アジア往還:漢詩と外交* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1995).

29. For early envoy poetry, see Wiebke Denecke, “Suffering Everlasting Sorrow in Chang’an’s ‘Everlasting Tranquility’: The Poetics of Japanese Missions to the Tang Court,” *East Asian Journal of Sinology* 14 (2020): 253–329. On written exchange from fifteenth to early twentieth centuries, see Wang Yong 王勇, ed., *Dongya de bitan yanjiu 東亞的筆談研究* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang gongshang daxue chubanshe, 2015).

30. Fascicle 3 of *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記.

31. “Song Ennin Sanzang gui Riben” 送圓仁三藏歸本國, *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 9277; *juan* 823.

32. Edward Schafer, “Fusang and Beyond: The Haunted Seas to Japan,” *JAOS* 109, no. 3 (1989): 387–95.

33. For Chōnen’s itinerary, see Wang Zhenping, “Chōnen’s Pilgrimage to China, 983–986,” *Asia Major* 7, no. 2 (1994): 63–97. On Chōnen’s preparations and goals, see Murai Shōsuke, “Nitchū sōgo ninshiki no naka no Chōnen” 日中相互認識のなかの齋然, in *Nissō kōryūki no Tōdaiji* 日宋交流期の東大寺 (Nara: Todaiji, 2017), 15–16, 25.

34. Two pairs of matched rhyme poems, including the response by Chinese hosts, are preserved in *Nittō shokeden kō* 入唐諸家傳考, 517–518, in *Dainihon Bukkyō Zensho* 大日本佛教全書, vol. 116 (Tokyo: Dainihon Bukkyō Zensho Kankōkai, 1931).

35. I count nine events in fascicle 1 of *Nittō guhō junrei kōki*.

36. Earlier multilateral relations between Chinese, Japanese, and Korean emissaries took place through both interpreters and writing. A convenient table of the first millennium of multilateral East Asian diplomatic exchange can be found in Wang Zhenping, *Ambassadors from the Island of Immortals: China-Japan Relations in the Han-Tang Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 229–32.

37. Okada Kesao 岡田袈裟男, *Edo igengo sesshoku: Rango, Tōwa to kindai Nihongo* 江戸異言語接触: 蘭語・唐話と近代日本語 (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 2006).

38. Ishizaki, *Kinsei Nihon ni okeru Shina zokugo bungakushi*, 15–19.

39. Rebekah Clements, *A Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 24–25.

40. Rebekah Clements, “Speaking in Tongues? Daimyo, Zen Monks, and Spoken Chinese in Japan, 1661–1711,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 3 (2017): 603–626. For references to brush-dialogue between Chinese Ōbaku monks and

Edo scholars and officials, see Jiang Wu, *Leaving for the Rising Sun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 183, 200, and 259–61.

41. Borgen, “Jōjin’s Travels,” provides an overview to the study of Jōjin.

42. STGK 1, 4/19. Given numerous editions of the diary *San Tendai-Go-daisan ki* [STGK], I give the traditional fascicle number followed by the date of the entry (e.g., 3/27 refers to third month, twenty-seventh day); based on Wang Liping 王麗萍 ed., *Xinjiao Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji* 新校參天台五台山記 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009).

43. Wang Liping 王麗萍, *Chengxun Can Tiantai Wutai shan ji yanju* 成尋參天台五台山記研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), 63.

44. When Jōjin received two servings of broth, he gives the second serving to Chen; STGK 7, 3/27.

45. Jōjin’s travelogue suggests Song government officials granted Chen permission with the condition he act as an envoy and return to Song China. With hard skepticism, Borgen, “Jōjin’s Travels,” 402–403, suspects Chen’s “true motive” for ordination was “the Chinese government twisted his arm”—and argues Jōjin doubted his religious conviction. By contrast, Wang Liping, *Chengxun*, 75, argues Chen’s initial personal motive was commercial activity—but he may have been affected by the pilgrimage with Jōjin. Regardless, it is clear diplomacy, commerce, and religion were intertwined.

46. STGK 8, 4/3, 4/4, and 6/12.

47. STGK 1, 4/8.

48. STGK 8, 4/1.

49. Jason Protass, *The Poetry Demon* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2021), 159–68.

50. Cai Yi 蔡毅, “Cong Riben Hanji kan Quan Song shi buyi—yi *Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji wei lie*” 從日本漢籍看《全宋詩》補遺—以《參天台五臺山記》為例, *Yuwai Hanji yanjiu congkan* 2 (2006): 243–62.

51. STGK 2, 6/8, Jōjin wrote that Tendai pilgrim Enchin (円珍, 814–91) regretted the volume of poetry he produced during his six-year journey through China. STGK 4, 10/26, Jōjin decries poetry as a “banquet game.”

52. A critical annotated edition with historical introduction of *Mushō Shōkō yumeyū Tendai ge* 無象照公夢游天台偈 in Xu Hongxia 許紅霞, *Wu zhong zhenben Song ji* 五種珍本宋集 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), 209–54.

53. Kokan Shiren (虎関師鍊, 1278–1346) in fascicle 8 of *Genkō shakusho* (元亨釋書) records a dialogue between Zuyuan and Mushō Jōshō shortly before Zuyuan’s death. See also Tamamura, *Gozan bungaku shinshū* 五山文學新集, vol. 6, 1120–24.

54. Information about the cult of the arhats and further citations can be found in Phillip E. Bloom, “Ghosts in the Mists: The Visual and the Visualized in Chinese Buddhist Art, ca. 1178,” *Art Bulletin*, 98, no. 3 (2016): 297–320. On the special role of tea in arhat worship, see n13.

55. Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 91–92.

56. Nine uncanny bells ring with frosty peals in the Central Mountains of the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Siku quanshu Wenyuange* edn.), *juan* 5, 150a.

57. The preface and poems as found in Xu, *Wu zhong zhenben Song ji*, 221.

58. Adapted from Stuart Sargent, *The Poetry of He Zhu (1052–1125)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 9–10, who based his system of denotation on the work of Qi Gong 啟功, *Shi wen shenglü lungao* 詩文聲律論稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977). Per Qi's manual, the cleanly regulated sequence: D2, B1, C1, D2.

59. The sequence of lines follows a standard regulated sequence of A, B, C, D, per Qi's manual: A2; B*4; C3; D*15; the unregulated *lines* marked with * symbol. Minor violations occur in places that do not alter these major qualities.

60. Clouds and golden pavilion may echo an earlier poem about this same site, “Inscribed on the Stone Bridge” by Cishou Huaishen (慈受懷深, 1077–1132), also about offering tea to the arhats; *Cishou Huaishen chanshi guanglu* 慈受懷深禪師廣錄 (ZZ73.1451.111b). Citations to ZZ are to the revised *Shinsan Dainippon Zokuzōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經 (1975–1989), 90 vols., providing volume, text number, page, register, and line.

61. On similar humor in poems by monks associated with Xutang Zhiyu, with whom Mushō Jōshō also studied, see Jason Protass, “Returning Empty-Handed,” *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 4, no. 1 (2017), 402–5.

62. *Zhongshan shihua* 中山詩話 (*Siku quanshu Wenyuange*), *juan* 1, 7b.

63. Fan Xiangyong 范祥雍, ed. *Luoyang qielan ji jiaozhu* 洛陽伽藍記校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 146–47.

64. Asakura Hisashi 朝倉尚, *Zenrin no bungaku: shikai to sono shūhen* 禪林の文学: 詩会とその周辺 (Osaka: Seibundō, 2004), 339–79.

65. For these poems and background, see Hirowatari Masatoshi 廣渡正利 ed., *Sekijō ihō* 石城遺寶 (Tokyo: Bunken shuppan, 1991), 170–71, 172–75 and 217–22. Another Donpekiro poem is translated by Andrew Goble in Murai Shōsuke, “Poetry in Chinese as a Diplomatic Art in Premodern East Asia,” 60.

66. The matched rhymes are presented clearly in Vincent Yang, “A Comparative Study of Su Shi's *He Tao shi*,” *Monumenta Serica* 56 (2008): 219–58.

67. *Issan kokushi goroku* 一山國師語錄 (T80.2553.327a-b). Yishan inscribed his poems on paintings for a patron in 1310, per *Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan no meihō* 奈良国立博物館の名宝 (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 1997), 320, no. 180. Yishan follows the Liangshan Guo'an poems, which became standard in Japan. For more Chinese poetic responses to the Guo'an poems, see *Shiniu tu song* 十牛圖頌 (ZZ64.1269.773b–775a) and *Chanzong zadu hai* 禪宗雜毒海 (ZZ65.1278.98c–99c). In China, another set of ten images and poems by Puming (普明) was more popularly extended through matching. See *Muniu tu song* 牧牛圖頌 in *Jiaxing zang* 嘉興藏, vol. 23 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1987), 347–57, and 357–65.

68. His poems were read and the preface quoted by laity and Zen monks, including Zekkai Chūshin (絶海中津, 1334/36–1405) in *Zekkai oshō goroku* 絶海和尚語録 (T80.2561.759c–760a).

69. Iida Rigyō 飯田利行, *Ryōkan goshaku Daichi geju yaku* 良寛語釈大智偈頌訳 (Tokyo: Daihorin kaku, 1988).

70. David B. Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 185.

71. Brian Steininger, *Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan: Poetics and Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 176–81.

72. Ishizaki, *Kinsei Nihon ni okeru Shina zokugo bungakushi*, 13–14.

73. I relied on the Nichibunken edition of *Kūge nikku shū*, published electronically with some annotation: <http://rakusai.nichibun.ac.jp/zenseki/>. Citations are to the year, month, and day as given in this edition.

74. Per Sargent / Qi Gong, the sequence of lines is cleanly regulated: D1, B4, C1, D1. Gidō mentions having the *Guangyun* as a youth; *Kūge nikku shū*, first entry of 1332.

75. “Evenly sustain” for *tōji* 等持 imperfectly conveys the additional layers of meaning here. First, Tōjiji was the name of Gidō’s current monastery. The line could be glossed, “At Tōji Temple, our *samādhi* is just the ordinary and everyday.” Second, in translated Buddhist sūtra, *dengchi* (等持) was used to translate into Chinese idiom the Sanskrit word *samādhi*, the meditative concentration. *Sanmei* 三昧 (J. *sanmai* or *zanmai*) transliterates the sound *samādhi*. The four-character phrase 等持三昧 combines a nativized translation with a foreignizing transliteration. Though semantically redundant, this is a clever way to expand on his temple’s name.

76. “Citrus-peel tincture” is a medicinal broth, named in the second- or third-century book of medicine *Jinkui yaoliue* 金匱要略.

77. *Jianzhong jingguo xudenglu* 建中靖國續燈錄 (ZZ78.1556.657b). Though that is the earliest anthologized version of this story, it was probably better known from later versions, such as *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (ZZ80.1565.323c). I also consulted a related Korean text in English translation by John Jorgensen, ed., *Seon Dialogues* (Seoul: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012), 140–41. Following a suggestion from Kevin Buckelew, my translation builds on the interpretation given in *Dachuan Puji chanshi yulu* 大川普濟禪師語錄 (ZZ69.1369.765c–766a).

78. Adapted in part from Thomas Kirchner, ed., *The Record of Linji* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), 302–3.

79. Tamamura Takeji 玉村竹二, *Gozan Zensō denki shūsei* 五山禪僧傳記集成 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983), 161; and *Enpō den tōroku* 延寶傳燈錄, fascicle 17.

80. Three monks’ names follow those given in Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助, *Kūge nichiyō kufū ryakushū* 空華日用工夫略集 (Tokyo: Taiyōsha, 1939), 155.

81. *Kūge nikku shū*, 1382/1/4.

82. Dōgen did not refer to this incident directly in his own writings. He did frequently refer to *shinjin datsuraku* as Rujing’s teaching. See Steven Heine, “Dōgen Casts Off ‘What’: An Analysis of Shinjin datsuraku,” *JABS* 9, no. 1 (1986): 53–70.

83. In Takasaki Jikidō 高崎直道 and Umehara Takeshi 梅原猛, *Bukkyō no shisō 11: Kobutsu no manebi Dōgen* 仏教の思想11: 古佛のまねび道元 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1969; rpt. 1998), 64–66. This topic has been widely written about in English as well, beginning with Takashi James Kodera, *Dogen's Formative Years in China* (Boulder, CO: Prajna, 1980), 106–7.

84. Medieval Chinese pronunciations follow Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), based on the Song dynasty *Guangyun*. These words *chen* (塵 or *drin*) and *shen* (身 or *syn*) are both in the *zhen* (真) rhyme family; Kokan Shiren's *Shūbun inryaku* rhyme dictionary of 1306, popular in Japan, gives the same information, suggesting a broad continuity that encompassed Rujing and Dōgen.

85. This idea repeated often, such as *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 263.

86. Heine, “Dōgen Casts Off ‘What’”; and Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 138–39.

87. Fascicle three of *Zōtanshū* 雑談集, as quoted in Nishio, *Chūsei no Nitchū kōryū to Zenshū*, 129, no. 23.

88. *Bukkō Kokushi goroku* (T80.2549.219b). Inspired by relevant discussion in Tachi, “Kamakura-ki no Zenrin ni okeru Chūgokugo to Nihongo,” 264.

89. Tachi Ryūshi, “Kamakura-ki no Zenrin ni okeru Chūgokugo to Nihongo,” 264.

90. Tachi Ryūshi 館隆志, “Kenchōji no kaisan” 建長寺の開山, in *Higashi Ajia no naka no Kenchōji*, 146.

91. *Bukkō Kokushi goroku* (T80.2549.220a).

92. Tachi Ryūshi 館隆志, “Gotten Funei no rai Nichi o megutte” 兀庵普寧の来日をめぐって, *Kokusai Zen kenkyū* 1 (2018): 63.

93. The verse, in rhymed six-character lines, reads: “Set down the thousand-pound burden, / the only essential is to dwell in pure ease. / Old age comes, and karmic debts remain; / Who stumbles again at this, my single gate?” (卸却千斤重擔, 惟要在處清閑, 老來業債未脫, 復墮建長一關).

94. *Wuàn Puning chanshi yulu* 兀菴普寧禪師語錄 (ZZ71.1404.9b).

95. *Wuàn Puning chanshi yulu* (ZZ71.1404.10a).

96. Steven Heine, *From Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 119. The seeds of this appear in his earlier work, including, “Dōgen Casts Off ‘What.’”

97. *Wuàn Puning chanshi yulu* (ZZ71.1404.11c). See also Tachi, “Kamakura-ki no Zenrin ni okeru Chūgokugo to Nihongo,” 267.

98. The printed text was likely prepared from the master's own written record, rather than from a student's furtive transcript. An example is not found among Puming's extant calligraphy. For a contemporaneous émigré monk's sermon in his own hand, see Wuxue Zuyuan, in Tayama Hōnan 田山方南, ed., *Zoku Zenrin bokuseki* 續禪林墨蹟 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1981 ed.), no. 121; and corresponding *Bukkō Kokushi goroku* (T80.2549.230a–b).

99. Imai Fukuzan, in his introduction to *Shōnan kattoroku* 湘南葛藤録 (itself likely a spurious collection), as translated in Trevor Leggett, *Zen and the Ways* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 250. On the dubious reliability of Imai Fukuzan, see Vallor, “*Waka and Zen*.”

100. This translation modified from Leggett by Kraft, *Eloquent Zen*, 52.

101. The idea of resonance as demonstrating understanding between two things can be traced back to the *Yijing* 易經, “Things with the same tone resonate with one another; those with the same *qi* seek each other out” (同聲相應同氣相求); translation by Esther Klein, *Reading Sima Qian from Han to Song* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 198.

102. A quotation of the *Blue Cliff Record* verse in case 44 by Xuedou Chongxian (雪竇重顯, 980–1052), *Biyuanlu* 碧巖錄 (T48.2003.181b).

103. *Bonsen oshō goroku* 竺僊和尚語錄 (T80.2554.422a-b).

104. Enomoto Wataru 榎本渉, “Nyū-Gen Nihon sō Chintei Kaiju to Genmatsu Mei-sho no Nitchū kōryū” 入元日本僧樞庭海壽と元末明初の日中交流, *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 70, no. 2 (2011): 260–98.

105. These numbers from Nishio Kenryū 西尾賢隆, *Chūsei no Nitchū kōryū to Zenshū* 中世の日中交流と禪宗 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999), 55–56.

106. More details about Musō’s training in Vallor, *Not Seeing Snow*, 8–14.

107. “Shō’an gannen” (正安元年) in *Musō kokushi nenpu* 夢窓国師年譜 (1354 edition; Kyoto University Library, no. 30467), 5a; accessed May 2019 from *Kyōto Daigaku Kichō shiryō dejitaru ākaibu* <https://rmda.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/>. This early text differs slightly from that found in *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 続群書類従 (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1923) 9, 499a-b.

108. *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, 7a-b. This interpolation about Yishan being a person from Taizhou is in the original text.

109. Tayama Hōnan 田山方南, *Zenrin bokuseki* 禪林墨蹟 (Ichikawa: Zenrin Bokuseki Kankai, 1955), speculated these may have been brush-dialogue, and noted the correspondence of manuscript and woodblock text. More significant work sponsored by Unganji from 1965 culminated in a complete annotated modern Japanese translation of the Gozan edition, *Kunchū Bukkokuroku* 訓注仏国録 (Tokyo: Dō kankōkai, 1975); therein the manuscripts are treated as variant texts. In Chinese, the correlation between manuscripts and printed text is noted in Jiang Jing 江靜, *Fu Ri Song seng Wuxue Zuyuan yanjiu* 赴日宋僧無學祖元研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu, 2011), 233–34 and 321–23. The only analysis in a Western language, Steffen Döll, *Im Osten Des Meeres* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 159–64, translates one of the three manuscripts and provides insightful reflections on brush-dialogue.

110. Hu Jianming 胡建明 [Ko Kenmei], *Chūgoku sōdai zenrin kōsō bokuseki no kenkyū* 中国宋代禪林高僧墨蹟の研究 (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 2007), 226–231; corrected in the 2011 Chinese edition (however, the manuscripts are still out of sequence).

111. Kinugawa Kenji 衣川賢次, *Chanzong sixiang yu wenxian congkao* 禪宗思想與文獻叢考 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2017), 219.

112. The collector's seal located in the corner bears the name of Tengan Ekō, dharma heir of Kōhō Kennichi who compiled the relevant part of *Bukkoku zenji goroku*, known as *Kigen mondo*.

113. This transmission happens that night, per *Bukkoku zenji goroku* (T80.2551.279c–280a). The transmission is recorded both in Zuyuan's record, *Bukkō Kokushi goroku* (T80.2549.234c–235a), and in *Bukkoku zenji goroku*, 282c.

114. For a more comprehensive statement of these differences, see Paul Rouzer, "Early Buddhist Kanshi: Court, Country, and Kūkai," *Monumenta Nipponica* 59, no. 4 (2004), 437–38. One early essay exploring diverse Japanese Buddhist responses is Herbert Plutschow, "Is Poetry a Sin? *Honjisuijaku* and Buddhism versus Poetry," *Oriens Extremus* 25, no. 2 (1978): 206–18. On early evidence for the equivalence of poetic and Buddhist paths, see Michael Jametz, "The Buddhist Affirmation of Poetry," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 34, no. 1 (2016): 55–88.

115. Robert Morrell, trans., *Sand & Pebbles* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 163–65.

116. Vallor, "Waka and Zen," 101–17.

(e.g., Jōjin [1011–1081]); apocryphal Chinese Buddhist scriptures using sources from Dunhuang; esoteric Buddhism in Tang and Song China; Zen Buddhism in Edo (1603–1868) Japan; and old Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons (*issaikyō*), especially from the Nanatsudera and Matsuo shrine canons.

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