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

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

By Steven Heine

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#### OPENING A MOUNTAIN: KOANS OF THE ZEN MASTERS

By Steven Heine

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

By Steven Heine

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

By Steven Heine

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# TRAJECTORIES IN CHAN/ZEN STUDIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### SHIFTS IN HEINE'S SCHOLARSHIP

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

An in-depth discussion of Heine's oeuvre, at least all of his monographs that are listed at the end of this review, is beyond the scope of this review. However, to understand the four works under review, I have divided his oeuvre roughly in into three phases: 1) philosophical and comparative thought of Dōgen and Western thinkers; 2) literary studies of Dōgen and Zen; and 3) a blend of hermeneutical, historiographical, and cultural approaches to Dōgen and Zen. Of course, there are some overlaps in these three phases. Thus, this division is only for heuristic purposes. Generally, works that belong to the first two categories are evident in Heine's earlier writings from roughly the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, when he explored the philosophical, comparative, and literary dimensions of Zen and Dōgen. Works that were produced after the mid-1990s fall into the third category.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heine's methodological shift in  $D\bar{o}gen$  and the  $K\bar{o}an$  Tradition would become a basis for his later explorations of  $D\bar{o}gen$ , Zen, and critique of Zen studies. His employment of postmodern literary criticism, specifically referred to as "discourse analysis," integrates notions of intertextuality and genre criticism, which focus on the formation of texts, with narratology and tropology that highlight the rhetorical meaning and function of  $K\bar{o}ans$  (xiii). Such a multifaceted

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

synchronic, intertextual connections between the  $k\bar{o}an$  and folk discourses—the "amalgamation" where "great/little traditions commingle and define themselves in terms of their contrast" (196)—he needs to detail the historicity of this amalgamation and show how these discourses intersected. Otherwise, this discussion remains on the level of hypothesis.

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

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

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

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

#### OPENING A MOUNTAIN: KŌANS OF THE ZEN MASTERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# DID DŌGEN GO TO CHINA?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### ZEN SKIN, ZEN MARROW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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