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REVIEW ARTICLE

Ishii Shūdō's Contributions to Dōgen Studies

Examining Chinese Influences on the *Kana* and *Kanbun* Texts

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After an eminent career lasting more than forty years, Ishii Shūdō 石井修道 (1943–) recently retired from the Faculty of Buddhist Studies at Komazawa University, the largest academic department of its kind in Japan (and thus, indeed, in the world). He currently serves as director of the Matsugaoka Bunko 松ヶ岡文庫 (Pine Hill Library), a prestigious archive of Zen resources located in Kamakura that was founded in 1945 by Suzuki Daisetsu (1870–1966). Although perhaps less known in the West than some other luminary postwar Japanese scholars of Chan/Zen Buddhism—especially Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 (1922–2006) and Iriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高 (1910–1998), with whom he studied and collaborated for a time while conducting seminars at the Zen Bunka Kenkyūjo 禅文化研究所 (The Institute for Zen Studies) in Kyoto—Ishii may well be just as or, in some ways, even more important than these former colleagues. As seen from current cross-cultural scholarly perspectives regarding methodologies for interpreting East Asian Buddhist texts, his ongoing research is particularly notable for producing an exceptionally large body of publications that make enormous contributions to the field through examining, with great insight and innovation, key

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elements in the formation and transformation of the classical Zen tradition in both Chinese and Japanese intellectual historical settings.

Ishii's Role in Postwar Studies of Zen

This article provides a very brief overview of some of the highlights of Ishii's overall accomplishments, including his investigations of crucial developments in Zen texts during the Tang and Song dynasties. This is no doubt the main achievement of a career that features more than a dozen books (including monographs and edited volumes) as well as over two hundred articles in print, many of which are quite substantial in length and are, in themselves, groundbreaking in scope and content. Given Ishii's prolific record of publications, there is no reason in this short article to attempt to be comprehensive in evaluating the full extent of his research. Instead, the aim here is to underline a few key points in a selective, representative way as a kind of memorandum of appreciation, while also taking into account with a critical eye some of the paths not taken or shortcomings that may be evident in his corpus.

My primary aim is to offer a compressed summary of Ishii's contributions to various aspects of studies of the life and thought of Dōgen Zenji 道元禅師 (1200–1253), founder of the Japanese Sōtō sect 曹洞宗 (Ch. Caodong zong). Dōgen traveled for four years from 1223–1227 to China, where, under the tutelage of master Rujing 如淨 (Jp. Nyojō, 1162–1228), he gained enlightenment through the experience of *shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落, or "casting off body-mind." Following his return to Japan, Dōgen composed two main collections of sermons: the *Kana* [or vernacular] *Shōbōgenzō* 仮字正法眼蔵, which contains informal sermons (*jishu*) in Japanese that were mainly delivered during the period while he taught at Kōshōji temple in Kyoto and first traveled to the remote mountains of Echizen province, but before the establishment of Eiheiji temple in 1244;[1] and the *Eihei kōroku* 永平広録, which contains 531 formal sermons (*jōdō*) in the first seven of ten volumes that were given in the Dharma Hall in *kanbun* (Sino-Japanese), first at Kōshōji (volume one contains 126 sermons) beginning in 1236 but primarily in the 1240s while Dōgen was residing at Eiheiji (volumes two through seven).

Ishii's expertise is especially evident in his highly specialized research on two fairly obscure Dōgen texts that he has used to illuminate larger issues in the history of Dōgen's writings in relation to Chinese Chan. One is the *Mana* [or *kanbun*] *Shōbōgenzō* 真字正法眼蔵 (1988), a collection of 300 *kōan* 公案 (Ch. *gongan*) cases produced in 1235 without commentary. Ishii shows that this text is crucial for understanding both the *Kana Shōbōgenzō* and *Eihei kōroku* in terms of how Dōgen appropriated and furnished novel, idiosyncratic interpretations of

1. The newly built temple was first named Daibutsuji and was renamed Eiheiji in 1246.

hundreds of encounter dialogues in ways that often differed from previous versions in mainstream Chinese commentaries. The other text examined by Ishii is "Gyōji" (Sustained Practice; Ishii 2007; Heine 2008), a fascicle (usually divided into two sections) that is included in the *Kana Shōbōgenzō* and functions as a transmission manual indicating how Dōgen viewed his inheritance of lineage from Chinese masters, including those from Caodong and other streams of Zen. Although the two Dōgen texts analyzed in great depth by Ishii may appear quite different or nearly opposite in terms of their respective orientations—one is a comprehensive compilation of dialogues, and the other a compendium of sacred biographies of ancestors—Ishii demonstrates the extent to which these writings are linked by Dōgen's intimate familiarity and distinctive adoption of Chinese masters' teachings. Dōgen adapts and often radically reinterprets the textual sources that depict the peaks of their religious attainment and express the styles of their pedagogy as passed on to disciples, who in turn take their place in the family tree.

Ishii specifies that Dōgen sought to introduce and explicate Chinese materials in a highly condensed yet evocative and compelling way for an audience of Japanese monks at a time when Zen's voluminous production of written records composed in rarified Song-dynasty literary language was practically unknown and would have seemed exotic and obscure. The *Mana Shōbōgenzō* and "Gyōji" texts serve as hermeneutic vehicles that enable Ishii to use his own mastery of Chinese sources to infuse an examination of the Japanese founder's efforts to at once inform and reform his rapidly growing monastic communities at Kōshōji and Eiheiji. This was during a period of government oversight of all religious groups as well as intense competition with the mainstream Tendai church centered on Mount Hiei in addition to other emerging sects of the new Kamakura Buddhism, including the Rinzai 臨濟 (Ch. Linji) and fledgling Daruma-shū 達磨宗 schools that were both affiliated with, or represented, branches of Zen. Furthermore, Ishii's major study of developments in Song-dynasty Zen (1988) includes an important section on the impact of Caodong predecessors Hongzhi 宏智 (Jp. Wanshi, 1091–1157) and Rujing 如淨 (Jp. Nyōjo, 1162–1228), along with Linji school rival Dahui 大慧 (1089–1163), on the formation of Dōgen's thought. Ishii also wrote numerous lengthy articles on many different aspects of Dōgen's collected writings.

In another major book (Ishii 1991a), Ishii examined Dōgen's distinctive approach to Zen by entering into controversial debates that were taking place among scholars at Komazawa University at the time concerning an innovative interpretative approach known as Critical Buddhism (*hihan Bukkyō* 批判仏教). This method, pioneered by Hakamaya Noriaki 袴谷憲昭 and Matsumoto Shirō 松本史郎 in the mid-1980s as a response to questions regarding social discrimination (*sabetsu mondai*) and other societal ills that infected Japanese Bud-

dhism, including the Sōtō sect, featured discussions of how Dōgen underwent an apparent "change of heart" (*henka*) about the essence of Zen practice in his later years (Hubbard and Swanson 1997). Seemingly disillusioned by the lack of strict ethics that transpired when Zen spirituality was compromised through interactions with the everyday life of ordinary society following an unsuccessful six-month visit in 1246–1247 to meet Hōjō Tokiyori 北条時頼 in Kamakura, where he turned down the shogun's invitation to become abbot of a new temple to be built there (Kenchōji 建長寺), Dōgen then began to put a greater emphasis on the notion of karmic causality (*inga* 因果).

According to Critical Buddhism, this ethical teaching was reflected in a newer Dōgen text from the late 1240s referred to as the 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* 十二巻正法眼蔵 that was designed to correct antinomian implications implicit in the doctrine of the universality of absolute Buddha-nature, which was the foundation of the 75-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* 七十五巻正法眼蔵. The 75-fascicle rendition had long been considered the mainstream version of the *Kana Shōbōgenzō*, but it is by no means the exclusive edition of a text whose structure and dissemination evolved over the centuries, with 60-fascicle and 28-fascicle editions, among others, also playing important roles.

Borrowing yet reshaping some of his colleagues' ideas and ideals, seven of the ten chapters in Ishii's monograph use the term *hihan* 批判 in the title in order to highlight Dōgen's criticism of various ideologies that reflect some of the flaws of the Buddha-nature doctrine as expressed by 1. Zongmi Guifeng's analysis of Tang-dynasty Chan; 2. key notions in Song-dynasty Chan such as the incorporation of *nianfo* recitation; and 3. this-worldly beliefs of the Daruma-shū, which was proscribed by government edict for apparently deliberated transgressions of the precepts. In addition, according to Ishii, Dōgen refuted several problematic notions that were typically part of the Zen thought of his era, including 4. "seeing into one's own-nature" (*kenshō* 見性); 5. "five ranks" (*goi* 五位); 6. "original and acquired Buddhahood" (*honrai jōbutsu* 本来成仏); and 7. notions of "spiritualism" (*reishō* 霊性). Moreover, Ishii's book provides a critical edition and discussion of the Japanese *yomikudashi* rendition of the main text attributed to Daruma-shū founder Dainichi Nōnin 大日房能忍 (d. c. 1194), the *Jōtōshōgakuron* 成等正覚論 (1991a, 626–714), which remains the only in-depth study of this material.

Of a spectacular, game-changing sports play, a commentator recently remarked, "There is no hyperbole in describing its impact," and the same appraisal holds true for evaluating Ishii's scholarship. To cite but one of many examples of how impressive his body of work is, in preparing for this article by rereading some of his writings I uncovered several dozen articles that I had not looked at carefully before, including "Examination of 'Shime' [Four horses]" (Ishii 2001). I expected that this study of one of the seemingly less significant

sections included in the 12-fascicle edition of the *Shōbōgenzō* would be rather straightforward and relatively unexciting, but the contrary turned out to be the case.

In addition to providing a modern Japanese translation (*gendaiyaku*) and intricately detailed analysis of the origins and implications of "Shime," this substantive piece of over seventy pages also offered a thorough examination of the more frequently cited but ever perplexing "Kattō" (Entangling vines) fascicle included in the 75-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*. This link was based on a minor connection between the two fascicles from a brief reference in "Shime" to Bodhidharma's dialogue on "skin, flesh, bones, marrow" 皮肉骨髄, which forms the centerpiece of "Kattō." Ishii has also produced a series of similarly titled in-depth examinations of "Jinshin inga" (Profound faith in causality), "Sanjigo" (Karmic retribution in past, present and future), and "Kuyō shobutsu" (Venerating Buddhas), among other fascicles from the 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*.

Ishii's work can be greatly appreciated for two main intertwining qualities. The first is an incredibly precise and meticulous attentiveness to the finer points as well as the broader implications of Chan/Zen textuality, ranging from a micro-level concentration on the production and dissemination of manuscripts to macro-level insightful reflection on the subtleties of interpreting the significance of prominent though, for the most part, previously little-studied classical writings. The other main quality is an uncanny ability to integrate and relate the particulars of textual sources with grander revisionist and resourceful scholarly themes in reconstructing the intricacies of Zen history and thought, especially in terms of the complex interconnections of doctrines and institutions as they were discussed and debated in the respective eras, with Dōgen serving as a bridge linking Song China and Kamakura Japan. Through the lens of Ishii's scholarly production we see clearly that Chinese Chan is an indispensable tool with which to study Dōgen Zen and that the Japanese master is equally invaluable for an understanding of Chan; yet each of the thinkers and texts, or sub-text divisions, that is being analyzed must not be confused or conflated but rather appraised and appreciated in terms of his or its nuanced distinguishing elements.

In addition to what has been achieved in his superb scholarship, as mentor to a couple of generations of leading international scholars who flocked to his university office beginning in the 1970s,[2] Ishii is particularly admired and respected for his modesty, patience, and gracious generosity of spirit fully committed to the cause of creating outstanding scholarship guided by ongoing self-reflection and self-criticism (*jiko-hihan* 自己批判), qualities that he greatly admires in the

2. To mention some of the names, this list includes Carl Bielefeldt, William Bodiford, Bernard Faure, T. Griffith Foulk, Miriam Levering, John McRae, Mario Poceski, David Putney, Morten Schlütter, and Albert Welter.

model of Dōgen's decision-making at key turning points in his career path. Foreign researchers who worked closely with Ishii at formative stages in their professional journeys learned techniques of text criticism as well as outlooks for historical reconstruction that now penetrate deeply into the contours of current Western scholarship dealing with multiple aspects of classical Zen.

At the same time, just as Suzuki, Yanagida, and Iriya have received criticism for their tendencies to romanticize and reify the traditional Zen narrative as derived from the rhetoric of the "string of pearls" fallacy, despite their best revisionist efforts, Ishii's work has sometimes been taken to task for promoting the ideological agenda of the contemporary Sōtō sect. Taking up the cause of Critical Buddhism in reproving deficient tendencies in various aspects of East Asian religious thought has led Ishii, it is sometimes felt ironically, to portray Dōgen as an imaginative and independent once-in-a-millennium genius who stood above the ideological fray by remaining free from much of the polemical bickering and issues of social injustice that tend to plague the legacies of other premodern Buddhist thinkers and schools. If Zen has helped cause some social problems in the modern world, for Ishii this would be due to misunderstanding and misrepresenting Dōgen's approach rather than anything the master said and did. Moreover, Ishii's work may seem to reflect sectarian biases in sometimes referring to ways Dōgen presented a distinctively Japanese attitude, or "Nihon-ization," by discarding syncretic elements he found in Chinese versions of Zen theory and practice that, as a kind of participant-observer par excellence, Dōgen imported to his native country purified of contamination with Pure Land or Daoist practices (Ishii 1990). Yet, Ishii also shows that Dōgen often attacked his compatriots for their ignorance while lavishly praising mainland traditions for an authenticity that was beyond the capacity of his countrymen to comprehend.

While acknowledging the validity of some of this critique, it is also important to recognize that at critical junctures in the development of contemporary scholarship in the field, Ishii has taken part in the challenging of sectarian orthodoxy regarding the founding figure, while managing to avoid taking the extreme positions of embracing apologetics without reflection and falling into the cynical role of devil's advocate. He has persisted and often succeeded in probing and overcoming stereotypical ways of treating supposedly sacrosanct textual materials and hagiographical imagery, and thereby helped reshape mainstream approaches regarding a number of thorny methodological issues.

On Shinjin Datsuraku

A prime example of Ishii's willingness to challenge custom or convention is in his subtle analysis of different linguistic and historical perspectives and theories regarding *shinjin datsuraku* (Ishii 1991a, 333, note 1, 418–86). Over the past forty

or so years since Dōgen scholarship has been advancing in the West, there have been many scholarly discussions regarding whether Rujing's pronouncement to his Japanese disciple would have actually been *shinjin datsuraku* or another similar phrase, 心塵脱落, which means "casting dust from the mind"; the latter was more typical of Song Chan rhetoric and would have sounded about the same to Dōgen's ear, which was relatively unskilled in hearing spoken Chinese. Ishii contributes to this conversation some intriguing remarks about the etymology of the terms, but here I call attention to another matter that is lesser known to Western readers concerning two theories of how and when the experience took place, if at all. Questioning the occurrence of this exchange that stands at the very foundation of sectarian theology by critically examining traditional sources, such as *Kenzeiki* 建撕記 and *Denkōroku* 伝光録, is itself an unflinching endeavor. Ishii offers a detailed critical analysis of the latter text attributed to fourth Sōtō patriarch Keizan 瑩山 (1268–1325) by comparing some of its accounts of earlier Zen ancestors to what is contained in Song transmission of the lamp records.

One of Ishii's goals is to amplify an argument made by scholar Sugio Genyū in an influential though much-debated article published in 1977 by refuting the notion of *shittaji datsuraku* 叱咤時脱落 (casting off via reprimand) as an elaborate "fabrication" (*kyokō* 虚構), while not necessarily supporting Sugio's theory of replacing this view of Dōgen's illumination with another convention based on the notion of *menjuji datsuraku* 面授時脱落 (casting off via face-to-face transmission). *Shittaji datsuraku* refers to the famous account of when a monk sitting next to Dōgen was slumbering during zazen and was severely scolded by Rujing, thus triggering Dōgen's awakening that was acknowledged by his mentor in a private interview later that night, whereas *menjuji datsuraku* refers to the idea that Dōgen actually underwent his enlightenment some weeks earlier through an intense spiritual experience when he first encountered Rujing that was foreordained by dreams, according to various Sōtō hagiographies.

To sum up his take on this issue, Ishii meticulously explains (1991a, 439–85) how the accounts generally relied upon must be legendary, even by the already suspect standards of premodern Buddhist pseudo-historical materials, because they were deliberately altered over time to romanticize a biased narrative of Dōgen's religiosity. Yet, he would suggest that deconstructing the shell of the fabricated stories should not detract from an appreciative awareness of the essential quality underlying these accounts of Dōgen's teachings about the importance of meditation, although this too needs to be clarified through historical studies of the sources. *Menjuji datsuraku* is also based on legends, although these are at least mentioned in words attributed to Dōgen himself, as in the "Menju" fascicle of the *Kana Shōbōgenzō*, but without his actually using the term *shinjin datsuraku* in that context is also problematic because it may be taken to deny the significance of contemplative practice, since if someone could be enlightened simply by

seeing a right master there would be no need for meditation. Therefore, a couple of other ideas suggested by Sugio to the effect that the authentic meaning of *shinjin datsuraku* may refer to an unrecorded experience, since it did not happen at any one particular moment of time but was the result of a man fully engaged in the practice of continuous zazen, may be a preferable way of looking at the matter and is consistent with many other passages in Dōgen's writings about the nature of the temporality of Zen awakening through purposeless meditation.

Despite this kind of analysis that mitigates claims of partisanship, Ishii maintains that Dōgen developed a style of interpreting koans that is peculiar (*dokuji* 独自) to his method of teaching. In an essay included near the end of the book on "Gyōji" titled, "Why Did Dōgen Zen Not Originate in China?" (Naze Dōgen Zen wa Chūgoku de umarenakatta ka), Ishii (2007, 556–80) gets to the heart of the matter of what constitutes Dōgen's originality by arguing that, as much as he borrows from them, Dōgen is never wholly reliant on Chinese sources since he invariably ends up with a distinctive reading of encounter dialogues. There is a focus on the "Japanese development" (*Nihonteki hatten*) in Ishii's analysis of some of Dōgen's doctrines; however, this is not intended as an example of cultural exceptionalism but an appraisal of what is new and different about the master's approach to theory and practice.

Ishii opens the essay "Why Did Dogen Zen Not Originate in China?" with a brief tribute to his mentor and longtime leader of Dōgen studies at Komazawa University, Kagamishima Genryū 鏡島元隆 (1912–2001), who published sixteen monographs, all on Dōgen, between 1951 and 1999 and consistently stressed the unique characteristics of Dōgen's teaching. Ishii concludes with a lengthy analysis of the case, "Nanyue polishes a tile [to make a mirror]," which is cited by Dōgen in *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 8 as well as various other writings, including the "Kokyō" (Ancient mirror), "Zazenshin" (Lancet of seated mediation), and "Gyōji" fascicles of the *Kana Shōbōgenzō*. Dōgen generally twists the conventional wording as well as the explication of the story so that it is no longer seen to evoke an absurdity or exercise in futility by suggesting that sitting in meditation will never make one a Buddha. Rather, Dōgen recommends that students must polish a tile as a metaphor for the need for ongoing zazen meditation so as to actualize fully at each and every moment the potentiality for realizing buddhahood.

Dōgen's Role as Bridge from Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen

At the time of his retirement, on 24 January 2014, Ishii presented a farewell lecture on "Chinese Chan and Dōgen Zen: Regarding Their Continuities and Discontinuities" (2014). This topic highlights that Ishii is comfortable working on as well as crossing between both sides of the geographical-cultural-linguistic

divide in order to investigate conceptual exchanges based on identifiable areas of intertextuality. However, he is also well aware of the challenges to the task of bringing an expertise on Chinese sources to bear on understanding the formation of Dōgen's major works so as to elucidate how much the master is indebted to—yet also departed from—the extensive influences of Chan ancestors and their records. He points out that Dōgen considered himself a transmitter of the Dharma rather than the founder of a sect or even a member of the Zen school, but modern scholars function under the sway of a tendency to view his thought from the retrospective specialized lenses of either Japanese or Chinese Buddhist studies, even as the latter field is still categorized for many researchers in light of Suzuki's somewhat outdated categorizations of Tang-dynasty versus Song-dynasty Chan.

Ishii's handling of Chinese sources—much of this work was produced in the first half of his career before he got seriously involved in publishing on Dōgen studies—covers foundational texts from both the Tang and Song dynasties. These are explored in great depth and detail in numerous publications in terms of their textual construction and production, including the provenance of editions and redactions in addition to the ideological implications of commentaries and revisions. Some of the texts Ishii has examined are the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* 六祖壇経, the writings of the prominent Hongzhou school 洪州宗 that was based in Jiangxi province, and *Baizhing's Monastic Rules* 百丈清規; these three sets of records were composed respectively at the beginning, middle, and end of the crucial stage marking the rise of Chan during the Tang dynasty. Ishii's works on Tang also have a special focus on the early Caodong school 中国初期曹洞禅, including the records of masters Shitou 石頭, Dongshan 洞山, and Caoshan 曹山, an interest in which was revived during the Song and eventually transformed by Dōgen into the Sōtō sect in Kamakura Japan, although, once again, the master did not wish to make this claim.

Ishii has written extensively about major Song-dynasty texts (1987), such as the *Jingde Chuandenglu* 景德傳燈錄 transmission of the lamp record as well as the *Biyanlu* 碧巖錄 and *Wumenguan* 無門關 koan collections. His emphasis on the Caodong school continues with studies of Song masters Touzi 投子, Furong 芙蓉, and Danxia 丹霞 in addition to Hongzhi and Rujing, but he also deals extensively with epoch-making Linji school figures Yuanwu 圜悟 and Dahui. An inspection of his corpus suggests that nearly all of the major topics in Tang and Song Chan have been given substantial treatment. Ishii's handling of Song materials is notable for an evenhanded examination of what is perhaps the most explosively diverse yet divisive period in the history of the school that seems to cast a long shadow over the entire unfolding of the tradition in Japan, by explaining the twelfth-century debate between the keyword approach of "meditation through introspecting the koan," or *kanna zen* 看話禪 that was advocated by

Dahui, versus "meditation through silent-illumination," or *mokushō zen* 默照禪 that was attributed to Hongzhi.

Ishii almost singlehandedly corrects some basic misconceptions about polarities regarding activity and passivity, and speech and silence that had been fashioned over the centuries through sectarian polemic and that were being repeated unreflectively in many instances of modern studies. In particular, he shows that the positions of introspecting the koan and silent illumination were much more complex and nuanced than was presumed and, therefore, these notions resist being pigeonholed by partisan rivals or neutral observers (Schlütter 2010). Ishii also explicates how Dōgen's standpoint of "just sitting" or *shikan taza* 只管打坐 as related to *shinjin datsuraku* was varied and intricate, and did not necessarily follow directly from Hongzhi's mode of meditation even though, from another angle, Dōgen often sought to emulate the Song master's literary prowess.

Ishii demonstrates this connection through a detailed analysis of a large number of *Eihei kōroku* sermons in which Dōgen cites nearly verbatim up to a point, yet subtly and in some instances changes with devastating results, the wording of his Caodong predecessor. This rhetorical technique also applies to Dōgen's appropriation of Rujing and a wide variety of Chinese masters (Ishii 1991b). On the issue of meditation in relation to realization, according to Ishii, Dōgen dissociated his approach from the view of zazen leading to satori in Hongzhi or the contrary view of zazen resulting from satori in Dahui.

There are two main elements in the way Ishii relates his expert knowledge of Chinese Zen records toward advancing Dōgen studies. One element involves examining Dōgen's creative appropriations of koan collections and transmission of the lamp records—a trend that is particularly evident in the early stages of Dōgen's career as he was developing his own style of doctrinal propagation—while also assessing what can be learned from using this material as a kind of window that enables current researchers to view the complexity of Song literature in greater depth. Ishii convincingly verifies (1988) that the *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, which was greatly influenced by an unheralded Song text, the *Zongmen Tongyaoji* 宗門統要集 from 1093,[3] is crucial for understanding the role of koans in the *Kana Shōbōgenzō* as well as Dōgen's *kanbun* texts such as the *Eihei kōroku*.

The second element concerns evaluating some of the Critical Buddhist claims about whether and to what extent Dōgen's view of Zen training may have been modified during the later phases of his career as he became more independent from other Japanese schools, including Zen and non-Zen Buddhist practices, while putting a greater emphasis on ethical issues based on the principle of karmic retribution. Critical Buddhism tended to focus exclusively on the role of the

3. At the time of some of Ishii's publications the text was dated 1133, but subsequent studies that he follows have moved this date up forty years.

12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, which was composed during the last few years of Dōgen's career, but Ishii confirms that a careful study of the late period of his career finds Dōgen putting into place some of the Chinese models of monasticism he had learned during travels to the mainland, as reflected in *Eihei kōroku* and other *kanbun* writings from this phase.

Dōgen as Inheritor and Interpreter of Koans

Both of these interpretative elements demonstrate that Dōgen's comprehensive knowledge of Zen records gained in China drove his inspirational religious vision in different directions. This was based on his use of an enormous variety of sources over the course of about twenty-five years from the time of his return to Japan in 1227, through the establishment of temples and authorship of writings in the residencies at Kōshōji and Eiheiji to the time of his death. Prior to Ishii's scholarship, the general tendency was to follow the lead of Watsuji Tetsurō's 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960) seminal essay of 1924, *Shamon Dōgen* 沙門道元, which along with writings by other Kyoto school philosophers, such as Tanabe Hajime, Nishida Kitarō, and Karaki Junzō, situated Dōgen as the quintessential premodern Japanese philosopher best known for vernacular writings that broke from convention, since classical Buddhist texts were almost always composed in *kanbun*. The *Kana Shōbōgenzō*, especially the 75-fascicle edition, was considered the pinnacle of Dōgen's accomplishments that were only in small measure indebted to the time of his early travels to China. Sectarian trends stemming from the Edo period had attempted to keep this manuscript hidden from the view of outsiders and not subject to objective inquiry, but modern interpreters both within and outside of the Sōtō sect were reversing this pattern through the production of copious translations and studies.

For much of the twentieth century Dōgen's *kanbun* writings received little or no attention and were probably seen more as an appendage or aberration than an integral part of the master's oeuvre. Largely underappreciated works included the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* and the *Eihei kōroku*, in addition to the *Hōkyōki* 宝慶記 collection of instructional conversations held with Rujing while Dōgen, even though a foreigner, was his primary student in China in the mid-1220s. Dōgen's main disciple, Ejō, discovered this text posthumously. Based on ideological affinities with other works from the final stages of Dōgen's career in regard to promoting ethical principles, Ishii, along with several other prominent scholars, considers that the text may likely be a product of Dōgen's recollections in his later years instead of a work that originated at the time of his travels.

Several important publications prior to Ishii gradually began to signal a shift to a new emphasis on the importance of Chinese influences that were incorporated into the *Kana Shōbōgenzō* and reflected in the ever more greatly esteemed

kanbun writings of Dōgen. The first example of this was perhaps the most important book in the field in the twentieth century, written by Kagamishima Genryū, who became known for pioneering scholarship on Dōgen's use of Chinese sources in *Zen Master Dōgen's Citations of Zen Records and the Sutras* (1965).

Kagamishima provided a detailed list of passages in which Dōgen cites dozens of records of Chinese masters as well as the *Lotus Sutra* and other scriptures, and he also presents some interesting theories regarding Dōgen's facility with language in creatively crafting his texts. This book quickly became, and to a large extent remains, the primary lexicon for all researchers in the field.[4] Kagamishima showed that Chinese influences are of overwhelming importance for any attempt to translate and interpret Dōgen's writings. Conversely, the *Shōbōgenzō* and *Eihei kōroku* are crucial for understanding Chan sources that Dōgen appropriated in such an intriguingly personalized way by at once citing them precisely from the records in which they were originally contained, while drastically altering the grammatical and semantic structures through his interlinear commentaries.

Another important scholarly development that greatly affected Ishii's work was a fresh focus on the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* that had long been considered spurious, even after the middle of three 100-case sections was confirmed in the early twentieth century. In 1987, Kawamura Kōdō published *Shōbōgenzō no seiritsu-shiteki kenkyū* (Historical studies of the formation of the *Shōbōgenzō*), which proved the legitimacy of the entire *Mana Shōbōgenzō* and also showed the importance of the collection for examining the content and style of the *Kana Shōbōgenzō*. Kawamura's main intent was to connect the *kanbun* text to a theory supporting the 60-fascicle version of the *Shōbōgenzō* as the version Dōgen was editing until the end of his life, a theory that had been originally associated with Edo-period scholar Tenkei Denson 天桂傳尊 (1648–1735) based in part on a traditional text with verse commentary by fifth Eiheiji patriarch Giun 義雲 (1253–1333). This issue represents a separate debate from the controversy raised by Critical Buddhism about the 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, but both discussions call into question the priority of the 75-fascicle version that was favored by Dōgen's disciple Senne and his follower Kyōgō in a highly influential early fourteenth-century commentary referred to as the *Gokikigakishō* 御聞書抄.

Kawamura maintains that the single main source of the koan cases included in the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* is the first of the Song transmission of the lamp records, the *Jingde Chuandenglu* of 1004, while Kagamishima puts an emphasis on the role of Chinese recorded sayings texts. Also, Kawamura believes the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* was a series of notes or memos Dōgen kept as preparation for developing the sermons contained in the *Kana Shōbōgenzō*, and Kagamishima

4. A kind of update with more details on citations was edited by Kagamishima (1995).

argues that the koan collection was created for Jakuen, a Chinese monk who was Dōgen's fellow trainee under Rujing and came to Japan in the early 1230s to join his former Dharma-brother's upstart community; his presence at Kōshōji must have reminded Dōgen of the importance of *kanbun* composition.

By knowing the influence of China to a degree that is probably without peer in the world of Dōgen studies, Ishii's strength lies in investigating in greater detail than others the Song sources from among the transmission of the lamp, koan collection, and recorded sayings records for Dōgen's citations of cases. Whereas Kagamishima stressed the role of recorded sayings and Kawamura emphasized the *Jingde Chuandenglu*, Ishii instead uncovered the impact on Dōgen's work of the *Zongmen Tongyaoji*. Although Dōgen refers to the *Jingde Chuandenglu* and several other transmission records but not the *Zongmen Tongyaoji* in both the *Hōkyōki* and *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki*, Ishii argues from a painstaking case-by-case analysis for the priority of this rather unconventional representative, at least at first glance, of Song records. The text is unusual because it limits hagiographical passages to the opening sections and continues for the remainder of its ten volumes with an extensive listing of koans but without providing either historical background material or philosophical commentary in prose or verse, even as the inclusion of such remarks was becoming the common standard for the production of koan collections during the Song.

According to Ishii's theory, when Dōgen arrived in the Chinese port of Ningbo in 1223, even before entering the monastery at Mount Tiantong he would have been exposed to two texts, the *Jingde Chuandenglu* and the *Zongmen Tongyaoji*, which were being distributed to Buddhist seekers as a kind of package, with the latter serving as a "crib sheet" for memorizing cases (Ishii 1988, 532–45). The *Zongmen Tongyaoji*, which provided a template by which the better-known *Zongmen Liandeng Huiyao* 宗門聯燈会要 from 1166 was patterned, was composed not for official reasons but as a study tool in monastic training and it has been omitted from the canon, including the modern *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. However, the *Zongmen Tongyaoji* was the main transmission record consulted by the Huanglong 黃龍 school of the Linji/Rinzai sect in which Eisai 栄西 became the first Japanese patriarch, and it is possible that Dōgen had already been influenced by this work during the time of his early, pre-China studies at Kenninji 建仁寺 temple founded by Eisai in Kyoto.

In any event, Ishii demonstrates that taking into account the *Zongmen Tongyaoji* helps explain why Dōgen's versions of koans are often at variance with those in the *Jingde Chuandenglu* and also the reason that some of his citations of Song passages cannot be traced back to the mainstream group of transmission of the lamp records. Ishii's breakthroughs with this research caused Kagamishima to issue a revised approach (1987) over two decades after his groundbreaking 1965 book, which stressed only the impact of recorded sayings. Kagamishima's new

essay accounted for the important role played by the transmission of the lamp and koan collection genres, both of which are combined in and epitomized by the *Zongmen Tongyaoji*. Kagamishima acknowledged that Ishii caused an important turnabout in his thinking. As critical an indicator of his contributions as this represents, Ishii further argues that the consequence of clarifying the *Zongmen Tongyaoji* is by no means limited to studies of Dōgen Zen, but is also crucial for learning the origins of and, thereby, properly reading Song-dynasty koan commentaries contained in the *Biyanlu*, *Wumenguan*, and many other lesser known but equally valuable examples (Ishii 2000).

Dōgen as Critical Thinker in the Late Period

However many differing views there may be regarding the sources for and influences exerted by the *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, and regardless of how the controversy might ultimately be resolved, the bottom line of the debate is that Dōgen inherited a rich and expansive body of traditional koan cases that were incorporated in distinctive ways into nearly all of his writings, whether *kana* or *kanbun*, throughout a much varied career marked by continuously producing diverse sorts of written texts usually derived from what were initially his oral sermons recorded by a scribe. Ishii traces multiple influences of Chinese texts on the stages of Dōgen's life work. He also shows that it was Dōgen's encounters with the Daruma-shū—of which he scorned the antinomian doxa attributed to Dainichi Nōnin, who never traveled to China, yet embraced the followers who joined his own movement at Eiheiji in the early 1240s after the proscription of the Darumu-shū—that constituted the main crux 対機 (lit. "opportunity for engagement") evident in the formation of Dōgen's approach to the praxis of the oneness of practice–enlightenment (*shushō ichinyo* 修證一如).

Prior to the advent of Critical Buddhism, Sōtō orthodoxy considered Dōgen's teaching to be constant and unchanging despite any apparent variation and vacillation. Conversely, another revisionist school of thought that was developed by Buddhist studies scholars in Japan generally not associated with the Sōtō sect maintained that Dōgen entered an extended period of decline when he left Kyoto in 1243 and shortly thereafter concluded his composition of the 75-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, a loss from which he never recovered. Although there is much of merit in the decline-based analysis when seen as a corrective to an unreflective acceptance of tradition, in light of the work of Ishii and others it seems clear that part of the problem with this standpoint is that it simply failed to recognize the importance of the *Eihei kōroku* as the main *kanbun* work of the later period that was just as creative as the *Kana Shōbōgenzō*. But why did Dōgen make that modification? If he targeted different audiences with literary styles suited to their specific needs, for what reason would he have used Chinese while located

in the provinces, where even fewer monks would have been able to follow his oral teachings than when he had been holding forth in his temple located the capital?

Critical Buddhism tended to agree with the decline thesis to a point in acknowledging that there was a dramatic shift, but argued vigorously that the real change in Dōgen's attitude, which occurred after his return to Eiheiji from visiting the shogun in Kamakura in the late 1240s, was actually marked not by degeneration but by a rebirth or spiritual renewal based on a commitment to the ethics of active wisdom rather than the mysticism of passive contemplation. Thus, based on these contrary interpretations it was up for grabs as to how to define Dōgen's "late" (*saigo* 最後) period and whether this began in 1243 or in 1247, no small distinction. Even though less than half a decade was in dispute, there was so much at stake from a methodological and ideological standpoint in terms of evaluating the significance of any alteration that Dōgen underwent.

Ishii joined Critical Buddhism in maintaining that a crucial change took place in the aftermath of the journey to Kamakura, thus emphasizing the "late late" or "final years" (*bannen* 晩年) phase of Dōgen's career. The question for him became what to make of this seeming inconsistency without, in a sense, throwing out the baby of Dōgen's earlier creativity along with the bathwater of his multiple geographical and literary transitions that may have led followers to an exasperated feeling of uncertainty about his real intentions. Ishii believes that studies of the main textual production of the late period must not be limited to the 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* but requires an examination of all of the works from this phase, including the later volumes of the *Eihei kōroku* and the *Hōkyōki*, assuming that the latter was not a direct product of the China trip, as well as the essays on monastic rules that are included in the *Eihei shingi* 永平清規.

The interesting point about that exercise is seeing the extent to which the thematic focus of the various writings converges around causality based on the impact of karmic retribution and the corresponding need for repentance, while maintaining an emphasis on purposeless meditation that is consistent with the original notion of *shinjin datsuraku*. Ishii examines how the tone of the *Eihei kōroku* was altered significantly in the post-Kamakura phase, yet remained unwavering in its support for notions from the works of earlier career stages, including the view that sitting in zazen is more fundamental than the precepts. The changes in the *Eihei kōroku*, therefore, were mainly stylistic rather than doctrinal.

Ishii divides the text of the *Eihei kōroku* into two parts: volumes 1–4 edited by Senne and Ejō that were produced through the time of the Kamakura journey; and volumes 5–7 edited by Gien covering the final years of Dōgen's life. Ishii finds that one important change in the last three volumes is that Dōgen is no longer as heavily influenced by Hongzhi's recorded sayings, which are less frequently cited, but again, there is not any significant alteration in his ideology in regard to

zazen, causality, or koan interpretation. Another way of viewing the production of *Eihei kōroku* is to note that sermon 3.251 issued upon his return to Eiheiji marks the beginning of the post-Kamakura period, so that Dōgen delivered as many as 280, or more than half of the entire body of, formal sermons in Dharma Hall during the last five years before he stopped preaching in public due to illness.

Despite contesting the exclusive emphasis on the 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* as representative of late late Dōgen, Ishii was an early though partial supporter of Hakamaya and Matsumoto and he continued to endorse the Critical Buddhist view of trying to generate a fundamental revision of the Sōtō sect's outlook in a way that links classical theories of dependent origination, karmic causation, and Buddha-nature to the contemporary need for social responsibility, although unlike his colleagues he does not comment directly on societal controversies. Ishii's tone of moderation in theological debates, which were sometimes characterized by strident rhetoric and ad hominen comments, was based on his dedication to explicating judiciously the works of Dōgen in their respective historical contexts while considering thoughtfully the implications for current society. This was a welcome reminder of the need to apply tradition inventively but without tampering with the essence of Dōgen's teaching. Ishii's approach to textual and interpretative issues struck a compromise position between the more radical reformist theories of Critical Buddhism denying that Zen is a true form of Buddhism and the status quo-oriented apologetics of traditionalists resisting criticism by formulating a middle way standpoint he refers to as Renewal Theology (*Shin Shūgaku* 新宗学; 1998).

For Ishii, the careful textual scholarship of Kagamishima serves as the main model influencing Renewal Theology in that this approach is neutral and dispassionate in uncovering multiple layers of truth from the past that can influence present religious institutional as well as scholarly decision-making. In turn, Kagamishima considered Ishii's compromise position to be the most reasonable approach because Ishii tries not to exaggerate the role of the 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* or downplay Dōgen's earlier as well as additional later writings.

Understanding multifaceted change in Dōgen's life for Ishii requires an examination of all aspects of what the master was saying and writing in every period, and it is not enough to limit oneself to one text from a single phase, such as the 12-fascicle edition, which in fact does not express a uniform view but uses manifold voices to reflect different influences and convey diverse messages. Perhaps the truest gauge of Ishii's contributions to this aspect of the field is that even though he does not fully agree with Critical Buddhism's exclusive focus on the role of that text, at the end of the day he has been the ever inquisitive scholar who has probably provided the most thorough and insightful analysis of "Shime" along with numerous other fascicles while also explicating additional late (and early) writings in terms of the adaptation of Chinese influences in ways peculiar

to Dōgen's style of teaching. However, Ishii's farewell lecture referred mainly to Dōgen's appropriation of koans and teachings about zazen and did not mention the 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, a lacuna noted by exponents of Critical Buddhism.

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