



FIGHTING OVER HAKUIN'S FLESH AND BONES:
MEMORY, IDENTITY, AND INVENTION
IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE ZEN

Masaki Matsubara, Ph. D.

Cornell University 2009

This dissertation is grounded in scholarship on the dynamics of tradition formation, invention, and maintenance and the role of cultural memory in tradition. I examine how cultural memory, socially constructed and shaped through a selective process of remembrance, forgetting, and invention, works to create a religious community. I consider how the understanding (“memory”) of Zen master Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769) has been heavily crafted in the development of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhism, heavily dependent on an elite and Orientalist tradition. I investigate the creation of a legacy of Hakuin which has long neglected Hakuin’s considerable role as a social critic and reformer. I propose that Hakuin is not only a *de facto* founder or reviver of the tradition, an ardent meditation master, and a versatile artist, but also a brave protester who condemned the abuse of political power and authority through corruption that further intensified social injustice and inequality for farmers or lower class people. The work not only illuminates the nature of the relationship between religion and human life, but also demonstrates the role of cultural memory within tradition bounded and constrained by various social forces that determine our received images of the past.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

APPROVAL OF THESIS/DISSERTATION

Name of candidate: Masaki Matsubara
First Name Middle Name Family Name

Graduate Field: Asian Religions

Degree: Ph.D.

Title of Thesis/Dissertation:

Fighting Over Hakuin's Flesh and Bones:
Memory, Identity, and Invention in Contemporary Japanese Zen

COMMITTEE SIGNATURES:

Chairperson: Jaye Marie Law Date: 4/28/09
Member: Danet Bouch Date: 4-24-09
Member: [Signature] Date: 4/24/09
Member: _____ Date: _____
Member: _____ Date: _____
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Masaki Matsubara
(Student Signature)

**FIGHTING OVER HAKUIN'S FLESH AND BONES:
MEMORY, IDENTITY, AND INVENTION
IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE ZEN**

A Dissertation

**Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University**

**in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

by

Masaki Matsubara

May 2009

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Matsubara Masaki was born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1973. He grew up in a Zen family of the Ryūgenji temple in the Myōshinji denomination of the Rinzai sect. His father, grandfather, great-grandfather, two brothers, and many of his other relatives are all Zen priests. Following his family tradition, Matsubara also became a priest and embraced the priesthood as his life vocation. He currently holds the position of vice-abbot at Ryūgenji.

After graduation from Gakushuin University, where Matsubara studied comparative politics, he entered the Zen monastery of Heirinji in 1995 and did formal Zen training there for four years. Throughout the monastic training, however, Matsubara found it necessary to deepen his understanding of Zen through academic as well as religious training. He also found the importance of considering current Japanese Zen Buddhism and its developments from a non-Japanese cultural context. This inspired him to study Zen in the U.S.

After his monastic training, Matsubara began graduate studies at Cornell University, first in the Intensive English Program; then in 2001 he entered the Master's program in the Department of Asian Studies. In 2004, he entered the Ph.D. program in the Asian Religions Field at Cornell. His long-term career goal is to continue his life's vocation as an ordained Zen priest in Japan and also work as a scholar of Japanese Buddhism and Religious Studies, both in Japan and the United States.

For my grandfather, Matsubara Taidō

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I began my studies of the Japanese Zen master, Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769), in the Masters program of the Department of Asian Studies at Cornell University in 2001 and continued my studies in the doctoral program of Asian Religions at Cornell. I have been indebted to many people whose teaching, assistance, and encouragement have been crucial for the completion of this dissertation, and to whom I am immensely grateful.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and deepest appreciation to my doctoral advisor, Professor Jane Marie Law. As a graduate student at Cornell, I was launched onto the scholar's path by Professor Law. Whatever contribution my work may make to the field, I owe the greatest debt to this distinguished scholar of the study of Japanese religions and the Academic Study of Religion, as well as to the thoughtful mentor that she has been for me. My training in the study of Japanese Buddhism was enriched by her encouragement to consider the topic within the broader view between hermeneutics and the critique of ideology. She instilled in me a concern for placing the study of Japanese Buddhism within social, cultural, and historical contexts while viewing it through as many lenses as possible in the field of the Academic Study of Religion. With extraordinary patience and compassion, she has not only trained my research, but also shaped my entire outlook as a scholar of religion; she has supported my graduate life with endless kindness. What I have learned from her is immense—something I cannot adequately describe in words.

I am also grateful to my other doctoral committee members, Professors Daniel Boucher and Kim Haines-Eitzen. Professor Boucher helped deepen my understanding of key concepts and movements in Japanese Buddhism within the broader world of

East Asian Buddhism and religious traditions. He also encouraged me to learn how to read Chinese Buddhist texts, which helped me to investigate Hakuin archives as well as temple archives throughout Japan. Professor Haines-Eitzen, an expert on early Christianity and early Judaism, taught me the importance of considering how Religious Studies as a broad discipline works not only in Asian contexts, but also in non-Asian contexts, and of developing my academic interest in how tradition is received in a particular historical context. I greatly enjoyed studying the concepts of tradition formation and transmission with her, and for her critical support and intelligence in the final days of this project, I am forever grateful. It goes without saying that all of the above-mentioned ideas from my entire committee are reflected in many parts of this dissertation.

I am grateful to Dr. Kyōko Selden, the retired senior lecturer in the Department of Asian Studies at Cornell, for her enthusiasm for reading Edo-period materials and *kambun* with me for eleven semesters. Her extensive knowledge (and insightful comments and helpful suggestions) of Japanese literature, culture, and history helped me facilitate a wider reading of Hakuin's original manuscripts.

I hope that I can work with Professor Janice Kanemitsu in the future, who gave me very useful insights concerning the intersection of the development of print technology and literature in the Genroku era as a site of identity construction as well as a cultural transmission in Japan's early modern period. This point of view will be central to my future work. Though we met at the very end of my work, the few conversations I had with her have really led me in new directions. She has my genuine gratitude for her intellectual generosity.

Special thanks goes to several Rinzai Zen masters who generously found time to meet with me to talk about Hakuin and his Zen and to give me valuable inside views of how this figure has been understood, and who always supported and

encouraged me to pursue my studies of Hakuin as well as to study Zen in the West: Kōno Taitsū of the Ryōmonji in Okayama, Noritake Shūnan of the Reiuin in Kyoto, Itohara Ennō, Nonomura Genryō, and Matsutake Kanzan of the Heirinji monastery in Saitama, Yokota Nanrei of the Engaku monastery in Kamakura, Hosokawa Keiichi of the Ryūunji in Tokyo, and Kōno Tetsuzan of the Daijōji monastery in Ehime.

Since the bulk of the research for this dissertation was conducted in Japan, I would also like to thank the institutes and temples that assisted me and supported my extended research period during the summers and winters from 2001-2008. They freely shared original and unpublished materials in their possession, helped me receive access to those sources, or warmly shared their useful information about those sources as well as data of the history of Rinzai Zen in general. They include the Eisei-bunko Museum, the Hanazono University Library, the Matsugaoka-bunko Library, the Myōshinji headquarters office (Myōshinji Shūmuhonjo), the Osaka City Museum of Modern Art, as well as individual temples and their priests: Baitōji (Tomioka Kōshū), Hōtaiji (Fujiwara Tōen), Jishōji (Kawakita Icchoku), Kankōji (Hayashi Ryōdō), Kichijōji (Yamada Shinryū), Kiichiji (Tanaka Dōgen), Kinryūji (Namiki Masanori), Shōganji (Kawamura Genyū), Shōganji (Hanaoka Hakuō), Shōinji (Miyamoto Enmyō), Shōjuan (Harai Kandō), Taizōin (Matsuyama Daikō), Tōbokuji (Fujita Yoshiaki), and Unchōan (Tonoya Kazunari).

Thanks are also due to several individuals who supported my research and study on Hakuin: Katsura Takeo, president, and Kataoka Yasunori, executive director, of the Japanese book, scroll, and antiquarian book-restoring store, Undaiban Co., LTD.; Leighton Longhi, the director of Oriental Fine Arts, Inc.; Tanaka Jun, Ph.D. student in the Department of History at Gakushuin University; Toga Masataka, the director of the Institute for Zen Studies at Hanazono University; Yabumoto Shunichi, president of Fine Arts Yabumoto Co., LTD.; and Yoshizawa Katsuhiro, a professor at

the International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism at Hanazono University.

I would like to acknowledge the grants and fellowships that made my research possible and that enabled me to complete this dissertation: the Japan Research Travel Grant (East Asia Program, Cornell University), the Robert J. Smith Fellowship in Japan Studies (East Asia Program, Cornell University), the Teaching Assistantship (Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University), and the Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship (Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation).

Many thanks go to Sally Yates, a former senior lecturer in the Intensive English Program at Cornell, who proofread my dissertation, correcting my English grammatical errors and mistakes. I am grateful to her for her kindness, patience, and editorial insight.

Finally, boundless gratitude is due to the people closest to me—my family. My parents in Tokyo, Matsubara Tetsuaki and Masako, have been my steadfast supporters from the earliest times, providing me with the opportunities to pursue my dreams. I have been always encouraged by my mother's strength, comforted by her faith, and inspired by her example. Nine years ago, it was she who sent me away to the U.S. with a wish, "Realize Your Dream." And last, but certainly not least, I owe my deepest gratitude to my wife and best friend, Odessa Lynn Roberts Matsubara, who not only gave me refreshing insight, knowledge, and advice, but also paid special attention to my well-being and supported the whole experience of my writing, day in, day out. She was my source of support and encouragement. Endless bows.

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Matsubara Taidō, an inspirational human being. When the dissertation is published, it will be dedicated to my wife, Odessa.

This dissertation has developed under the supervision of Professor Law and my committee, whose critical readings and comments enabled me to begin to find my own

voice as a scholar in the academic study of religion. However, any mistakes, errors, or misinterpretations or tendencies to “use an axe when a scalpel was needed” in the work are mine alone.

Note: There are some notes on dates and terms mentioned throughout this dissertation. I use dates given in the Western calendar, not the lunar one, unless so described in Hakuin’s original manuscripts; the dates provided in the scholarly works to which I referred are not changed. I use the standard Hepburn system for romanizing Japanese terms, with the exception that I do not use the long vowel sign (macron) for places (e.g., Tokyo and Kyoto) that are nowadays widely recognized in the west without them. Japanese names are given in normal Japanese order (family names followed by given names), and the names of Japanese people and places are not expressed in Italics. Buddhist temples names end usually with “-ji” (or occasionally “-dera,” “-in,” or “-an”), and I have given them as they occur in Japanese (e.g., Ryūgenji, my family temple), rather than translate the suffixes (e.g., “Ryūgen temple”). Finally, in Japan, the traditional lunar-solar calendar was converted to the Western calendar in January, 1873. This means, for example, that the dates of Hakuin’s birth (the twelfth month of 1685) and death (the twelfth month of 1768) in the old calendar correspond respectively to January, 1686 and January, 1769 in the modern calendar. Finally, all photographs are by the author, unless otherwise indicated.

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PREFACE

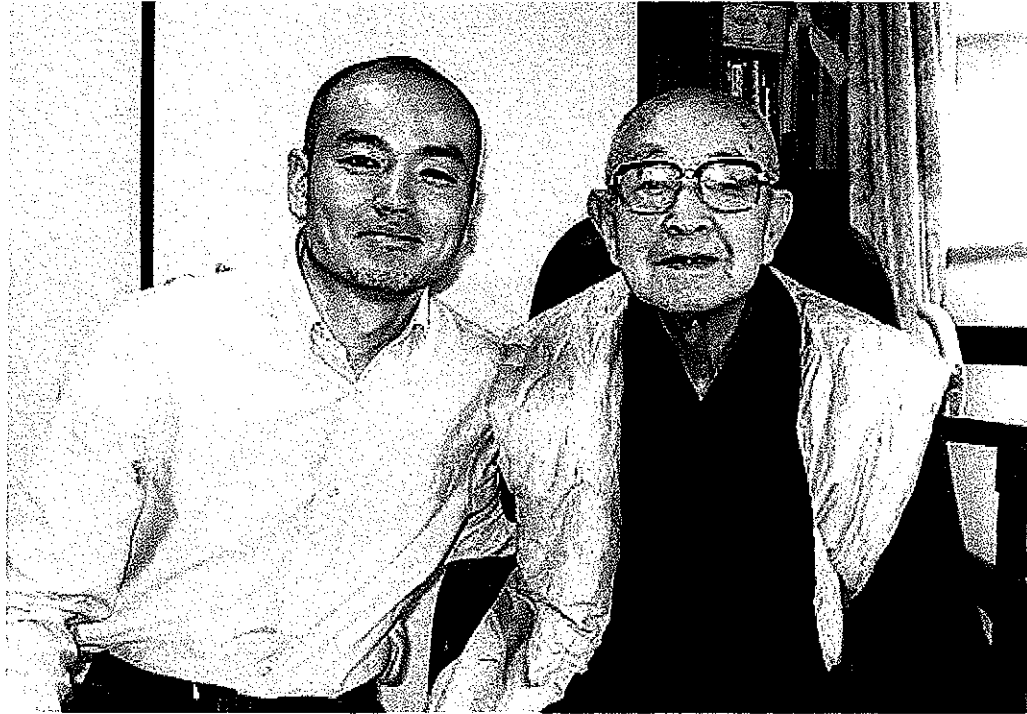


Figure 1: Grandfather and me

It is a sticky July evening in 2008, a day before the *Segaki*, or *Obon*, Festival, an important summer event in the temple's annual ritual calendar. My grandfather Matsubara Taidō (1907-), a 101-year-old Zen priest, is working in his study. He is reading a clipping from the morning paper of the *Sankei*, putting his favorite magnifying glass with a miniature lightbulb to his right eye in order to read it. He leans so far over his desk that his black chair completely hides his slight figure. He has a daily routine, which is absolutely inflexible: getting up at 4 a.m., chanting for about 30 minutes, working in his study until his breakfast at 8:00, and again continuing to work in his study until dinner at 7 p.m.; he has lunch at 12:00 and takes a nap for an hour in his chair. He enjoys a small can of beer and a cup of sake every night with his dinner, and then a small cup of wine and a small piece of cheese before, with my

mother's help, he goes to bed at 8 p.m. He takes requests for media interviews and for public talks without regard to the place, if the requests are reasonable, in spite of his age. This daily routine reflects something of his motto, "lifelong practice; retirement upon death." Looking over his shoulder, I call to him for the third time, "Grandpa! It's Masaki." And instead of saying my name, he utters the interrogative that has come to replace it, which translates roughly as "How long have you been there?" This exchange became the ceremonious start of our almost daily conversations during my stay in the summer of 2008.

My grandfather, holding his fountain pen, whose cap he has unscrewed, with his right hand, opens a biography of Hakuin Ekaku written by Katō Shōshun and published in 1985, and glances at an illustration of Hakuin, and then at the chronology of his life at the back of the book: born on December 25, 1685; the practice under Shōju rōjin, 1708; the induction into introspective meditation methods from Hakuyūshi, 1710; the decisive enlightenment experience at the age of forty-two, the tireless and energetic, as well as extraordinary and multifaceted, teaching activity in the second forty-two years of his life; and his death in 1768.

Suddenly remembering something important, my grandfather closes the book and starts to reminisce about this great Rinzai Zen master:

Speaking of Japanese Zen, the twenty-four Zen teaching lines were brought to Japan and first established in the Kamakura era, either by Chinese monks who came from the continent or by Japanese monks who had studied in China and received sanction from Chinese teachers. Three of these lines belong to Sōtō and the remaining twenty-one lines belong to Rinzai. Out of the twenty-one lines, the line known as the Ō-tō-kan school [named after three founders, Daiō Kokushi, Daitō Kokushi, and Kanzan Egen], which was handed down to and peaked with Hakuin, is the single lineage that survives today. We, all Rinzai, trace our descent from him, and Rinzai Zen now, practically speaking, is the Zen of Hakuin. Herein lies the reason that he is the achiever, the greatest, or, in a sense, the founder of modern Japanese Rinzai Zen. There are two pillars characterizing this Hakuin Zen. One is that it is kōan Zen. The

other is that it places a high value on teaching, which has been my motto. As Hakuin did, I also wish to be able to continue my mission and to make my best effort to spread Buddhist teachings to as many people as possible until the last day of my life.

The origin of my study on Hakuin lies in the simultaneous fascination and frustration which this story forcefully brings to me. I was greatly moved by what I heard from my grandfather and, in fact, I find in this story the hermeneutical significance of doing my research on this subject. But I was also greatly perplexed by this way of presenting memories, assumptions, and historical evaluations of Hakuin which seems to make the distinction between what is true and what is not true about him and which actually demarcates what I have newly discovered about Hakuin. Here, in my own grandfather, was a traditional presentation of Hakuin that had evidently been shaped by a set of religious and institutional assumptions, making my grandfather into a vessel of a received tradition. I do not mean to suggest that this received tradition or what he said to me about Hakuin is wrong. Instead I intend to suggest that this received tradition has been delimiting the essential multivalence of who Hakuin was. My curiosity about this has led me not to ascertain the possible truth of traditions such as the tradition of Hakuin, but to consider this tradition to be a phenomenon of cultural memory. My dual status as an insider and an outsider in the Rinzai Zen tradition has helped me to understand this connection between memory and tradition and to comprehend the constructed nature of the received image of what I have been taught to “remember” as Hakuin.

As a Zen priest belonging to the Hakuin tradition, I once uncritically accepted beyond all doubt the dominant traditional views as representing the only true historical Hakuin. In fact, it was practically impossible for me to criticize and question the veracity of those traditional views of Hakuin under my unique ecclesiastic family structure and home environment. I was born and grew up in a Zen temple in a

long-standing Zen priest family in the Myōshinji denomination of Rinzai Zen, the institution which claims to identify itself as the orthodoxy of Hakuin Zen. My father is a Zen priest, my grandfathers are Zen priests, my great-grandfathers were Zen priests, my two brothers are Zen priests, my four cousins are Zen priests, my uncles are Zen priests, my grandfather's uncle was a Zen priest, and all of my great-grandfather's brothers were Zen priests. Therefore, I had no reason to doubt the traditional views of Hakuin.



Figure 2: My three brothers chanting with my grandfather

I learned how to chant Buddhist sūtras from my infancy, and thus was quite familiar with Hakuin's name through chanting on a daily basis the sūtra called "Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen (*Hakuin zenji zazen wasan*)"¹ The sūtra is contained in the

¹ There is an extant autographed text of this sūtra, which has been labeled the "Fukazawa version." Basically it is unclear as to the exact date of the completion of this sutra. Rikukawa Taiun once assumed the date was sometime in Hakuin's later life. However, Yoshizawa Katsuhiro has argued against this position and maintains that it is from an earlier period. What it is interesting to me is that this Fukazawa version lacks the last fifteen letters for some reason, which were added by Shaku Sōen in the Meiji period. Here I limit myself to pointing this out, but I assume that there is a lot of room for this text to be

daily sūtra-chanting curriculum of most of today's Rinzai temples, and the repeated use of this sūtra suggests that the status of Japanese Rinzai rests on its being recognized as Hakuin's Zen. I do not remember exactly when I began to take my grandfather's chanting lessons, starting at 6:00 a.m. as a daily curriculum. However, I do still remember how severe his lesions were; even when I was about three years of age, he yelled at my older brother and me to make our little voices chant more clearly, while we had to sit cross-legged for the entire chanting time. This is not the only situation in which I had a glimpse of my grandfather's Zen disposition. I also faced his Zen attitude when I learned from him how to walk on *tatami* mats, how to eat food and to treat the dishes, how to heat the bath, and how to clean up toilets and gardens—for example, "Sweep so that there is no sweeping trace left." All that I learned from him actually equaled or exceeded in strictness what I learned from my own later experiences at the Heirinji monastery in the Myōshinji denomination. As a result, my unique situation inculcated in me a view of Hakuin as a great figure of the Rinzai tradition, thus solidifying my uncritical acceptance of the traditional views of Hakuin. Here is an obvious but not to be overlooked lesson: one's own location in a given cultural, social sphere plays an important role in determining how one remembers the past in general.

However, throughout my training as a student of religion in American academia, a situation unexpectedly developed. I became keenly aware of the tremendous retention and manipulation of those traditional images of Hakuin. While many intellectuals, scholars, and priests have long focused on Hakuin's early "terrors"

critically investigated—how do we understand, if the original text, which lacks the last fifteen letters, is real? Or if the version added by Sōen, to which we are familiar today, is actually a fabrication? This shows the same case as the title of the sutra "Ten-phrase Kannon Sūtra for Prolonging Life," which is Hakuin's creation. The fact that the original title of the sutra is "Ten-phrase Kannon Sūtra" remains largely unknown even among Zen priest circles, while today it is known almost exclusively as "Ten-phrase Kannon Sūtra for Prolonging Life."

of hell and other key events in his lifetime, his meditation techniques, and his artistic works, they have crafted their own hagiographical images of Hakuin as a cultural object symbolically representing Japanese Rinzai Zen. I know that such a “Hakuin” is not entirely mistaken, but it misses something important about him. The traditional view excessively delimits him. I have realized not only how distorted my understanding of Hakuin was, but also that my understanding was merely an uncritical acceptance of these traditional narratives that were designed, controlled, and propagated in the tradition around me. I have developed healthy suspicions about the claims being made of tradition by those who guarded and maintained it, and I suspect that in fact Hakuin was being actively sculpted by modern Zen institutions to suit their own ends. How did I gain this suspicion? I arrived there not through theory, but through an actual return to Hakuin’s writings themselves. I read Hakuin’s own words. As a result, I have found it necessary to add a new chapter about him as a social critic and reformer.

Thus I see the recreation, within an absolutist and “orthodoxy” discourse, of the traditional narratives of Hakuin and their controlled tendencies, and at the same time I see a forgotten voice repressed behind that recreation. To show this, I thought it was best to question those traditionally accepted images of Hakuin from outside of the Rinzai tradition by employing academic hermeneutical and critical ideological methods—I mean an amalgamation between the conflicting approaches of relying on what Hans-Georg Gadamer labeled “effective history” or “fusion of horizons” and restoring the possibility of what Jürgen Habermas and other critical theorists have identified as “systematically distorted communication.” By saying “from outside,” I do not and cannot mean to claim that this approach is purely objective and that I am an outsider to the Hakuin tradition. Any approach to knowing has certain ideological implications. I also know I am always an insider of the tradition to which I belong at a

certain level.

Rather, what I do claim here is that this approach of “being from outside” means to be marginal or in the role of mediator to that tradition and it helps provide the possibility of rehabilitating repressed voices and memories behind the construction of the dominant tradition, making an important critique of dominant ideology and revealing the connection between the hegemonic order and “historical” representations. My interest in being neither the insider nor the outsider, but rather at the limen of the two, stems no doubt from the fact that I feel myself to be marginal to the Rinzai tradition, and thus the Hakuin tradition, in Japan and in the academic tradition in the U.S. as well and, at the same time, largely indebted to both of these locations. I also feel myself to be marginal because I have in mind the belief and practice of Zen as a tradition or life vocation, and simultaneously I have that Zen tradition as an object or field of study. Through not only being on the margin of, but also being a mediator to the tradition, I could not stop questioning the accepted past, orthodoxy, and traditionality of Japanese Rinzai. Only by being on the margins could I begin to rehabilitate a long-neglected aspect of the great Zen master, one that remains alive, but that is certainly undervalued and even almost entirely untouched, within the tradition itself. As I have attempted to see the essential diversity of the tradition or of who Hakuin was, I have realized that I have set myself off from a certain ideological strain that currently claims to represent Rinzai Zen, but is actually a variant of the “Orientalist” ideology, denounced in the sense of Bernard Faure’s “reverse Orientalism,” prevailing deep in the Zen tradition in twentieth-century Japan.²

Hakuin passed away 240 years ago. Even while he was alive, people tried to

² For more information, see Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Also see his “The Kyoto School and Reverse Orientalism” *Japan in Traditional and Postmodern Perspectives*, eds., Charles Wei-Hsun Fu and Steven Heine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995): 245-81.

create a tradition around him. Now that he is not alive, controlling how he is imagined and propagated has become a major agenda of the Rinzai tradition. This agenda leads to the tradition's active forgetting of the past and achieving the inclusive hierarchy or the exclusive unity of idealized identity for the subject in the tradition's attempts to maintain itself. And we continue to be told that this constructed Hakuin is the traditional one. We indeed have long believed this claim as being true, without knowing the fact that it is actually a relatively recent innovation. This is why it is important to understand the relationship between the dynamic process of tradition formation, (re)invention, and maintenance and the role of cultural memory in the tradition. Otherwise, we cannot fully understand Japanese religious figures in general, and Hakuin in particular, unless we become more careful and critical of the ways that social, cultural, institutional, and historical factors control how the past should be remembered.

I opened this section with a reference to my grandfather, Matsubara Taidō, as a senior representative of the received tradition of Hakuin. What he said is indeed an ideal description in that it is his version's close "translation" of the traditional view of this great Zen master. This traditional view has been the place where the tradition and the previous scholarship end, yet it is the place where I begin. I, as one of his grandsons standing in the same Hakuin tradition, attempt to re-evaluate the traditional view. I hope to avoid regarding this view of my grandfather as purely ideological, because I think that tradition is a continuously emerging phenomenon, shaped and reshaped through its representations in a particular historical context, not primarily as a concrete social reality, but rather as a complex, social, and cultural object designed to meet needs and agendas in terms of the present. This is the central mechanism which gives the tradition life. I propose to create a new chapter on Hakuin as a social and political activist bravely protesting on behalf of the lower classes against the

shogunate almost two centuries ago. By making available this significant legacy of Hakuin, especially meaningful for today, I shall bring this long-silenced voice into the conversation about the relevance of Zen.

It is the day before the temple's memorial service of *higan* (lit. the "other shore") on the spring equinox in March, 2009.³ Matsubara Taidō is in his study in the temple in which he has lived for his entire life, working on his manuscript for his new book project. He says to me, "Being more than 100, I am emotionally moved just by waking up in the morning and being alive," and, "then, I think today I want to write this or read that." Being such an old age, although he is a Zen priest, he can no longer practice sitting meditation or even pull out the weeds in the garden. Thus, he tells me, "My practice today is three things: reading, writing, and speaking," adhering to his motto: "lifelong practice; retirement upon death." He continues his teaching activities every day. He labors at teaching, observing the current world situation and its incidental human crises of respect, dignity, and morality, and he gives a warning, "Actually, the collapse or 'bankruptcy' of the human mind is more horrible than the economic recession." He remarks that what saves the human is the human and that only this realization saves the human. When I hang up the phone after speaking with him, I remember the words my grandfather said one by one. I wonder if that isn't what Zen teaching is. I wonder if that isn't what Hakuin tried to tell us. I wonder if Hakuin were still alive, what dialogues I would hear between Hakuin and my grandfather. I smile, listening to his voice resonating in my mind. In a few minutes, my grandfather will turn around to his desk, pick up his fountain pen and favorite magnifier on the

³ The *higan* and *obon* are considered in the Buddhist calendar to be the times when people customarily visit and clean their ancestors' graves, making offerings of food and drink to sustain the ancestors in the other world and hoping that those ancestors are safe on their journeys to full enlightenment, or to reaching the "other shore." The term *higan* indicates the two periods around the spring and autumnal equinoxes.

desk again, and continue to write his manuscript, hiding his figure completely behind his black chair, and promising that we will talk again soon.

INTRODUCTION

Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769) is widely regarded as the seminal figure of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen. This contemporary religious order is often regarded as a tradition unconcerned with moral formulations and contemporary social events and focused solely on the quest for deep religious experience (*kenshō* or *satori*). Under the banner that meditation and enlightenment express the core Rinzai experience, Hakuin's religious writings and considerable production of brush paintings are held up as examples of a highly developed capacity for religious experience. My work problematizes this tendency to privilege this "experiential Hakuin," at the risk of ignoring his equally present and cogent moral voice. I explore a particular constructed memory of this religious figure in the Rinzai tradition, and examine how he has been remembered and how these "memories" have been culturally crafted in contemporary Japanese Zen to meet the tradition's present demands, agendas, and interests.

A series of questions, both historical and theoretical, ground this inquiry: how has this culturally constructed memory of Hakuin been formulated and used over time as the tradition develops? How have his new historical identities been presented in response to social imperatives and institutional struggles or in the legacy from twentieth-century intellectual Zen? Why has Hakuin's social and political criticism of the Tokugawa shogunate's power and authority been neglected in the Zen tradition? Where does the contemporary Zen leadership locate authenticity in this selective production of remembrance, forgetting, and invention? Who has agency in producing the remembrance of Hakuin and who is responsible for crafting our cultural memory of him in the dynamic processes of tradition? What is the relationship between cultural memory and invented tradition? Considering cultural memory as a tradition's shared sense of its own past and identity to be socially determined, I examine how the

cultural memory of Hakuin is constructed in a dialogue with the tradition itself, in which the tradition's authority, legitimacy, and orthodoxy are ideally constituted and reconstituted. The agenda is to identify Hakuin as a representative of the tradition's own "religion of man" and to elevate the supreme value of his religious experience and activities. Yet this very same process of "remembrance" ignores and even represses his strong anti-elite social critiques, which in their day were very controversial and forthright.

Considering these concerns, I argue that Hakuin should also be remembered as a social activist concerned with protecting farmers and low-status people from social inequality and injustice caused by the shogunate's regulations of class hierarchy. I also argue that the Hakuin we remember is an image heavily crafted by historical, social, and institutional factors that shape our received images of the past. I show that the remembrance of Hakuin, the ways his image has been constructed over time, illustrates not just the importance of the "Hakuin tradition" in Japanese religious history, but also of the structures of authority that disseminate it and give it life. I propose that we cannot fully understand Japanese religious figures in general, and Hakuin in particular, unless we account for the ways in which institutional factors control how the past should be remembered.

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. In Chapter 1, I present how Hakuin's identities have been constructed and elevated to his present position of prominence. In Chapter 2, I discuss theoretical reflections of tradition, tradition invention, and cultural memory, and discuss the role of cultural memory in the dynamics of the mechanisms of tradition. In Chapter 3, I discuss the rise of the essentialist and Orientalist Zen of D. T. Suzuki and Hisamatsu Shin'ichi that came to shape the Zen tradition in the twentieth century (and to a large extent, in the emerging twenty-first century). In Chapter 4, I discuss the "canonized" biography of Hakuin,

demonstrate how it narrates this figure. I show that it no longer serves as an historical paradigm but rather as a textual and religious narrative. In Chapter 5, I retrace the previously dominant studies and interpretations of Hakuin and show how the Hakuin we remember has been presented in highly selective readings. In Chapter 6, I turn to the ignored attitudes of Hakuin, i.e., his political and social criticism of power and authority, and examine his considerable role as a social critic and reformer, by focusing on his political treatise *Hebiichigo* and others such as *Oniazami*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa*. Although *Hebiichigo* was banned after it was originally published in 1754, the work, whether an autographed version or not, has been contained in a series of collected works of Hakuin's writings since the end of the nineteenth century. Finally, in Chapter 7, I present the neglected visual medium for Hakuin's moral campaign that has been silenced in the establishment of the Orientalist experiential Zen tradition.

CHAPTER ONE

DOES HAKUIN WEAR PRADA?

In this chapter, I explore the traditional view of Hakuin and its developments in the Rinzai Zen tradition since the end of the nineteenth century. I examine the constructed nature of the established images of this great figure of whom the tradition has been proud since his death. I focus on demonstrating the following five points. First, I discuss three limited approaches to (and interpretations of) Hakuin, paying particular attention to his identities which were remolded in the tradition's pre-programming. Second, I discuss the almost one-sided use of his sūtra for the lay people and the almost entirely neglected founder worship of him, both of which have actually created the tradition's ambiguous positioning for him as the *de facto* founder. Third, I attempt to re-evaluate his well-known status as the reviver of tradition by tracing the history of the term "reviver" and examining possible internal and institutional struggles in the tradition since the Meiji reforms. Fourth, I discuss major collections of Hakuin's writings in which his image has been ideally constituted in the tradition. Last, I discuss a recent popular trend of exhibitions of Hakuin's art through which he has become a cultural fashion. I argue that Hakuin has been refashioned in what I call "Hakuin triad" and suggest that the Hakuin we remember today is a fairly recent innovation in the history of Hakuin remembrance. These discussions expose the way religious authorities who have allegedly maintained their Rinzai tradition have in fact (re)invented Hakuin again and again. I start this chapter with a movie scene that reveals how a seemingly autonomous choice is actually programmed and controlled by power and authority.

Hakuin as "Blue Sweater": Programmed and Controlled Identity

One of the highlights in Academy Award-winner Meryl Streep's movies is the scene in *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), in which an impossibly demanding, powerful, and icy New York fashion magazine editor, Miranda Priestly (portrayed by Streep), who practically reigns over the fashion industry, gives a monologue on how so-called "fashion" is programmed and produced. In the scene, Miranda, who is in the process of determining a new style of fashion in a designer-preview while selecting items from racks of clothes, affirms to her assistant, Andrea "Andy" Sachs (played by Anne Hathaway), that fashion is programmed and controlled by Miranda and her colleagues. Andy is stylistically inept and proudly knows nothing about fashion, but has the job a million girls would kill for as Miranda's assistant. Andy chuckles over Miranda's serious debate with some other assistants about deciding between two similar belts for an outfit because she thinks they look exactly the same, and then she undervalues the racks of clothes as mere "stuff." Miranda then jumps swiftly on Andy's snicker, pointing out sharply the blue sweater Andy is wearing on that day. Miranda says:

Stuff? Oh, okay. I see, you think this has nothing to do with you. You go to your closet, and you select, I don't know, that lumpy blue sweater, for instance, because you're trying to tell the world that you take yourself too seriously to care about what you put on your back. But what you don't know is that sweater is not just blue. It's not turquoise. It's not lapis. It's actually cerulean. And you're also blithely unaware of the fact that in 2002 Oscar de la Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns. And then I think it was Yves St. Laurent, wasn't it, who showed cerulean military jackets? I think we need a jacket here. And then cerulean quickly showed up in the collections of eight different designers. And then it, ah, filtered down through the department stores, and then trickled on down into some tragic Casual Corner where you, no doubt, fished it out of some clearance bin. However, that blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs and it's sort of comical how you think that you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry, when in fact, you're wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in

this room...from a pile of stuff.⁴

What Miranda shows here is the fact that the limitation and production of the identity are inevitably programmed and controlled by agents. Believing that she is free from any social constraints, Andy *thinks* that this blue sweater announces a kind of personal autonomy over whatever she chooses. In short, she thinks that any choice she makes demonstrates that she is in charge.

However, Miranda sees things from a different point of view from Andy's. She finds fault with the irrelevance of Andy's position, stressing that Andy's selection of her blue sweater had been already plotted long before she entered the Casual Corner clothing store to buy it. Miranda argues that choices are constrained by decisions that Miranda and her assistants made seemingly invisibly years earlier in designer previews. This notion of choice operating as an invisible constraint makes fashion a predominantly social phenomenon. Andy's blue sweater is a social product in this sense, while it makes the invisible constraint in question visible and accessible, even to people who "pull them out of sales bins."

What does this fashion business have to do with Hakuin? I argue that the Hakuin triad, i.e., as the *de facto* founder of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen, an ardent meditation master, and a versatile artist, can be seen as a kind of "blue sweater." The Hakuin we remember today is wearing this "blue sweater" that the Japanese Rinzai tradition has plotted to advertize and popularize. In order to understand the idea that "Hakuin wears the blue sweater," I begin to discuss the traditional view of Hakuin and its limited triadic approach to this brilliant Rinzai Zen master.

⁴ David Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, widescreen edition [DVD] (20th Century Fox, December 12, 2006); accessed December 14th, 2007. Also, http://jp.youtube.com/watch?v=U_b4FbSvM-I; Internet; accessed 14 January 2009 and 24 January 2009; <http://www.hulu.com/watch/13046/the-devil-wears-prada-cerulean-sweater>; Internet; accessed 24 January 2009.

Who is Hakuin? Traditional Views of the Hakuin Triad

Generally Accepted Interpretations and Dictionary Definitions

Hakuin is recognized as one of the important religious figures in the history of Japanese Rinzai Zen and even Japanese Buddhism as a whole. He has been regarded as the reviver (*chūkō*), thus the *de facto* founder, of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhism, which is, in effect, monopolized by the Hakuin-lineage in the present day. Specifically, contemporary Rinzai Zen represents itself as the Zen of Hakuin, tracing its religious heritage back to the lineage of Nanpō Jōmyō (also known as Daiō Kokushi, 1235-1309), Shūhō Myōchō (Daitō Kokushi, 1282-1338), and Kanzan Egen (Musō Daishi, 1277-1361), due to the single lineage that survives today⁵; others are dying out. We are told time and again that it is from this lineage that all the presently existing lines, and thus priests, descend.⁶

Unfortunately, these seemingly “commonsensical” or “natural” accounts might themselves be nothing more than a useful fiction. Bernard Faure argues that “the ideological work of the tradition has been to hide the diversity and contingency of its origins behind an apparent consensus of orthodoxy, repeated *ad nauseam* in all the texts.”⁷ Michel Foucault argues that “what is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.”⁸ Given Faure and Foucault’s insights, problematizing what has been regarded as a non-problematic interpretation can be useful to re-evaluate the established view of Hakuin as a controlled narrative about him and therefore as an

⁵ The school centered on this lineage is known as the Ō-Tō-Kan school, a branch deriving its appellation from an abbreviation of the names of those Zen masters.

⁶ For more detailed information, see Michel Mohr’s “Zen Buddhism during the Tokugawa Period: The Challenge to Go beyond Sectarian Consciousness” in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no.4 (1994), pp. 341-372. Also see his article “Examining the Sources of Japanese Rinzai Zen” in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 20, no.4 (1993), pp. 331-344.

⁷ Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 16.

⁸ Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 79.

ideological construct. In fact, it is important to point out how the discourses of Hakuin as the *de facto* founder of the entire religious heritage of Japanese Rinzai Zen have been used to construct the tradition's own brand of *the* "select elitist" Zen.⁹ It is uncertain when Hakuin was first identified as the tradition's reviver, but it is certain that he was already regarded as such during the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926) periods.

How has Hakuin been perceived in general? For example, the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell (2004), gives us a short description:

Hakuin Ekaku: Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1768) was a Japanese Zen monk who worked to reform Rinzai Zen, and from whom modern Rinzai lineages in Japan are descended. For Zen monks, he is known as an artist, scholar, and systematizer of DOUBT in KŌAN study. He stressed that Kōan introspection, especially the cultivation of doubt, was the only means to SATORI (AWAKENING) and that initial sudden awakening had to be followed with more Kōan study (*gogo*) to deepen the experience.¹⁰

This statement emphasizes his practice with the concentration of *kōan* study. The following biographical description of Hakuin, made by Philip Yampolsky, is found

⁹ In my future research, I plan to examine the relationship between the remembering of historical background as represented in lineage and the social formation of tradition, in keeping with my studies of the (re)production of controlled narrative/social remembering of the past. Again, contemporary Rinzai Zen represents itself as the Zen of Hakuin due to the single lineage that survives today; others are dying out. Does this assumption fail to question the notion of a Zen tradition? But does it help to question the claims of that tradition? What does "others are dying out" really mean? Given hints from the arguments made by Faure and Foucault, I suggest that this is only a replication of the pious reconstructions of a single, static conception of lineage published as "the history of Chan"—an approach critiqued by John McRae as the "string of pearls fallacy." For more information, see his *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). I also suggest emphasizing that the Hakuin we remember as the tradition's reviver is a fairly recent innovation in the history of Hakuin remembrances. In my postdoctoral work, I propose to demonstrate how this single succession of lineage serves as the controlling element constituting the social shape of the past and the construction of identity in which a process of legitimation of the tradition and of social hierarchization is generated.

¹⁰ John Jorgensen, "Hakuin Ekaku" in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., vol.1 (New York: Macmillan Reference USA/Thomson/Gale, 2004), pp. 313-314. The capitalized emphasis is original. About Hakuin's Kōan, many other dictionaries like *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, edited by John Bowker, Oxford University Press, 1997, introduce his most famous one: "What is the sound of one hand clapping?," which is known in Japanese as *sekishu (no) onjō*.

in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*:

HAKUIN (1686-1769), more fully Hakuin Ekaku: mid-Tokugawa period (1603-1868) reviver of Rinzai Zen. Hakuin was born to a commoner family in Hara, present-day Shizuoka Prefecture. Entering Buddhism at an early age, he studied widely both Buddhist canonical works and Zen literature. He was also well versed in the secular literature of China and Japan, and in popular Japanese poetry and song. At age twenty-two he set out on his studies, visiting a succession of Zen masters and practicing meditation at various temples. At twenty-four he visited the Zen master Shōju Rōjin (Dōkyō Etan, 1643-1721), and after an arduous eight-month stay, was granted his teacher's sanction. For the next eight years Hakuin traveled to various temples, perfecting his understanding of Zen, eventually returning to his temple, the Shōinji in Hara, in 1718. Here he concentrated on teaching a considerable number of disciples. Hakuin also devoted much time to itinerant preaching and lecturing and to the instruction of laymen. He passed away in 1769.... Rinzai was revitalized by Hakuin and his heirs.¹¹

Yampolsky also points out: 1) Hakuin's unbroken teaching lineage of Nampō Jōmyō, Shūhō Myōchō, and Kanzan Egen, going back to the Zen that had been introduced to Japan from Sung China in the early Kamakura period (1192-1333), 2) his emphasis on the importance of *kenshō* experience achieved through meditation, and meditation at all times and with *kōans*, not just quiet sitting in secluded areas, as well as meditation as a way of nurturing good health and prolonging life as described in the works *Yasenkana* and *Oradegama*,¹² 3) Hakuin as a talented writer whose intended audience was extensive, from feudal lords to other priests and nuns, to laymen. However, Yampolsky's keen observation is remarkable: "A large body of his writing consists of letters...in which he champions the virtues of Zen and calls strongly for humane government and adequate consideration for

¹¹ Philip B. Yampolsky, "Hakuin" in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade, vol.6 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 157-158.

¹² The previous scholarship has read this work's title as "Orategama." However, as shown in the work's part three entitled "Letter in Answer to an Old Nun of the Hokke Sect," his handwritten notes along the title read "Oradegama." Therefore, I follow this reading throughout this dissertation.

farmers,”¹³ 4) Hakuin as a gifted painter and calligrapher with his uniquely powerful style whose subjects are Zen figures, poems, Zen sayings, and single characters. Yampolsky concludes that Hakuin is the dominant figure in Japanese Rinzai Zen history and that he revived Rinzai Zen, which had been effete and corrupt, by going back to Sung-Zen in China, which had been introduced in the Kamakura time, with a stress on *kōan* practice.

The *Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion* carries the following description of Hakuin:

Hakuin Ekaku (hah-koo-in ay-kah-koo; 1686-1769), a Japanese Rinzai Buddhist monk who revived his school with a system of koan (a paradoxical teaching that transcends logical or conceptual thought) practice. He was also famous for vivid writings on Zen topics, ink paintings on a variety of Buddhist topics, and sermons for commoners.¹⁴

Having seen English sources, how, then, do Japanese dictionaries describe Hakuin?

A representative Japanese dictionary *Kōjien* reads as follows:

A Rinzai Zen monk of the mid-Edo period. His name is Ekaku, his style Kokurin. He is from Suruga. When he was young, he trained in many places. Even after he was awarded the rank of First Seat [*dai'ichiza*] in the Myōshinji school, he dedicated himself to teaching in the provinces, reviving Shōinji in Suruga, and so forth, known as the Reviver of the Rinzai School, he was beloved by the people. He produced many powerful and spirited Zen paintings and calligraphy [*Zenga*]. His posthumous titles are Shinki Dokumyō Zenji and Shōshū Kokushi. His writings include *the Poison Staments in a Thicket of Thorns*, *the Record of His-keng*, *the Dream Words from the Land of Dreams*, and *Orategama*. 1685-1768.¹⁵

A nearly identical entry is found in another important dictionary, the *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, which reads:

¹³ Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁴ “Hakuin” in *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion*, general editor Jonathan Z. Smith, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), p. 404. Incidentally, the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, edited by Paul Legassé, Columbia University Press, 2001, has no entry about Hakuin.

¹⁵ *Kōjien*, ed., Izuru Shinmura, 4ed (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), p. 2045. The translation is mine.

Hakuin: Rinzai Zen monk of the middle Edo period. His name was Ekaku, his style Kokurin, and his imperial titles Shinki Dokumyō Zenji and Shōshū Kokushi. A Dharma successor of Shōju Rōjin, he assumed the priesthood of Shōin-ji in his native village in 1717, but the following year entered Myōshin-ji. He subsequently shunned fame and traveled throughout the provinces teaching Buddhism. He is called the Reviver of the Rinzai School. His writings include *the Dream Words from the Land of Dreams* (7 vols.), *Yasenkanna*, and *Orategama*. 1685-1768.¹⁶

The *Shinchō Nihon jinmei jiten* reads as follows:

1685-1768. Rinzai Zen monk of the middle Edo period. Born in Ukishimahara in Suruga. His original family name is Sugiyama; his styles are Kokurin and Sendaikutsu. Ordained under the monk Tanrei Soden at Shōinji at the age of 15. Later trained under the Sokudō at Daishōji in Numazu. Further practiced under the monks Baō at Zuiunji in Mino, Shōtetsu at Eiganji in Echigo, and Sōkaku at Kegonji. In 1708 practiced under Shōju Rōjin Dōkyō Etan. After this, he traveled throughout the provinces training, and in 1718 assigned as the rank of First Seat in the Myōshinji. On a night of 1726 he attained his decisive enlightenment experience through reading the Lotus Sutra and became a Dharma successor of Shōju Rōjin. Later, while being active centered on Shōinji and establishing his own kōan system, he is recognized as the reviver of the Rinzai Zen. In his later years, he founded Myōchizan Kannonji, the new Muryōji, and Mishima Ryūtakuji. Died at Shōinji. His imperial titles Shinki Dokumyō Zenji and Shōshū Kokushi. His writings include the *Hakuin kanahōgo*, *Yasenkanna*, *Itsumadegusa*, and so forth, his countless writings are an immortal achievement in the history of Zen literature, and his paintings and calligraphy are also well known for their extraordinary manners.¹⁷

Although I have presented here several descriptions about Hakuin from major, authoritative dictionaries in both English and Japanese, these descriptions all reflect a typical (and well-known) chronological biography or traditional account of Hakuin, which usually describes only the active and successful aspects of his life. Besides this, these popular descriptions and others share many common events about Hakuin's life and activity: 1) he received the rank of First Seat (*dai'ichiza*) in the

¹⁶ *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1981), p. 1946. The translation is mine.

¹⁷ *Shinchō Nihon jinmei jiten*, (Tokyo: Shinchō sha, 1995), p. 1356. The translation is mine.

Myōshinji sect at the age of thirty-four, in 1718, 2) he wore simple black robes all his life, 3) he expounded his teachings for the masses in easy ways such as using calligraphy, ink drawings, and *kana-hōgo*, or Japanese writings, including the sūtra called *Hakuin Zenji zazen wasan* (“Master Hakuin’s Song of Zazen”), 4) he overcame his childhood fear of hell through his hard training, and 5) he developed his unique ideas and techniques for nurturing health and prolonging life through meditation.

These descriptions of Hakuin seem very factual, persuasive, and even powerful, but they do not necessarily give us enough appropriate information about who Hakuin was. Rather, we can see some misinterpretations in those descriptions. For example, as explained by scholar Jorgensen, the idea of “more Kōan study (*gogo*)” after initial awakening should be understood not just as a practice to deepen the received experience itself, but rather as a practice of the Four Vows (*shigu-seigan*), i.e., 1) “However innumerable all beings are, We vow to save them all,” 2) “However inexhaustible delusions are, We vow to extinguish them all,” 3) “However immeasurable Dharma teachings are, We vow to master them all,” and 4) “However endless the Buddha’s way is, We vow to follow it.”¹⁸ In other words, the pursuit of the Four Vows is, in another Zen specific term, that of “*Jōgubodai-gekeshujō*,” or “above, to seek after *bodhi* and below, to save all sentient beings.” In Hakuin’s actual writings, he indeed mentions the pursuit of the “Four Vows” as the practice of *Gogo*, literally meaning “after enlightenment.” The *Gogo* practice is not *kōan* study practice; it is the application of *kōan* practice to reality, which is simultaneously considered to be a teaching activity.

Although we frequently encounter the idea of Hakuin’s “receiving the rank of First Seat in the Myōshinji,” while some biographies describe him as “entering

¹⁸ *Zenshū nikka seiten: Daily Sutras*, published by the Zen Studies Society, New York, 1998.

Myōshinji,” or something else indicating that he became the head of the Myōshinji, this does not mean that he became the temple’s abbot at all. It simply means that Hakuin registered himself as a monk of the Myōshinji denomination, while the rank of the First Seat represents the lowest rank a monk can hold in the Myōshinji. These are typical misunderstandings about Hakuin, easily observable in his biographies circulated today. As is clearly shown even in all of the above-mentioned descriptions, it is crucial to understand that the previous scholarship on Hakuin has helped shape the “Hakuin triad.”

The Hakuin triad as the Established View

The Hakuin triad is the established view of this Rinzai master as 1) the *de facto* founder of the tradition, 2) an ardent meditation master, and 3) a versatile artist. In the first part of this Hakuin triad, the purpose of the biographical/hagiographical approach to Hakuin is to closely read his chronological biography, or so-called “*Hakuin Nempu*,” to reassess the events and experiences of his career, and to establish his historical, religious, and institutional status as the reviver of the contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition, or, namely, as the central figure of the contemporary elite Zen establishment. This biographical/hagiographical approach stresses not only religious faith and activity in what Hakuin represents in the *Hakuin Nempu*, but also their meaning within the ongoing religious tradition up to the present day. The *Hakuin Nempu* is held by some to be accurate, without any errors, guesses, or exaggerations about Hakuin’s career. The ecclesiastic authorities, intellectuals, and scholars who engage in this approach have not applied a critical lens to the historicity and religiosity of the *Hakuin Nempu* as an authoritative historical document written and compiled by Hakuin’s disciples. Instead they have

created their own unique and idealized interpretations of Hakuin through conjecture and embellishment. These unique and idealized images of Hakuin have formed the authority of the elite Zen circle and located this tradition distinctively in the Japanese Buddhist world and even in the non-Buddhist world. In this sense, this biography no longer serves as an historical paradigm but only as a textual and religious paradigm,¹⁹ revealing that controlling how Hakuin is imagined becomes a major agenda in Rinzai Zen.

In the second part of the triad, ecclesiastic authorities, intellectuals, and scholars have focused on Hakuin's specific works such as *Yasenkanna* and *Oradegama*, especially the former, as health manuals, which impressively display his important meditation techniques, "Introspective Meditation" (*naikan no hō*) and the "Soft-Butter Method" (*nanso no hō*). Because those intellectuals have been captivated by how Hakuin used specific meditation techniques to combat his *Zenbyō* (lit., "Zen sickness") from which he suffered during his long training days in his youth, they have examined Hakuin's idea of meditation as his own unique health method. Although we do not know exactly what the nature of this disorder was (because Hakuin did not describe it clearly), the symptoms that Hakuin does describe suggest tuberculosis, some kind of physical collapse or nervous breakdown, or some combination of the two. However, whatever the sickness was, it eventually prevented him from seriously continuing his training.

Further, scholars as well as intellectuals in various fields such as psychology and medicine have applied the efficacy of Hakuin's meditation techniques as a means of improving the physical and psychological health of modern people. In this regard, while they assert that *zazen* practice is not only a means for achieving *kenshō*

¹⁹ Faure has an article on how Bodhidharma is treated in a similar way. For more information, see "Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm" *History of Religions* 25, no. 3 (1986): 187-98.

experience but also a means for attaining good health, what is more important here is the popularization of Hakuin's Zen concepts, which are of interest to everyone concerned with health. In a critical sense, one can argue that Hakuin's meditation techniques as health hygiene are employed for lay cultivation by the religious authorities who recognize them as the most effective way of introducing, advertizing, and disseminating the Zen of Hakuin, and thus Rinzai Zen, to the masses. At the same time, within the Hakuin tradition, it goes without saying that many ecclesiastic authorities, scholars, and intellectuals have regarded Hakuin's meditation techniques as important ways of nourishing one's vital energy to achieve the *kenshō* experience which was Hakuin's decisive religious quest.²⁰

In the third part of my triad, many people, inside and outside of the tradition, have shown enormous interest in Hakuin's works of art such as his ink drawings, paintings, and calligraphy. What I have to emphasize here in particular is that these people are interested not in understanding the hidden religious (and political as well as moral) meanings and messages that Hakuin left, but in understanding those arts as a visual expression of his religious experience.²¹ Hakuin's artistic works are the crystallization of his *satori*, and therefore, it has been said that they should be understood as something ineffable. A good example of this position is reflected in New York art collector Longhi Leighton's words, "When you see Hakuin's art, just feel it, just feel it, do not talk about it!"²²

This Hakuin triad shows the creative yet limited interpretations or images of Hakuin. It is also a limited approach to understanding him. While it represents what Faure considers the narrative "repeated *ad nauseam* in all the texts" as the

²⁰ The term *kenshō* means literally "seeing one's self" or "investigating one's nature."

²¹ Recently Yoshizawa Katsuhiro has insisted on the importance of the hidden messages in Hakuin's art. He has decoded Hakuin's art, based on his writings. I discuss this point in later chapters.

²² I met Longhi Leighton at his home in New York City on September 5, 2008. He was saying this while he was looking at Hakuin's *Hotei* painting, which is the only one Leighton currently owns.

ideological work of tradition, here Foucault's definition of an author might also yield much better results as a working hypothesis. According to Foucault, "The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning.... [He] is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work;...he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction."²³ Such a redefinition of the author helps us avoid the kind of historical reductionism that can be found in the Hakuin triad. The traditional discussion about Hakuin, a discussion which authorizes Japanese Rinzai, in which all the Hakuin remembrances are reduced to that triad, is therefore an ideological construct. Indeed, the triad reflects the notion that the Zen tradition has produced and reproduced itself while also maintaining itself, while Hakuin has been refashioned to meet to the demands and interests of the tradition in terms of the present, responding to the spirit of the time. This process reveals the tradition mechanism through which the Hakuin we remember today has been the power objective of those in the tradition who have allegedly maintained it, yet have been inventing him in this process again and again since the time of his death in 1769.

Who are the actual agents behind this construction then? In the sections below, I focus my discussion on the tradition's more recent tendencies: founder worship, the creation of the collected works, and the increasing number of art exhibitions. Regarding the founder worship, while I concentrate on the sūtra called "Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen" and the Hakuin memorial service, I find, in the tradition's ambiguous dependence on these two activities, the ideological, constructed nature of Hakuin's status as the *de facto* founder.

²³ Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 118-19.

*The Ambiguity of the Tradition's Position Relying on Hakuin:
The Sūtra "Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen" and the Hakuin Memorial Service*

Joachim Wach's Idea of "Founder"

Today Hakuin is touted as the reviver, or the *de facto* founder of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen. He has been afforded high status as one of the most significant Buddhists in Japanese religious history. However, who is the "founder"? What are the features of this "founder"? Here it might be useful to start with Joachim Wach's ideas of "founder" from his categorization of religious authority. First, the term "founder" does not necessarily indicate any personal quality or activity, but rather it shows the historical and sociological influence of his charisma, including his influence after his death. In fact, few if any founders who are recognized as such set out to found a religion. Second, at the psychological and historical level, the founder is a revolutionary teacher, a reformer, or even a prophet. Third, at the sociological level, he is the head of a religious school or the leader of a religious group. Fourth, at the theological level, the number of followers is not important, but it is crucial that his status as the founder be established by the influence which his personality, thought, and activity have on his followers. Last, "virtually all the founders became objects of religious veneration themselves."²⁴ In this vein, a cult built around the founder is added as one of its distinctive features. According to Wach, this cult does not necessarily characterize so-called "reformers," "heads of schools," or "leaders of religious groups," but it inevitably characterizes the founder. From these features, all of which are sociologically significant, he stresses that the founder is not just a reformer, teacher, or prophet, but something socially defined, because he "founded a religion."

Wach's features of the founder can be useful to apply to the case of Hakuin,

²⁴ Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 342.

except that he is a prophet with extraordinary spiritual power symbolized by miracles. Hakuin did not intend to found a religion. In fact, as great as his personal religious charisma was while he was alive, he was never at that time elevated to his present position of prominence. He was a revolutionary teacher and reformer in the sense that he created his own *kōan* practices, including the famous “Hear the Sound of One Hand,” he taught in simple language for people, and he was a social critic. He became the leader of his religious group, which I call “Hakuin *kyōdan*,” and eventually was considered to be the head of Japanese Rinzai Zen. His image adorns countless altars in temples affiliated with the Rinzai school. The sūtra “Master Hakuin’s Song of Zazen” is in the daily sutra-chanting curriculum of most of the Rinzai temples—in general, this sūtra is often chanted at a variety of anniversary ceremonies for Rinzai followers. A series of his seven sermons, called “*rōhatsu jishū*,” which encourages practitioners to seriously engage in a strict and austere course of meditation and *kōan* practice and to achieve *kenshō* experience, is read in a highly respectful manner each night during the concentrated meditation period in December at the monasteries. All these observations reflect the fact that Hakuin has become the object of religious veneration in the Zen tradition, which simultaneously reveals a kind of founder worship or “founder-advertisement-campaign,” namely, a cult, which is what Wach characterizes as being a distinctive feature of the founder.

Exposing the Isolated Locations of Hakuin Rituals

If I follow Wach’s idea of the founder and the correlation between “founder” and “worship,” I find a more complex scenario in the case of Hakuin. The founder worship centered on Hakuin has been less celebrated than that of other important figures in the tradition. This celebration, or the lack of celebration, actually reflects an ambiguity of the tradition’s customary position of relying on Hakuin as the *de*

facto founder. It is the breakdown that, in the end, seems to bring the socially determined nature of Hakuin's established image into relief. This hierachization can be exemplified in two worship elements in particular: in the sūtra *Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen*, which Hakuin himself composed, and in the Hakuin memorial service for his death on December 11th (*Hakuin ki*; lit., "Hakuin anniversary"). I look at these two elements in the cases of three different monasteries: Heirinji, Myōshinji (the headquarters as well), and Ryūtakuji.

Although in general *Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen* is often regarded as one of the most popular sūtras in the Rinzai communities, this is not true in all places. At Heirinji, the sūtra is chanted only in the morning-chanting curriculum for the limited concentrated meditation period that is open to lay practitioners every summer. This is the only time at which the sūtra is read at this monastery. Regarding the Hakuin memorial service, surely the memorial service should be observed on exactly the anniversary of his death. However, the service at Heirinji is conducted the next day, on December 12th, at the joint ceremony of the anniversary of the death of Myōshinji's founder, Kanzan Egen, who died on that day (*Myōshin kaisanki*; lit., "Myōshin-founder anniversary"). It is clear to see that the monastery's priority is on the Myōshinji-founder's anniversary, not on the Hakuin memorial service, while the master of the Heirinji attends the former anniversary in Kyoto every year.

At Myōshinji monastery, surprisingly enough, the sūtra is not read at all throughout the year. It is read only at certain occasions outside the monastery: when the master of Myōshinji monastery attends Kanzanji's concentrated meditation practice held for lay people in Osaka one time a year; and when the monastery is requested to help with events at other branch temples. Thus, the practitioners at the monastery know the sūtra, but do not chant it at the monastery. Besides, only the Myōshinji-founder anniversary is observed without fail, while the Hakuin

anniversary is not held at all at this monastery. Even Myōshinji, the headquarters, along with other well-known headquarters such as Kenchōji, Engakuji, Nanzenji, and Kokutaiji, does not include the Hakuin memorial service in the institution's annual calendar of events.

The third case is Ryūtakuji, another monastery belonging to the Myōshinji denomination whose founder is considered to be Hakuin. The sūtra is read before the monastery's bedtime in the meditation hall every other night. This monastery observes the Hakuin anniversary as one of the temple's crucial annual events, while not observing the Myōshin-founder anniversary. In short, this monastery takes a position completely opposite from that of Myōshinji.

How do we understand these conflicting cases shown among Heirinji, Myōshinji, and Ryūtakuji? How do we understand the unique and even isolated status of the sūtra and the founder worship positioned within the Myōshinji denomination, even though it is the denomination that produced Hakuin and thus pretended to adhere to the orthodox tradition about him? What causes this drifting status of Hakuin, while he has been regarded as the *de facto* founder? I cannot simply dismiss these cases as purely mysterious; I want to regard them as more political and ideological.

Regarding Ryūtakuji, the monastery's faithful acts of both chanting the sūtra and observing the Hakuin memorial service suggest that the temple maintains its status as Hakuin's monastery and portrays itself as the embodiment of Rinzai Zen's collective memory of Hakuin. However, the common feature of the tradition's position of the sūtra is the fact that most likely it has been largely used in the circumstance of lay-oriented practices. I propose that the sūtra has probably been employed primarily for lay proselytization by the Rinzai authorities, who have recognized its appeal for the common people due to its simply-written style of

Japanese, which makes it easy to read and memorize. In short, the reason the sūtra is used for the lay people is not primarily because Hakuin is the reviver of the tradition, but rather because it is the quick way to learn Zen ideas and it allows the traditions to appropriate Hakuin's charisma. The Rinzai authorities projected Hakuin's image for the laity through this sūtra, the image that simultaneously reflects the image of Rinzai Zen. Recently, the 650th memorial of the Myōshinji founder has been commemorated by the Myōshinji Exhibition (*Myōshinji ten*) at the Tokyo National Museum. Meditation sessions have been held at which *Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen* is necessarily chanted every single time.

In stark contrast to his prestigious status as the *de facto* founder, the exclusion of the Hakuin memorial service from the annual calendar of events by Myōshinji, along with other monasteries and headquarters, fosters a sense that the service does not assume a role of any importance in Myōshinji history. In fact, there is no liturgical evidence at all for any Hakuin memorial service at Myōshinji, either as a monastery or as the headquarters, or the head temple (*honzan*) of the Myōshinji denomination in the sense that it stands as the head temple of thousands of branch and subbranch temples (*matsuji*), while developing its centralization of power. It is the Myōshin-founder anniversary more than any other event that eventually comes to emphasize Myōshinji's status as the head of the denomination in the Rinzai tradition.

There are a few possible reasons why Myōshinji as the head temple does not observe the Hakuin memorial service. The first is that the denomination consists of four factions, i.e., Ryōsen, Tōkai, Reiun, and Shōtaku (this is the one out of which Hakuin came), and all of the thousands of the branch temples belong to one of the four, and thus the denomination needs to take over the balance of power among the four factions.

The second possible reason for not observing the memorial service is the head temple's elitist temperament vis-à-vis Hakuin, who ended up receiving in his career only the lowest rank a monk can hold in the institution. Further, Hakuin is not listed among Myōshinji's "generational representatives" (*sedai*), who have the qualification to become the chief abbot (*kanchō*) of the denomination. As for the headquarters, Hakuin is just a monk at a poor rural temple. Such prideful headquarters diminishes Hakuin and does not give high importance to him.

The last possible reason I propose is also related to Myōshinji's elitist pride as the headquarters. The symbolic return to the Myōshinji founder through worship means to reassure the religious heritage of the single extant lineage of the Ō-Tō-Kan school today, as succeeded by Hakuin. This symbolic return is used to claim that Myōshinji is the orthodox Rinzai institution of which even Hakuin is a part.

Although I have presented the possible reasons for Myōshinji's exclusion of the Hakuin memorial service, all of these arguments are not persuasive enough, given the fact that the tradition has maintained Hakuin as the *de facto* founder or reviver of Japanese Rinzai Zen. In the end, however, there is no appropriate reason why the tradition does not observe the Hakuin anniversary, if, as the tradition has told us, Hakuin stands at the beginning of a religious interpretation of modern Rinzai history, in which all Rinzai priests inherit spiritual authority through a diachronic genealogy that can be traced back to Hakuin. The tradition's silence around the Hakuin anniversary, therefore, indeed reflects nothing but the tradition's ambiguous position of relying on Hakuin.

While the concept of the "founder" as a religious ideal is a socially determined category, this ambiguity remains in the universal and transcendental nature of "Hakuin" raised to the status of icon of the Japanese Rinzai Zen spirit. In this light, this ambiguity might not only result from the tradition's myth of an

unbroken mind-to-mind patriarchal transmission and its manipulative or conservative functions attached to its position. It also might reflect even the ideological nature of the status as culturally determined or as a “cultural investment” made during the time the tradition has major cultural breaks in the Meiji period and the time when the tradition had to create status in its revival attempts. I argue that the seemingly “timeless and unchanging” conception of Hakuin as the founder is actually a much later creation, probably, a conception created during the periods after the Meiji reforms. This is the time when Japanese Buddhism was severely hit by the Meiji government movement with its motto of “anti-Buddhist violence” (*haibutsu kishaku*) and its policy of “separation of Shintō and Buddhism” (*shinbutsu bunri*). This is the time when the Rinzai Zen tradition was urged to adapt to the spirit of the times for its maintenance and to redefine itself by positioning Hakuin as the tradition’s spiritual ancestor—this redefinition includes the independence of all the current denominations and the opening of contemporary monasteries. I return to this point, when I discuss the internal and institutional Rinzai politics in the Meiji period.

I do not suggest denying the idea of the single extant lineage of Hakuin in the present or the idea of Hakuin as the tradition’s reviver. I simply suggest that the Hakuin who is held up as the *de facto* founder or reviver is a fairly recent innovation in the history of Hakuin remembrance, an innovation made by the Rinzai ecclesiastic authorities. In this light, these authorities, as the agents, certainly maintained or even saved the tradition, yet invented the tradition itself, as well as Hakuin, as the *de facto* founder or reviver of the tradition. Now if we think of why Myōshinji, along with most of the monasteries and all the headquarters, does not observe the Hakuin memorial service, even though he has been given his present status of prominence within the entire Rinzai tradition, the ambiguity leads us to reconsider the constructed nature of his status as culturally determined in a particular

historical context.

Knowing the fact that the Hakuin lineage is the only extant Rinzai religious heritage, the early Japanese Zen leaders since the Meiji period, who sought to defend their cultural institutions from the onslaught of the anti-Buddhist regime, found in Hakuin the most ideal way to explicate the unique qualities of Japanese Rinzai Zen. In a sense, the invention of Hakuin as the *de facto* founder or reviver can be understood in large part as Japanese Rinzai's response to modernity. Do we find any written historical evidence of the history of his status as the *de facto* founder or reviver? What does the biography of Hakuin or other major documents and publications say about it?

A Possibility of Re-evaluating the Hakuin We Remember as the Reviver

In this section, I attempt to reconsider Hakuin's status as the reviver or *de facto* founder as a relatively recent invention in the history of Japanese Rinzai Zen. In order to re-evaluate the tradition generating and maintaining the previously established images of Hakuin, it is necessary to fight against what Faure calls "the teleological tendencies of controlled narrative,"²⁵ of Hakuin, the vision or narrative that has seemed to be non-problematic in understanding this great figure. Leading to the pious reconstruction of the ideal images of Hakuin in this way, this cultural reductionism constitutes the elaboration of a symbolic identity and the inclusive hierarchy or the exclusive unity, serving to produce a process of authority, legitimacy, and orthodoxy in Buddhist circles. In this sense, this cultural reductionism includes a lot of politics and is ideological in nature. The Hakuin remembered in this limited way reflects our amnesia, an active and creative forgetting of the past,

²⁵ Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, p. 4.

simultaneously serving as a repression of that past. I suggest that this image of Hakuin is an ideological fallout of the Meiji era or soon after that, or at least an early-Taishō product. We can get him “out of the sales bins at discount stores.”

It is uncertain exactly when Hakuin first came to be called the “reviver of Japanese Rinzai Zen,” or “*nihon Rinzai Zen chūkō no so.*” Yoshizawa has made an invalid argument that Hakuin was already regarded as such by the beginning of the Meiji period, one century after his death. Whether or not Yoshizawa’s argument is right, I became convinced that it is crucial to approach this problem in the same way as studying cultural memory, raising the question of how Hakuin figured in various later developments of the tradition. When I began to write the first draft of my study of Hakuin with the allegedly unquestionable account of his present status of prominence in the history of Japanese religions, i.e., Hakuin as the reviver, I could not ignore it completely in spite of my efforts to free my discussions from such a one-sided emphasis.

One reason for this linkage is that Hakuin is automatically equated with Japanese Rinzai, as he is in any of the standard reference works, in the same way that Dōgen has been automatically equated with the Japanese Sōtō tradition. In short, it is nearly impossible to get behind the construction. In fact, the main concepts of teaching and practice in the tenets of Japanese Rinzai Zen today have largely been introduced together with his thought and activity, i.e., his *kōan* practice, teaching activity, and the priority of *kenshō* experience. This evidence convinced me further that a discussion of Hakuin certainly serves the needs of narrative convenience in the tradition. Where is the origin of the narrative convenience of Hakuin as the tradition’s reviver, then? I think that the answer to this question derives from the course of internal Rinzai politics and institutional disputes since the beginning of the Meiji period, thus supporting my argument that such an identity of Hakuin is a Meiji,

or twentieth-century, product.

There are some clues to support this viewpoint. I begin by tracing the history of this status by focusing on major key documents and publications and then discussing the status as a product of internal Rinzai politics and institutional disputes since the Meiji reforms. As the question has not even been asked, as being unquestionable in the tradition, the specter of Hakuin has continued to haunt much of Japanese Zen scholarship in the Rinzai tradition.

Tracing Seven Sources for the History of Hakuin as the Reviver

1. *Hakuin Nempu*

The *Chronological Biography of Hakuin*, or so-called “*Hakuin Nempu*,” which was compiled by his descendant and published in 1820, fifty-two years after his death, does not contain the phrase “Hakuin as the reviver of the Japanese Rinzai Zen.” This biography identifies Hakuin as the “man who appears only once in five hundred years” (*gohyaku nenkan shutsu*) and as the Zen Master *Shinki Dokumyō*, whose honorific Zen Master title was conferred posthumously on him by the Emperor Gosakuramachi (1740-1813) in June, 1769. Of course, this biography does not include a description of another honorific title which Hakuin was awarded by the Emperor Meiji in 1884. Neither does the original manuscript of this biography, first announced to the public in 1934, contain a description of Hakuin as the reviver of the tradition, and it describes him in the same way as the *Nempu*. What we come to know here is that Hakuin was not positioned as the reviver of the tradition among his descendants as of fifty-two years after his death.

2. Royal Proclamation by the Emperor Gosakuramachi

The wording of the royal proclamations by which the court, or more specifically, the Emperor Gosakuramachi, awarded the Zen Master title *Shinki Dokumyō* to Hakuin does not include any evaluation of this recipient as the reviver, which could be an appropriate reason for the conferment of the title. These proclamations name the title itself as well as a brief statement praising the recipient of the award. These words of praise probably reflect the terminology suggested by Myōshinji, since the court would not have been familiar with either the honoree or the Zen vocabulary used to praise him. Significantly, the proclamations, as shown in many other documents, specifically praised the recipient as being the “the great man who appears only once in years” and “the extraordinary great master.”²⁶ The repeated use of this phrase does not suggest that the tradition’s status rested on Hakuin as the reviver.

3. *Keikyoku sōdan*

There is a collection of sayings, activities, anecdotes, and legends of Hakuin’s disciples, the collection called “*Keikyoku sōdan*” written in 1829 by the monk Myōki Sōseki (1774-1848), of the fourth generation of Hakuin-lineage descent. This collection also does not mention Hakuin as the reviver of the tradition

²⁶ The Emperor Gasakuramachi’s words in their entirety are as follows:

敕。萬似芙蓉。卓現海隅。峰分八葉。根蟠三州。至清之氣。神秀之象。集大成者。爰大寂常照禪師遠胤。白隱座元。間出偉人。格外名僧。深入正受大圓鏡。沒寶明。親徹本光無盡燈。發靈焰。勘破東山暗號令。舖張南浦毒爪牙。留下室內救弊之微言。道行四海。成褫菴居參禪之真種。化旺十方。可謂天澤雲彌。龍澤注霖。少林春回。鶴林垂蔭。師之德音。洋洋盈耳。簡加褒章諡曰。神機獨妙禪師。明和六年六月八日。

I added punctuation to make it easier to read. See *Hakuin Oshō zenshū* (Tokyo: Ryūginsha, 1935).

or even as “*gohyaku nenkan shitsu*,” even though the primary purpose of this collection is to convey the greatness of Hakuin’s disciples, many of whom became famous. However, it goes without saying that this collection simultaneously celebrates Hakuin’s achievement of turning out those leading monks at his temple Shōinji, or what Myōki calls “the greatest *dōjō* in the world.” Hakuin was not identified as the reviver of the tradition as of sixty-one years after his death.

4. Royal Proclamation by the Meiji Emperor

In May 1884, the Meiji Emperor conferred posthumously the honorific *Kokushi*, or “National Master,” title *Shōshū* on Hakuin, the final National Master title to be awarded in Japan. Even on this important occasion, no evaluation or praise of Hakuin as the reviver are found in the wording of the royal proclamations by which the Meiji Emperor awarded the title to Hakuin.²⁷ These proclamations give the name of the title itself and very brief, almost business-like, simple lines announcing the bestowal of this award. There are no words praising the recipient of this royal national master title. According to *Meiji tennō ki*, the collection of the private and official movements of the Emperor Meiji, compiled and published by the Imperial Household Agency, it says (from only the excerpts regarding Hakuin):

On the 26th. With a special reason...Hakuin, Founder of Ryūtakuji Temple in the Izu Province, is awarded as the *Shōshū Kokushi*...the name of Hakuin is Ekaku, traveling all over the country and being absorbed in teaching. Died in the fifth year of Meiwa, and the Emperor Gosakuramachi conferred

²⁷ The words in the letter of notification from the Emperor Meiji include the following:

神機独妙禅師

謚正宗国師 左大臣二品大勲位熾仁親王奉 明治十七年五月廿六日

Also:

龍澤寺

今般特旨ヲ以テ開山神機独妙禅師へ国師號宣下候事 明治十七年五月廿六日

太政官

See *Hakuin Oshō zenshū* (Tokyo: Ryūginsha, 1935).

the Zen Master *Shinki Dokumyō* on him in honor of his virtue. On this day, commemorating the two monks' Dharma virtues, there is carried out a new ceremony of the conferment.²⁸

It was true that Hakuin had been recognized with high respect, but there is no written evidence to determine that he received his National Master title precisely because he had been positioned as the tradition's reviver. Hakuin as reviver or founder does not appear even at almost 110 years after his death. This was the time when Buddhism sustained serious damage from the *haibutsu kishaku* movement at its peak in the 1870s and also the time when the Meiji regime attempted as a patriotic duty to make a state religion out of Shintō, through the Great Promulgation Campaign.²⁹

5. *Kinse zenrin sōbō den*

The *Kinsei zenrin sōbō den*, selected legends of Japanese Rinzai monks

²⁸ Kunaichō, *Meiji Tennō ki*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1971), pp. 207-08. The original Japanese words translated above are as follows: “伊豆国龍澤寺開山白隠を正宗国師と諡す...白隠名は慧鶴、諸国を遍歴して教化の到らざる所なし、明和五年寂するに及び、後桜町天皇其の徳を追褒して神機獨妙禪師と勅諡せらる、是の日二僧の法徳を追思し、新に贈諡の典あり。” Here the two monks indicate Hakuin Ekaku and Mumon Gensen (1323-1390; the Founder of Hōkōji, or 方広寺, one of the fourteen denominations in Japanese Rinzai Zen), who was awarded the honorific *Kokushi* title *Shōkan* (聖鑑). The Hōkōji denomination became independent from the Nanzenji denomination in 1903. The fourteen denominations are Nanzen (南禅), Tenryū (天竜), Shōkoku (相国), Kennin (建仁), Tōfuku (東福), Kenchō (建長), Engaku (円覚), Daitoku (大徳), Myōshin (妙心), Kōgaku (向嶽), Kokutai (国泰), Eigen (永源), Butsū (仏通), and Hōkō (方広).

²⁹ With the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868 and the establishment of the Meiji regime, this new government formulated the centralization of the imperial power and tried to create Shintō as a state religion that should unite the nation and the people. According to Helen Hardacre, the Great Promulgation Campaign, lasting from 1870 to 1884, was one of these governmental movements and was a national indoctrination movement that missioned Shintō teachings centered on the emperor/kami-worship and revering the emperor. In this context, Buddhist priests were assigned as National Evangelists to spread the teaching to the populace. Hardacre argues that these Buddhist priests were able to legitimate themselves in the eyes of the state by being “government mouthpieces.” For more information, see Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the State 1868-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Also see the next section of this dissertation.

collected since modern times, and compiled by Rinzai priest Ogino Dokuon in 1890, gives a brief biography of Hakuin, without a specific reference to him as the reviver, but with an emphasis on him as the actual engineer who reinvigorated Japanese Rinzai and who brought its real spirit out of which many outstanding monks appeared.³⁰ As for the collection *Hakuin Oshō Zenshū*, published in 1898, its preface does not contain any descriptions of Hakuin as the reviver, while it emphasizes him as a National Master. Another collection, entitled *Kinsei zenrin genkōroku*, written by lay practitioner Mori Daikyō in 1902 (two years before the Russo-Japanese War), is a collected work including the words and actions of 113 Rinzai monks since the mid-Tokugawa era. In this collection, the author insists that it was Hakuin who strove to revitalize the Great Law of Rinzai Zen from its state of deep stagnation and decline, positioning him as one of the two giants (the other is a Sōtō monk, Tenkei) in modern times. Although in the collection Mori Daikyō placed Hakuin ahead of Tenkei, regardless of their dates, this does not mean that he sees that Hakuin is greater than Tenkei. He says that the reason is “no other reason than that Rinzai Zen is the earliest-founded of Zen schools.”³¹ It is certain that he recognized Hakuin’s important contribution to the development of the tradition.

6. *Kinko zenrin sōdan*

One of the milestones in the scholarship on Japanese Rinzai Zen is the work titled *Kinko zenrin sōdan*, written by Mori Daikyō (who is also the author of the *Kinsei zenrin genkōroku*) and published in 1919, an anthology of 407 Zen priests and lay practitioners in total, from the three Zen schools, Rinzai, Sōtō, and Ōbaku,

³⁰ The original lines read: 鶴林白隱老出觸正受端之惡毒遂振起既隨之宗風其輪下得人亦不少祖師真風於是再昭昭。Rikukawa Taiun pointed out that this brief biography of Hakuin was simply some parts reprinted and excerpted from the Chronological Biography of Hakuin or *Hakuin Nempu*.

³¹ Keizo Mori, *Kisei zenrin genkōroku* (Tokyo: Nihon tosho center, 1977), p. 2. The Sōtō monk Tenkei: 1648-1735.

ranging from early modern times to the Zen master Shaku Sōen in the Taishō period. The entry about Hakuin in this collection does not describe Hakuin as such, but as the great master who appears only once in five hundred years.³² This collection mentions that Hakuin appeared as if one Buddha appeared in the world, greatly increasing Rinzai Zen climates and leading to unprecedented circumstances of prosperous dharma assemblies. This line reflects the tradition's prosperity around Hakuin, as his autobiography *Isumadegusa* describes, "At first, I had only two or three monks here [Shōinji] with me. Later, they were joined by others, like attracting like, until eventually their number swelled to more than a hundred and fifty. In recent years, we usually have three hundred monks in residence in and around the temple."³³

7. *Zendō*

Lastly, there is the publication called *Zendō* (lit., "Zen Path"), a special edition on Hakuin published in 1918, a few days before the end of the First World War and a century and a half after his death. It includes remarks made by Shaku Sōen and D.T. Suzuki. On one hand, Sōen, deploring the contemporary Rinzai masters clinging to the factional ramifications of either Kyoto Zen or Kamakura Zen and either the Inzan lineage or the Takuju lineage, identifies Hakuin, the prominent master who appeared only once in five hundred years, as the reviver of the Zen tradition's Dharma-Lamp (*hōtō*), which was in a state of deep stagnation and

³² This collection mentions that Hakuin appeared as if one Buddha appeared in the world, greatly increasing Rinzai Zen climates and leading to the unprecedented circumstances of prosperous dharma assemblies. This description could be an expression of Hakuin as reviving the tradition in a sense, but I am looking for an exact phrase of Hakuin as the reviver, as clear evidence of identification by the tradition as such. Descriptions such as the above-mentioned can be very easily found in many other works, which has become almost a cliché by and for the tradition.

³³ Norman Waddell, trans., *Wild Ivy: The Spiritual Autobiography of Zen Master Hakuin* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), p. 84.

decline.³⁴ On the other hand, D.T. Suzuki, who is Sōen's disciple, identifies contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen as *Hakuin shū*, or "Hakuin school." He insists that there existed other lines besides the Hakuin faction before and after Hakuin's time, but all of those lines vanished and only the Hakuin lineage survives today. Thus, all present-day Rinzai priests trace themselves to Hakuin and his descendants.³⁵ In short, Sōen calls Hakuin the reviver and D.T. Suzuki calls the Zen of Hakuin *Hakuin shū*.³⁶ We know that this fact does not necessarily mean that Hakuin was first identified as the reviver as of the beginning of the twentieth century, but it can be an indicator of Hakuin as a product of the Meiji and Taishō periods to a large extent. It is also remarkable that the previously unquestionable identity of Hakuin as such was claimed around the vanguard of *nihonjinron* theorists who formulated a conception of unique Japaneseness in the beginning of the twentieth century, as Japan's militaristic nationalism increasingly heated up. Following Sōen and Suzuki's authoritative identifications of Hakuin as the tradition's reviver or *de facto* founder in 1918, a well-known Buddhist scholar, Tsuji Zennosuke (1877-1955), positions Hakuin as the real engineer of the revival of Rinzai Zen in his work *Nihon bukkyōshi* published in 1961, while scholar Rikukawa Taiun also identified Hakuin as such in his work *Hakuin Oshō shōden* in 1963.

It is safe to say that the identification of Hakuin as the reviver of Japanese Rinzai Zen is found in records from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, and thus to a large extent is a product of the Meiji and Taishō periods. This can be supported by the fact that Ōsaki Ryōen's

³⁴ For more information, see *Zendō* (Tokyo: Zendōkai honbu, 1918), p. 9.

³⁵ For more information, see *Zendō*, p. 10.

³⁶ This term might have been used before D. T. Suzuki because it is a generally accepted view that only Hakuin's line survives today. However, at least the works I have mentioned above have no descriptions of this specific term. Nakajima Genjō, the previous chief of Hakuin's temple, Shōinji, in Shizuoka, once insisted on *Hakuin shū* and set the temple as the headquarters. The temple belonged to the Myōshinji denomination once after that, but now it has become independent.

Hakuin zenji den, or “*Biography of Zen Master Hakuin*,” published in 1904, identifies Zen master Hakuin as the reviver of the modern Rinzai genealogy, saying that it is no exaggeration to identify Hakuin as the reviver of the modern Zen world.³⁷ This description is important because this book was supervised by Sōen, who is also one of the powerful representatives of Meiji Zen and an apologist of Hakuin as the tradition’s reviver. It is possible, then, to suggest that Hakuin’s identity is a relatively recent product, more so than one would expect.

Internal and Institutional Rinzai Politics: Hakuin as a Political Scapegoat

1. Buddhist Position in the Meiji Political Oppression

We need to examine another dimension of the history of Hakuin as the reviver. I suggest that in addition to the political context of the early modern period, the identification of Hakuin as such is a product of internal Rinzai politics and institutional disputes during the period since the beginning of the Meiji reforms. Drawing upon Ōsaki’s publication (1904) where both Sōen and Ōsaki identified Hakuin as the tradition’s *de facto* founder, it is important to note that it is in 1903 that Hōkōji became an independent denomination, separating from the Nanzenji denomination, while in 1905 the Buttsūji denomination separated from the Tenryūji denomination and the Kokutaiji denomination split away from the Shōkokuji denomination. These events are important because they remind us to think of Buddhism’s oppressed political position under the Meiji government’s religious policies at that time. Buddhist institutions, or, more accurately, Buddhism as a whole, confronted a number of threats and challenges in the beginning of the Meiji period:

³⁷ For more information, see Ryōen Ōsaki, ed., Shaku Sōen, *Hakuin zenji den* (Tokyo: Morie shoten, 1904), pp. 175-76.

for example, the proclamation mandating the separation of Shintō and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*), the disestablishment of the state's patronage of Buddhism, the abrogation of mandatory temple affiliation, seriously affecting temples' economies, and the movement to destroy Buddhism (*haibutsu kishaku*) in which numerous temples were destroyed and monks were killed or forcibly laicized.³⁸ These threats and challenges to Buddhism were led under the Meiji government's project to formulate the dominant nationalization of Shintō, although it was not necessarily successful in the end. Under this severe persecution, Buddhism eventually had to seek any possible ways for survival. Here are some examples of the movements of *shinbutsu bunri*, *haibutsu kishaku*, and the Great Promulgation Campaign.

A. *Shinbutsu bunri*

The *shinbutsu bunri*, issued in 1868, is one of the governmental policies established by the Meiji Reformation. Promulgated as the first step to elevating Shintō as the state religion, this policy caused a series of events collectively known as the *haibutsu kishaku*, the destruction of Buddhist establishments, which reached a climax at the beginning of the 1870s. Let me show two examples of the implementation of the separation: the Miwa Shrine and the Tōnomine Shrine. The Miwa Shrine in Nara Prefecture, linked with several temples during its long history, had established a unique lineage known as Miwa Shintō, heavily influenced by Shingon Buddhist doctrine that stressed a series of esoteric initiation rituals. In 1871 “the shrine was declared a Major Imperial Shrine, the highest rank except for the Ise Grand Shrine.”³⁹ The shrine's hereditary priestly positions were abolished and the

³⁸ For more information, see *Bukkyo bunka jiten* (Tokyo: Kōsei shuppansha; 1989), pp. 875-76 and *Nihon bukkyoshi jiten* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999), pp. 847-48.

³⁹ Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the State, 1868-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 82.

priests (traditionally both served by male and female) were dispersed, and, in turn, the leadership of the shrine was assumed by men assigned by central administrators in Tokyo. The shrine's official history, completed in 1873, omitted all reference to Buddhism in the shrine. The government later established an office in the shrine called the Miwa Kyōkai for preaching Shintō and the shrine developed rites for victory in war as well as for revering the imperial household.

Allan Grapard also gives us remarkable data about this separation. Taking the example of the Tōnomine, which is the temple-shrine enshrining Nakatomi Kamatari (later, Fujiwara no Kamatari, 614-669), the head of Religious Affairs of the Ritsuryō (imperial rescript) government, Grapard argues that Japanese religiosity was intricately connected to the discourse of Shintō-Buddhist combinations over the centuries and that any separation of the two caused drastic shifts in Japanese religious attitudes. The Tōnomine Shrine was also damaged by the separation movement. For example, all monks had to return immediately to lay life or to become Shintō priests. All Buddhist representations, buildings and objects at the center had to be removed. All divinities bearing syncretic names had to be renamed.⁴⁰ What Grapard underlines in this separation policy is not just these political oppressions that Buddhism experienced, but also the necessary effects that the policy brought about. These effects are “an abrupt disruption of the cultural discourse [Buddhist and Shintō combinations] and the creation of a Shintō divinity that appears to be quite empty of religious character, for the simple...reason that it never was Shinto to start with.”⁴¹ The separation policy created a vacuum of Japanese religiosity, or a vacuum in the meaning of popular religious life after its inherently indissoluble Buddhist elements were excluded. In this light, the Meiji

⁴⁰ Amaterasu omikami was considered to be Dainichi nyorai or Kōmyō daibontennō.

⁴¹ Allan G. Grapard, “Japan’s Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji (*Shinbutsu bunri*) and a Case Study: Tōnomine,” *History of Religions* 23 (1984), p. 262.

separation is considered to be a cultural revolution. The beginning of the Meiji era is the time in which Japanese Zen lost its grounding in culture and suffered from material deprivation as well as the state patronage it had enjoyed in the Tokugawa time. It had to look for some ways to regain its maintenance.

B. *Haibutsu kishaku*

This movement to destroy Buddhism, followed by the separation policy, is the movement in which “the pent-up resentment of the Shinto priesthood was unleashed in ferocious, vindictive destruction. Buddhist priests were defrocked, lands confiscated, statuary and ritual implements melted down for cannon.”⁴² Even in a remote place such as the Oki Islands, about forty to eighty kilometers northwards off the coast of the main island of Japan, this movement caused such oppression. According to Yasumaru Yoshio, for example, during several months starting from March 1869, temples, statues, ornaments, and even Buddhist altars in the lay people’s houses were destroyed, and all of the forty-six temples on the main island were demolished. Shintō shrines were “regenerated” by the wrecking of their Buddhist statues and altar fittings. In Genpukuji, a temple off the main island, the head of the temple’s main Buddha statue, Dainichi nyorai, was cut off, and its other statues and sutras were also ruined and further smeared with excrement. Fifty-three out of about seventy priests on all of the islands were laicized, and they became farmers. Further, in the case of Toyama Prefecture, the government attempted to merge all of the 313 temples in that area into only six temples (primarily one temple for each sect: Rinzai and Sōtō were counted as one sect; East Honganji and West Honganji were counted as one; Jishū was merged with Tendai; and Shugendō was consolidated with Shingon.) The temples’ statues and ornaments were burned and

⁴² Hardacre, *Shintō and the State, 1868-1988*, p. 28.

their bells were taken down.⁴³

Taking as one of the examples most influenced by this destruction movement, Yasumaru also provides the case of Shūgendō, or the practice of mountain ascetics that combines the worship of *gongen* (mountain deities as simultaneous manifestations of Buddhas and kami) with ascetic pilgrimages to the mountains. According to Yasumaru, while it was declared that the *gongen* were really Shintō kami, the government's religious policy allowed Shintō to co-opt the centers of Shūgendō. Also, the Shūgen sect was outlawed in September, 1872, and the practitioners, called *yamabushi*, were required to become Shintō priests or to return to lay life (usually becoming farmers). In the end, attempts were made to turn such Shūgendō pilgrimage sites as Mt. Fuji, Mt. Yoshino, Mt. Dewa sanzan (Haguro, Gassan, and Yudono) into Shinto establishments. Many former practitioners who joined the Shintō priesthood had to change their religious identities overnight.

C. The Great Promulgation Campaign

The so-called “Great Promulgation Campaign” (*taikyō senpu undō*) was the national indoctrination movement essentially propagating three teachings: 1) “respect for the gods, love of country”; 2) “making clear the principles of Heaven and the Way of Man”; and 3) “reverence for the emperor and obedience to the will of the court.”⁴⁴ This campaign was pushed forward with the establishment of the Ministry of [Religious] Instruction (*Kyōbushō*) in 1872. In this project, Buddhist and Shintō priests assigned as National Evangelists (*kyōdōshoku*) became more active in

⁴³ For more details, see Yoshio Yasumaru, *Kamigami no meijiishin* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1979), pp. 90-99.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43. These three teachings are in Japanese as follows: 1) “敬神愛国ノ旨ヲ体スベキ事”; 2) “天理人道ヲ明ニスベキ事”; and 3) “皇上ヲ奉戴シ朝旨ヲ遵守スベキ事.” See Yasumaru Yoshio, *Kamigami no Meiji ishin: Shinbutsu bunri to haibutsu kishaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1979), pp. 182-83.

preaching this Great Teaching all over Japan as joint Shintō-Buddhist proselytization. These National Evangelists were administered by the Great Teaching Institute (*Daikyōin*),⁴⁵ which was fostering a closer relationship between Buddhism and the state, which in turn caused a clash between Buddhism and Christianity. It is important to note that Rinzai priest Ogino Dokuon, a compiler of the work *Kinse zenrin sobōden* in 1890 and identifier of Hakuin as the man who rejuvenated the Rinzai tradition, served once as the Abbot of this Great Teaching Institute and also served as the Abbot of the Three Schools of Rinzai, Sōtō, and Ōbaku.⁴⁶ Thus it is important to pay attention to how he represented Hakuin. The three different sects of Zen were categorized as a single Zen school in the same way that several sects of Buddhism were categorized as a single Buddhism *vis-à-vis* Shintō under the Meiji government. Under all of these governmental oppressions of Buddhism, it was necessary to regenerate the Zen tradition.

2. Zen's Response: The Rise of Fourteen Rinzai Denominations

The managing of the joint Shintō-Buddhist proselytization by the Great Teaching Institute was short-lived. It was eventually abolished in 1875, the abolition being decisively led by the secession of the True Pure Land sect (more specifically, its four denominations) under the leadership of Shimaji Mokurai (1838-1911), who insisted on the “separation of Shintō and Buddhism” and the “freedom of religion.” Regarding the Zen sect, both the Rinzai sect and the Sōtō sect became independent in 1874, while the Ōbaku sect became independent from the Rinzai sect in 1876,

⁴⁵ According to Yasumaru's analysis, the number of the National Evangelists is 7,247 as of 1874: (Shintō priests, 4,204; Buddhist priests, 3,043). However, as of 1880, the number of Buddhist priests is more than 100,000: (Rinzai priests, 6,054; Sōtō priests, 16,713). For more information, see *Yasumaru's Kamigami no Meiji ishin*, pp. 182-83.

⁴⁶ The Meiji government assigned the “president” in each Buddhist sect in order to have jurisdiction over the Buddhist priests of National Evangelists.

which is the same year that the Rinzai sect was divided into nine denominations: Nanzen, Tenryū, Shōkoku, Kennin, Tōfuku, Kenchō, Engaku, Daitoku, and Myōshin.⁴⁷ This was followed by Buttsūji and Kokutaiji's independence in 1905, and by 1908 the fourteen denominations of Rinzai today were all present.⁴⁸ After the dissolution of the Great Teaching Institute, each of these denominations/institutions, which assigned its own abbot to control and administer it, ended up separating from the joint Shintō-Buddhist proselytization policy and teaching independently, but their own teaching activities were still limited under the governmental restriction of keeping the three teachings propagated by the Great Teaching Promulgation Campaign.

These historical events, which are crucial in understanding the history of those Rinzai denominations, tell us the importance of reconsidering how they showed their complete independence, how they showed their religious legitimacy and practicality to the political power, and thus how they tried to reform themselves. I think that the factional activities in the Rinzai sect, such as teaching, produced the second strategy for each faction's survival. That is to say, such factional activities reflect a kind of free competition among the Buddhist institutions to prove their effectiveness in response to the ideological demands of the state, but, at the same time, this movement is also actually a phenomenon in which Rinzai Zen reforms were being practically proposed and carried out. I suggest that the internal Rinzai politics and institutional disputes during the Meiji period had a strong influence on

⁴⁷ For more information, see *Zengaku daijiten* (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 2000), p. 1192; *Nihon bukkyoshi jiten*, p. 1079; Atsushi Ibuki, *Zen no rekishi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), pp. 288-89.

⁴⁸ In 1880 the Eigen denomination became independent from the Tōfuku denomination; the Hōkō from the Nanzen in 1903; the Buttsū from the Tenryū and also the Kokutai from the Shōkoku in 1905; and finally in 1908 the Kōgaku from the Nanzen. See *Zengaku daijiten*, pp. 686-89; Ibuki's *Zen no rekishi*, pp. 288-89. Significantly, the system of the National Evangelists was abolished and the right to appoint and dismiss priests was delegated to the president of each sect in 1884, the time when the Meiji Emperor awarded Hakuin the National Master title *Shōshū*. See *Bukkyo bunka jiten*, p. 876.

the shaping of not only the Rinzai tradition as a whole, but also on the identification of Hakuin as the reviver in order to assert a unified identity of the Rinzai sect.

Further, this suggestion is buttressed by the incidental result of the denominational independence, the result that the basis of the present monasteries which those denominations have opened was, therefore, a relatively recent establishment: for example, in order of oldest to newest, Tenryū; 1766; Engaku 1769; Enpuku 1786; Nanzen 1798; Shōkoku 1820; Shōgen 1847; Daitoku 1872; Myōshinji 1878; Tōfuku 1882; Kenchō 1884; Kokutai 1893; Kennin 1898; Heirin 1904; Zuigan 1926; Ryūtaku 1941; and Rinzai 1949; incidentally, Ōbaku sect had its monastery in 1876.⁴⁹ Together with the establishment of the monasteries, it is a consequence that Hakuin, whose lineage was the only extant one, was touted as the *de facto* founder of the Rinzai tradition. In short, the Hakuin we have been taught to remember today is an ideological fallout of the internal revival movements in the Meiji and Taishō periods.

3. Hakuin as the Rinzai scapegoat vis-à-vis the Sōtō Institution

Again, from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century was the time for the Zen reformation to adjust its needs to the ideological demands and agendas of reality, precisely because the Zen tradition's adjustability is an issue of life and death. Also significant is the fact that Zen master Sōen, who represented modern Zen along with others such as Ogino Dokuon and who designated Hakuin as the reviver of the Rinzai Zen tradition, became the abbot three times in total, of the Engakugi (1892, 1916) and Kenchōji (1903) denominations. What is more significant is the fact that Sōen (and D. T. Suzuki as

⁴⁹ In Ōbaku sect, the monastery is called “*zendō*,” not “*sōdō*.” For more information, see *Shōwa Heisei zensōden: Rinzai Ōbaku hen*, ed., Rinzaikai (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2000) and Keiyū Sakurai, *Zenshū bunka shi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku shuppan, 1986).

his translator) attended the Chicago World Parliament of Religions in 1893 as the representative of the Zen school. It goes without saying that while Sōen (and D. T. Suzuki) made the greatest contribution to the promulgations of Zen in both the West and Japan, he also was central to Zen's formative development in Japanese Buddhism, especially from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵⁰

With regard to this formative development of Rinzai Zen during the Meiji period, we have to keep in mind the possibility of bolstering the Rinzai's own authority *vis-à-vis* its institutional rival, the Sōtō sect. That is, Hakuin was used as a Rinzai scapegoat against its rival Sōtō institution. Regarding Sōtō revival movements, William Bodiford argues, "Since the Tokugawa period various groups of Sōtō monks have promoted competing images of Dōgen as a standard for discrediting earlier Sōtō practices and for justifying reforms aimed at reshaping Sōtō institutions."⁵¹ He demonstrates, "While their interpretations of Dōgen have differed, one constant has been the tendency to interpret many medieval developments as deviations from an idealized 'orthodoxy' attributed to Dōgen."⁵² This historical reductionism indicates the invention of Dōgen as the founder of the Sōtō sect. This invention was primarily carried out by the Sōtō monks such as Manzan Dōhaku (1636-1715) and Menzan Zuihō (1683-1769), whose goal was to revive the traditional conception of the master-disciple Dharma transmission

⁵⁰ Sōen's address at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions in 1893 is included in *The World's Congress of Religions*, edited by J.W. Hanson (Chicago: The Monarch Book Company, 1894), pp. 388-90. The title of his address is *The Law of Cause and Effect, as Taught by Buddha*. Here, he does not mention Hakuin as the representative of Japanese Rinzai or Rinzai as the Zen of Hakuin. He talks about Buddhism as the law of cause and effect and explains the constantly changing nature of all existence and phenomena. This approach to understanding the meaning of Buddhism in the constant flux of things, thus empty in nature, is mystic and experiential.

⁵¹ William Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. xii.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. xii. Also see Bodiford's article "Dharma Transmission in Sōtō Zen: Manzan Dōhaku's reform Movement," *Monumenta Nipponica* 46, no. 4 (1991): pp. 423-51.

supposedly taught by Dōgen in his work *Shōbō Genzō* by focusing on the primary importance of the “seal by the face to face transmission,” rather than mere “*satori*.” Promoted by the publication of the *Shōbō Genzō* (95 vols.) in 1816 to celebrate the 550th anniversary of Dōgen, the revival of the Japanese Sōtō sect was accomplished by returning to Dōgen. Namely, this revival equated Sōtō exclusively with the teachings of Dōgen. Confronting and competing with the Sōtō sect as its institutional rival, the Rinzai sect in the Meiji period might have met its need to establish an authoritative figure of its tradition, someone competitive with Dōgen. In short, Hakuin is a consequence of this reform movement of the Rinzai tradition.

It may be useful here to remember Foucault’s words: “What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origins; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.” I argue that the identification of Hakuin as the reviver is no exception to this rule. It is critically important to underline this historical and religious contrast: whereas Dōgen’s lineage is the only one that exists today in the Japanese Sōtō tradition, his contemporary Rinzai monk, Nampō Jōmyō’s lineage, succeeded by Shūhō Myōchō, Kanzan Egen, and Hakuin, i.e., the “Ō-Tō-Kan-Paku line,” is the only one that exists today in the Japanese Rinzai tradition. In fact, herein might lie one reason the ecclesiastical authorities of Japanese Rinzai trace their “Japanese religious heritage” back to the monk Nampō. I propose that Rinzai’s competitive response to Sōtō’s established status resting on Dōgen was to establish Hakuin as the tradition’s reviver or *de facto* founder whose Zen was the single extant lineage in the tradition, thus representing Hakuin as the Rinzai cultural pedigree that the tradition was proud of. The ecclesiastical authorities behind this construction or image production of Hakuin were transmitters of the tradition, yet simultaneously cultural creators and inventors of it.

It is probable that the idea, repeated *ad nauseam* in “some clearance bin,”

that Hakuin had systematized and organized the present *kōan* system and thus was its creator might be a later institutional enhancement added around this “Hakuin cultural pedigree.” The present *kōan* system was organized by Hakuin’s later disciples such as Inzan Ien (1751-1814) and Takujū Kosen (1760-1833), who were the direct disciples of Gasan Jitō (1727-1797), who himself was a direct disciple of Hakuin. In this light, it is not right to recognize Hakuin as the reviver because he is the creator of the Rinzai *kōan* system. After all, the identification of Hakuin as the reviver should reflect something of an active, creative remembrance in the Zen tradition.

In the next section, I discuss how a series of collections of Hakuin’s written works can be seen as a means of constructing his image and who the agents of this constructed image are.

Milestone Works on Hakuin: The Rise of Collected Works

A number of essays, theses, and monographs on Hakuin have been published over the years since his death. They are fewer in number, however, in comparison to those on other popular Buddhists such as Dōgen, Shinran, Nichiren, Ryōkan (1758-1831), and Ikkyū Sōjun (1394-1481). All the materials on Hakuin are written with the sole attention to the three limited visions, i.e., the Hakuin triad. Regarding the publication of collected editions of Hakuin’s writings, many types of his previously scattered writings have now become accessible in printed and transcribed formats for the first time.

The first collected work which I have found is the *Collected Writings of the Priest Hakuin (Hakuin oshō zenshū, vol.1)*, published in 1898, compiling twelve writings in total, such as *Oradegama, Hebiichigo, Sashimogusa, and Yasenkanna,*

plus a brief biography of Hakuin. *Oniazami* and *Kabezoshō* are not included. Following this edition, nineteen writings (including a biography) were compiled in 1902 as the *Wide Record of Hakuin* (*Hakuin kōroku*, 2 vols.). *Hebiichigo*, *Sashimogusa*, and *Kabezoshō* are not included. These two above are the collections on Hakuin that were published during the Meiji period.

During 1934-1935, a much-enlarged version of the earlier editions was published as the *Complete Works of Priest Hakuin* (*Hakuin oshō zenshū*), an eight-volume collection including previously unavailable works such as *Kabezoshō*, his legends, and even his disciples' recorded sayings and activities. This publication was groundbreaking due to its comprehensiveness; it is still an important source on Hakuin today. One of the major contributions that this collection made was its announcement that the original manuscript of the *Chronological Biography of Hakuin* (*Hakuin Nempu*) was extant.⁵³ In 1935, Hakuin's four writings, *Yasenkanna*, *Oradegama*, *Hebiichigo*, and *Sashimogusa*, were compiled for the *Collected Japanese Writings of Hakuin* (*Hakuin hōgoshū*). In 1938, the *Collection of Zen Master Hakuin's Writings* (*Hakuin zenjishū*) was published, edited by a well-known Buddhist scholar, Tokiwa Daijō, with more detailed explanations, analyses, and annotations than previous editions. Philip Yampolsky regarded Tokiwa's edition as the most reliable among others of his time, while Yampolsky translated the *Hebiichigo* into English, based on Tokiwa's edition. However, regarding his edition of *Hebiichigo* (Shōinji version, one of the three autographed manuscripts), it contains errors and unclear explanations in glosses and notations.⁵⁴ I return to this

⁵³ I refer to the transcription of this text presented in Rikukawa's *Hakuin Oshō shōden* (1963).

⁵⁴ In my future work, I propose to produce my annotated English translations on all the four extant versions of Hakuin's political treatise *Hebiichigo*. The four extant versions are three autographed manuscripts (the Shōinji, Kiichiji, and Eisei-bunko Museum versions) and one published version of an autographed manuscript (the Matsugaoka version), among which there is considerable variation, and I own copies of each of these versions. I propose to establish a more accurate translation of the *Hebiichigo*.

point, when we read currently published translations of Hakuin's works.

The most recent collection of Hakuin's writings in Japanese is the *Collected Japanese Writings of Zen Master Hakuin* (*Hakuin zenji hōgo zenshū*, 14 vols.), compiled and edited with more trustworthy analyses by Yoshizawa Katsuhiro between 1999-2003. Most of the previous errors and misconceptions have been pointed out and corrected in this publication. Further, the Institute for Zen Studies (*Zenbunka Kenkyūjo*), affiliated with the Myōshinji denomination, starting in 1997, has published the *Collection of Woodblock-Printed Reproductions of Zen Master Hakuin's Facsimile Holograph Editions* (*Hakuin zenji jihitsu kokuhon shūsei*), consisting of twelve writings in total (ten Japanese writings and two Chinese writings, in 30 vols.) Yoshizawa's *Collected Japanese Writings of Zen Master Hakuin* is the printed version of this copied version of both Hakuin's autographed and published manuscripts.

Hakuin as a Cultural Fashion: Recent Trend of Art Exhibitions

Mircea Eliade once asked how a historian of religion understands some hidden significance in the so-called cultural fashions. By the term "cultural fashion," I mean a culturally-determined current reflected as "manifestations of the *Zeitgeist*" and thus a cultural creation. When a particular subject, whether it is theory, philosophy, or art, becomes popular, the important thing to understand is the popularity as a cultural fashion in terms of what it has accepted and what it has ignored and rejected. In Eliade's words, "it is not a question of searching for *sources*," but for an "imaginary creative universe."⁵⁵ What about Hakuin then? How

⁵⁵ Mircea Eliade, "Cultural Fashions and the History of Religions" in *The History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding*, ed., Joseph M. Kitagawa with the collaboration of Mircea Eliade and Charles H. Long (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1967), p. 21. The emphasis is in

does his art become a cultural fashion? How do we understand a series of Hakuin's art exhibitions as this imaginary creative universe? I argue that the exhibition speaks in a loud voice displaying the religious experiential visions of his artistic works, while at the same time, being *à la mode, en vogue*, it also serves as an extension of the Rinzai tradition. I suggest that the exhibition of Hakuin functions as the museumified space of the ideal Hakuin that the tradition wants to convey to the public.

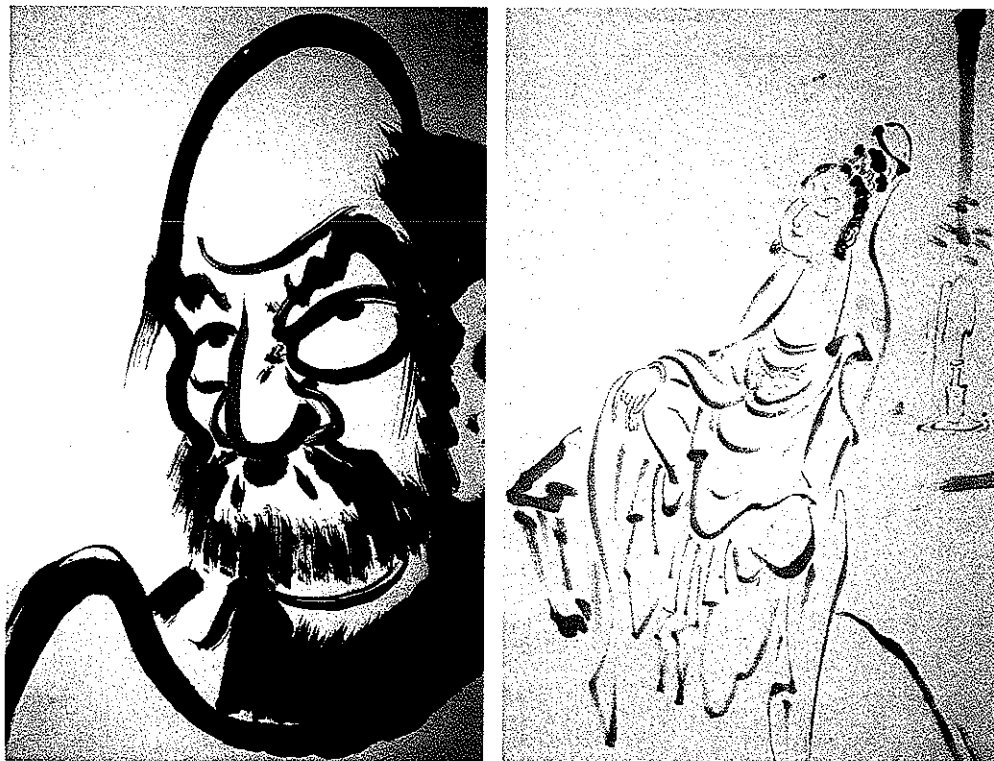


Figure 3: Bodhidharma (left) and Willow Kannon (right)⁵⁶

original.

⁵⁶ These paintings are preserved in Ryūunji, Tokyo.



Figure 4: Śākyamuni Descending the Mountain (left) and Calligraphy of “Tenjin of the Tenman Shrine, Deity of Absolute Freedom” (right)⁵⁷

The most popular trend in recent years among the Hakuin triad is his art. This is clearly reflected in the increasing number of exhibitions, symposiums, and forums of his artwork that are taking place in many places in Japan. For example, at the symposium entitled “*Why is Hakuin Art Now?*” (*naze ima Hakuin ga ka?*) held on December, 2006, at Waseda University in Tokyo, scholars of Japanese Art History, Aizawa Masahiko and Yamashita Yuuji, as well as some curators, focused on Hakuin’s paintings, ink drawings, and calligraphy. They looked at Hakuin’s artwork of Bodhidharma and Kannon simply as an art of religious experience. The essential point of this symposium was simply to advertise how Hakuin’s artwork produces something deeply powerful and terrifying, explaining his audacious brush

⁵⁷ This painting is preserved in Ryūunji, Tokyo; the calligraphy in Ryūgenji, Tokyo.

style, the deepness of color, and the strength of line full of energy as emanating from his awakening.

In addition to an exhibition held in Gifu Prefecture, there also took place a forum and an exhibition in Tokyo and Sendai, in Winter and Spring, 2008, respectively, presided over by the International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism and Zuiganji (both affiliated with Myōshinji headquarters). The former forum included lectures given by Norman Waddell, Yoshizawa Katsuhiro, and a scholar of Art History, Shimaō Arata; the latter exhibition included Yoshizawa, Shimaō, and Yamashita, with a special speech given by Genyū Sōkyū, a Rinzai priest, as well as an Akutagawa Prize winner of 2001. These forums and exhibitions offered not only the typical works of Bodhidharma, Kannon, Hotei, and the so-called “uniquely Hakuin,” that is to say, something “powerful,” “solid,” “profound,” “penetrating,” “settled,” “severe,” and other terms suggestive of a bold, decisive style. But they also offered the previously unavailable work depicting Bodhidharma. At the very least, it is important to underline that while Hakuin’s art was observed by the insiders of the tradition and art intellectuals, his calligraphy and considerable production of brush paintings were inevitably held up as examples of a highly developed capacity for religious experience in the Zen tradition. Hakuin’s works are also situated as “ZEN PAINTING,” the terminology “ZEN” being used in the same way D. T. Suzuki introduced Zen to the West as a philosophy/spirituality or “pure Zen” which exceeds religions, making sure that Zen has been given international attention. When such a metaphysical and antistructual claim is made, it turns out to be an ideological discourse.

In the summer of 2008, the exhibition entitled “*Hakuin and his Disciples*” (*Hakuin to sono deshitachi*) was held at the Eisei-bunko Museum in Tokyo, exhibiting more than fifty of Hakuin’s works in total, for example, the figure of

“National Master Ditō,” selected from the collections by Hosokawa Moritatsu. In January, 2009, in Numazu, Shizuoka Prefecture, there was held an exhibition showing Hakuin’s paintings of *Totō Tenjin* (lit., “Tenjin who went over to China.”) The idea of this *Totō Tenjin* comes from a story in which a court scholar and master poet, Sugawara no Michizane (845-903), identified as the Japanese deity Tenjin (lit., “God of Heaven”), the patron deity of scholarship and literature, travels to China in a dream, receiving dharma succession from the Chan master, Wuzhum Shifan (1178-1249), and returning to Japan bearing the branch of a plum tree, in a single night.⁵⁸ Next, let’s see the most recent Hakuin forum or exhibition in the U.S. in March 13, 2009, titled “The Hidden Message of Hakuin’s Zen Paintings,” at the Asia Society in New York City.

How Many Bodhidharmas are Needed?: At the Hakuin Forum in NY

It was Friday afternoon on March 13, 2009, in New York City, a very clear day in contrast to the cold, snowy weather we had had on the previous days. It was the day of the Hakuin Forum, held at the Asia Society, for the first time in the U.S. Titled “The Hidden Message of Hakuin’s Zen Paintings,” this forum was sponsored by the International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism (IRIZ) at Hanazono University, Kyoto, and by a sock company, Okamoto Corporation, Nara. It was free for the public. I visited it by myself. At 1:30 p.m., a half-hour before the forum’s start, there were several small groups of people standing in front of the building entrance on the corner of Park Avenue and 70th street. As the time approached 2p.m., several cabs stopped in front of the building, and many dressed-up women entered it at a smart pace. I was told that more than 200 people visited the forum.

⁵⁸ This legend of Sugawara no Michizane, created in medieval Zen circle centered on “Five Mountains” (*gozan*), I argue, plays a strategic role for the propagation of “Japanizing” Chan.

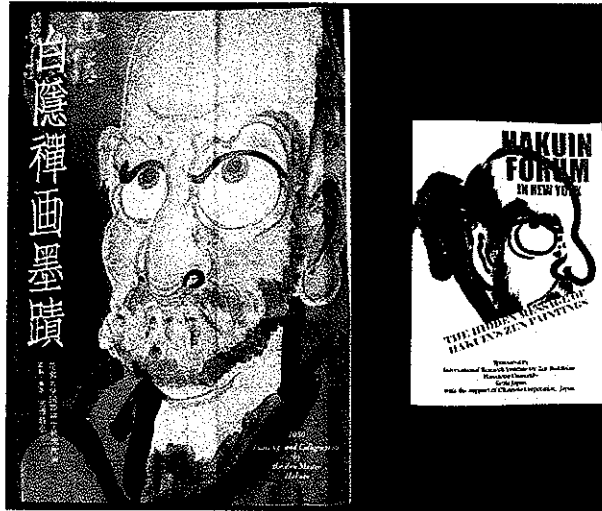


Figure 5: Pamphlets of Hakuin Forum in NY

I entered the Asia Society and tried to take a picture of the forum atmosphere, but the front desk clerks told me, “Please refrain from taking pictures.” Some of the clerks were certainly employees of the Okamoto sock company. After finishing my registration and receiving some pamphlets, I went to the main hall for the forum downstairs where Yoshizawa’s new publication of Hakuin’s art, containing a total of 1050 of his works, was exhibited and advertised by a display of several actual images from the publication. Those exhibited images were mostly what we have been taught as being so-called “uniquely Hakuin,” that is, his paintings of Bodhidharma, and other paintings and calligraphy which have been positioned as something powerful and mystical. Right next to this exhibition, there was displayed an enlarged version of Hakuin’s Daimyō Procession painting. While I was simultaneously curious and frustrated about such parallel settings of Hakuin’s art, this was a moment in which I soon sensed a certain consensus that Hakuin’s Daimyō Procession painting displayed next to this exhibition was no longer the subject of his social and political critique; rather it symbolized a more religious, mythical subject. And this sense turned out to be true, as the forum proceeded. How many

Bodhidharmas were displayed at the desk?



Figure 6: Display of the New Publication

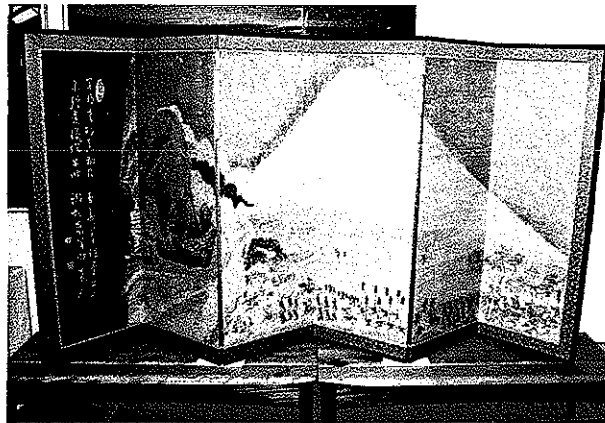


Figure 7: An Enlarged Daimyō Painting

I sat in the very back of the hall. The audience was made up of many kinds of people of all ages, including college students from Japan as well as the U.S., formal-suited men and women, and also probably members of the Asia Society. The person who was sitting next to me was, by chance, Stephen Addiss, Japanese art historian, from the University of Richmond. He talked to me about his plans to have Hakuin exhibitions in 2010-2011.

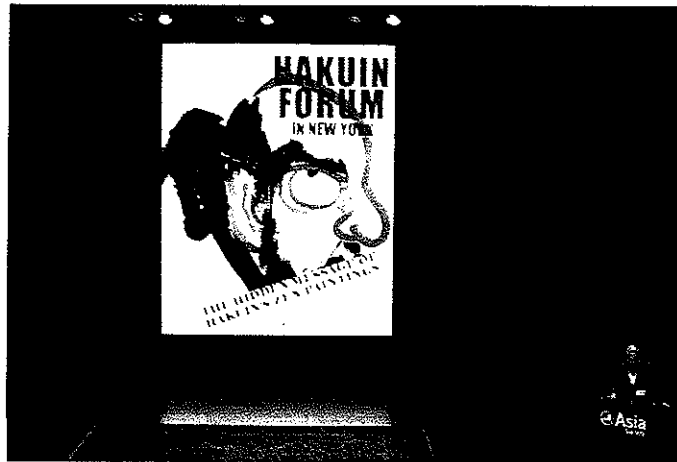


Figure 8: Opening of Hakuin Forum

With a big image of Bodhidharma on the back screen, the forum was opened with Thomas Kirchner's introduction, which was followed by Yoshizawa's lecture and DVD presentation and three presentations (10 minutes for each) by Professors Ōhashi Ryōsuke (philosophy and aesthetics, Ryōkoku University), Yamashita Yuji (Japanese Art History, Meiji Gakuin University), and Stephen Addiss. Thomas Kirchner, a Zen priest as well as researcher at the IRIZ, who was wearing his robes and who sees the important value of Hakuin's art in its spiritual significance and its teaching means, recounted brief life stories of Hakuin in a hagiographical sketch: his memory of hell in his childhood; his hard-training days in his youth; his first experience of enlightenment; his Zen-sickness experience; his meeting with Hakuyūshi; his enlightenment experience at the age of 42; and the rest of his life devoted to teaching. He stressed that for Hakuin, the enlightenment experience was important; however, the true meaning of the enlightenment experience was to save others.

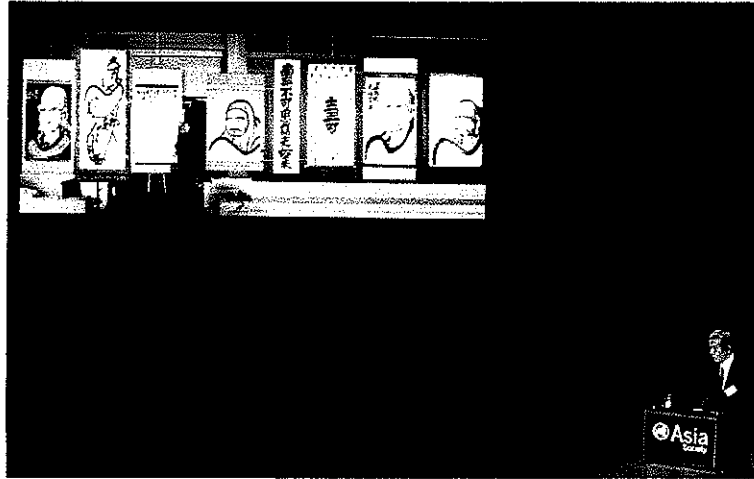


Figure 9: Yoshizawa and more Bodhidharmas

In his lecture entitled “A Reappraisal of Hakuin’s Zen Art,” Yoshizawa told us that Hakuin’s art of Bodhidharma is the most important of all his art. He introduced a series of Hakuin’s many representative paintings of Bodhidharma, which were produced in his 30s, 40s and 70s. What he was considering was not only the drastic differences revealed by a comparative observance of those paintings, but also Hakuin’s intention to produce Bodhidharma paintings. He emphasized the primary importance of understanding his paintings and his inscriptions written on those paintings as complete sets—not just the painting part, not just the inscription part; we have to see both together as his complete work. Yoshizawa then argued, “Hakuin was depicting not merely a historical Bodhidharma, but also, simultaneously, the psychological Bodhidharma, namely, the Buddha Dharma or Buddha nature.” This argument was supported by addressing a series of Hakuin’s inscriptions on his Bodhidharma paintings, reading: “Direct pointing to the human mind; see self-nature and attain Buddhahood,”⁵⁹ “Bodhidharma cannot be drawn nor expressed in inscriptions;” “I have painted several thousand Bodhidharmas, yet have never depicted his True Face;” and “If you think this face is that of

⁵⁹ In Japanese, “jikishi ninshin kenshō jōbutsu.”

Bodhidharma, then you are a cat who cannot catch a mouse.” Yoshizawa insisted, “Hakuin’s paintings must be understood along with the inscriptions; painting and words complete Hakuin’s work,” and, “Hakuin described the Dharma or Buddha nature as ineffable and unexplainable.” How many Bodhidharmas were exhibited in this forum as Hakuin’s representative art for the audience who was mostly Americans? There were a lot. In Shakespeare’s words, “The lady doth protest too much, methinks.”

In this framework of understanding Hakuin’s art, Yoshiwaza explicated Hakuin’s Daimyō Procession painting.⁶⁰ Placing the primary importance on the inscriptions written on that painting, which indicates that Hakuin depicted the “true face of Bodhidharma,” he argued, “This work is not just his political criticism, although I had a certain period when I was thinking of it in that way.” But today his thinking has changed. While Mt. Fuji symbolizes the Buddha-nature or the self-nature and thus represents the spiritual, sacred world, the daimyō procession in question represents the secure, everyday reality. He also understands that the contrasting images represent a Mahayana principle: seeking enlightenment above; saving others below. During the lecture, he further developed his idea that these two images or ideas should not be taken as two completely different or antagonistic positions, but rather as the two sides of the same coin, which teaches ultimately “Direct pointing to the human mind; see self-nature and attain Buddhahood.” Yoshizawa declared, “This painting is the best work among Hakuin Dharmas (and Bodhidharmas).” This painting never goes beyond the category of a spiritual subject.

Professor Ōhashi, in his presentation entitled “The Third Wave of Japonisme: Zen Expression in a Globalistic Age,” focused on Hakuin’s art not merely as an

⁶⁰ For more details of my discussions of this painting, see Chapter 7, where I show Yoshizawa’s interpretations of it and my understanding of it.

object of interest of internal spirituality or exoticism, which was the traditional approach to Zen art in the twentieth century, but as an “autonomous expression of a quite contemporary sense of design.” Ōhashi called this unique expression of Zen art “twenty-first century Japonisme” and defined it as giving expression to “emptiness” or the way of expressing something inexpressible. In this way, Hakuin’s art, represented by his Bodhidharma paintings, manifests a feeling of, or fosters a sense of freedom, humor, and powerfulness, which has, however, not just power, but deep quietness and profundity. To me, what he was arguing by this “Japonisme” as being characteristic of Hakuin’s art is the same conventional approach to the priority on the spiritual and religious values of Zen art; probably his emphasis is on the means of expression, not on the impression of the art itself. In any case, everyone uses Hakuin’s Bodhidharma paintings.

Professor Yamashita, in his presentation entitled “Hakuin and Sesshū: Two Types of Bodhidharma Paintings,” evaluated the fifteenth-century Zen monk Sesshū’s Bodhidharma painting as being lesser than Hakuin’s.⁶¹ He argued, “Sesshū’s work should be removed from its lofty evaluation as a National Treasure and viewed as the work of an ordinary fellow with a certain degree of artistic talent, while Hakuin’s work should be evaluated from its roots in popular spirituality and situated in the context of orthodox Japanese art history.” Yamashita sees Sesshū’s work as “graphic painting” or “the painting that is explaining something,” while positioning this figure as a Zen artist. For Yamashita, Hakuin stands at the opposite

⁶¹ Here, Sesshu’s Bodhidharma painting is the one in the collection of the Sainenji in Aichi Prefecture and which is a Japanese National Treasure depicting the famous story of Chan history in which Huike, the second patriarch, cut off his arm and offered it to Bodhidharma, in order to show his determination to seek the Way. Hakuin’s Bodhidharma painting is the one in the collection of Manjuji in Oita Prefecture. Interestingly, Yamashita told us that while Sesshū’s one work of art is registered as a National Treasure and 6 works as important cultural property, none of Hakuin’s works have been assigned as important cultural property either at the municipal or prefectural levels, to say nothing of the national level.

pole. Hakuin had no consciousness of himself as an artist, and he simply produced his art work as an alternative means of spreading teachings as well as at the request of people. Yamashita sees the artistic value of Hakuin's work not in its professionalism, but instead in its simplicity and popularity out of which the spirit of Hakuin's Zen is manifested.

Professor Stephen Addiss, in his presentation entitled "A Hakuin Exhibition in America," advertised a series of Hakuin exhibitions scheduled for 2010-11 which he is currently planning. The exhibition is titled "The Sound of One Hand: Paintings and Calligraphy by Zen Master Hakuin." He introduced the seven categories of Hakuin's art which were to be displayed at the exhibition: 1) An Artistic Biography of Hakuin; 2) Buddhist, Shintō, and Folk Deities; 3) Zen Subjects; 4) Daily Life, Birds and Animals; 5) Confucian Themes and Painting-Calligraphy Interactions; 6) Hotei as Everyman; and 7) Followers of Hakuin. This categorization shows, he said, "How Hakuin not only carried on an earlier monk-painting tradition, but also developed many new subjects, creating new visual means for Zen." These means are to convey the importance of the "sound of one hand" *kōan*, as his exhibition title indicates. As a recent scholarly fashion of Hakuin's art, as Yoshizawa has strongly considered as critically important how and in what ways Zen or Hakuin's teaching is expressed, the visual techniques Hakuin uses, such as "scroll within scroll," "painting in painting," and "character pictures," have been more and more paid attention. Thus, how Hakuin's Bodhidharma is depicted has been the primary concern.

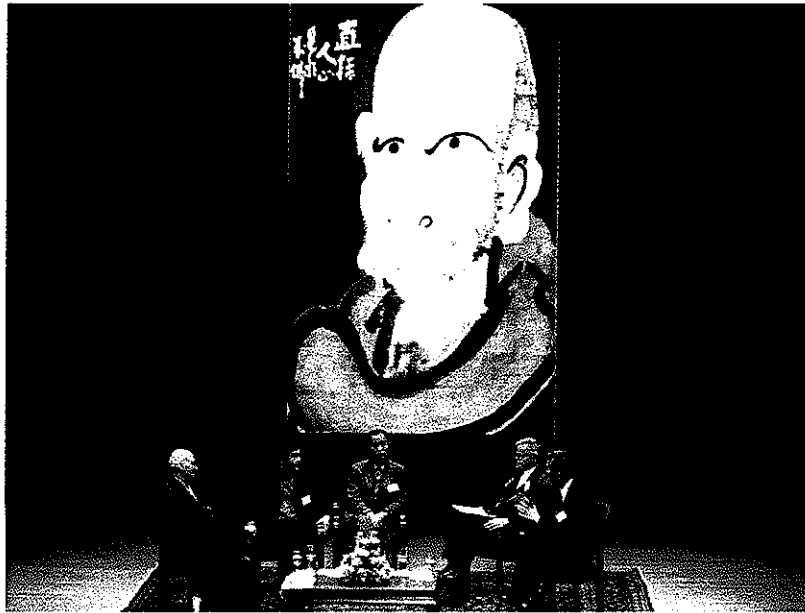


Figure 10: Round-Table Talk of Hakuin's Art

At the end of the forum, Yoshizawa reminded us, “In understanding Hakuin’s art, what is currently becoming the most important is to study the inscriptions on his art, because paintings and calligraphy tell us something more than meanings while the inscriptions tell us Hakuin’s determined meanings and exact intentions.” Is this argument the incidental consequence for Yoshizawa, who positions “Hakuin as neither a religious man nor artist, but a ‘hyōgenka’ (lit., ‘expressionist’)”? He stresses, “One of the purposes in having the Hakuin Forum today is thus to convey the accurate meanings and interpretations of Hakuin.” The primary importance of studying Hakuin’s inscriptions is the necessary condition to understand Hakuin accurately. Unfortunately, Hakuin’s Daimyō Procession painting is simply dismissed as Zen spiritual as well as dogmatic art.

When I left the hall, I looked again at that painting placed next to the exhibition of several images of “uniquely Hakuin paintings and calligraphy” from the new publication of Hakuin’s art. I wondered if we were a long way from divesting ourselves of these essentialism of Hakuin studies. I wondered when the

haunted Hakuin would be freed from the spell? How many Bodhidharmas were displayed on this day? This figure is everywhere. Hakuin's moral voice with the cautionary note sounded approximately 260 years ago has remained unheeded.

The increasing number of exhibitions of Hakuin in recent years represents a commercial strategy which the tradition uses to advertise Hakuin's greatness and attraction as its own "religion of man." As the exhibitions, as well as the Hakuin displayed and introduced in those exhibitions, become a cultural fashion, this strategy simultaneously serves as a source of exercising the tradition production projects for authority and authenticity. Whether publishing the collected editions of Hakuin's literary works or holding exhibitions of Hakuin's art, this essential camouflage, masking the tradition's programming of who Hakuin must be, accounts for the fact that the "Hakuin" elaborately chosen and displayed in museum-like places is primarily social and serves as a foil to spread not only the Rinzai tradition's own brand, Hakuin Zen, but also the tradition itself. While people encounter the Hakuin refashioned in this tradition's unique way, the exhibitions become "the clearance bins out of which Andy fished her lumpy blue sweater." If I follow this position that the Hakuin that has been transmitted by the tradition is prominently social, as Foucault shows, what the tradition exercises in this process has the performative power of (re)producing a master narrative (partly as a process of limitation) and proliferating discourse labeled "Hakuin" Zen. This view reveals that the Hakuin we remember is not a mere given but rather a product or an artificial construct. This function of the production projects concerning who Hakuin should be, how he can be popular, and how he can be sold, can be seen in the business field of the fashion industry.

Today Zen master Hakuin is receiving greater attention from a wider range of people. He has been a subject in the classes of many universities in both Japan

and the U.S. His name has been seen in many bookstores. His artistic works have been exhibited at many places such as public museums, community centers, or temples in Japan, and also extended to the U.S. this year. A person who encounters Hakuin on such occasions finds this figure powerfully mystic, and assures that his art reflects the workings of his religious experience in Rinzai Zen. He *thinks* that this “experiential Hakuin” announces his memory determination, or his own finding, in understanding this Zen master, even to the point of exempting himself from the tradition as an established social consensus. As we learned from Miranda in *The Devil Wears Prada*, we now know that the Hakuin he is encountering was selected for him much earlier from “a pile of stuff.” I am interested in looking into this “pile of the stuff” out of which I can pick the long-isolated aspect of this brilliant Rinzai Zen master, one with a cogent moral voice.

CHAPTER TWO

RETHINKING THE MECHANISMS OF TRADITION AND THE ROLE OF CULTURAL MEMORY

Encountering Memory

Zen Authorities' Memory and Questioning the Certitude

This chapter starts with five stories of Hakuin recollected by present Rinzai representatives: Matsubara Taidō, Kōno Taitō, Nonomura Genryō, Yokota Nanrei, and Hosokawa Keiichi. The authority of the Buddhist thinker, introduced in the preface, Matsubara Taidō recounts the following:

Hakuin set a high value on mental healing and wrote his work *Yasenkanna* ["Idle Talk on a Night Boat"], and this was actually to save practitioners who suffered from mental sickness and fatigue, on the basis of his own experience. This writing was also known in general as the "book of health," when I was young. In fact, when I developed tuberculosis after the demobilization in 1945, it was very helpful in curing it for me. It was Hakuin who considered even sickness to be an occasion for practice and who pursued the primary importance of *kōan* study in meditation that characterizes the Zen of Hakuin, and thus the climate of the Japanese Rinzai School today. But it was also Hakuin who taught Zen teaching to the populace in simple language as a part of his teaching activities, for example, as shown clearly in the *Yasenkanna*. What I like in Hakuin most is, however, indeed his calligraphy of "*Namu jigoku daibosatsu*" ["Homage to the Great Bodhisattva of Hell"]. I like this, not because it represents his unusual talent for art as it is usually appreciated, but because I see how eagerly he devoted himself to teaching Zen to save people.⁶²

⁶² This is a transcription of my interview with him on January 4, 2008. The translation is mine.



Figure 11: “Homage to the Great Bodhisattva of Hell,” or “*Namu jigoku daibosatsu*”⁶³

The Zen master Kōno Taitō, 79 years old, at Ryōmonji recounts:

Although Hakuin’s teaching style in Japanese becomes an object of our attention, this not only means to make Zen something uniquely Japanese, to fit it to the Japanese people, and to adjust it to the Japanese cultural climate. But it also reflects his enthusiasm for spreading Zen to the populace. A good example of this is his work, *Kohiki uta* [lit., “Grain-Grinding Song”]. Further, Bankei⁶⁴ is like a grandfather to Hakuin in age, and it is hard to believe that they met directly. But, it is certain that Hakuin heard about Bankei’s “Unborn Zen (*pushō Zen*)” and saw its amazing popularity among the people due to his simple approach using simple language to teach. In fact, Hakuin’s “checking questions (*sassho*)” for the first barrier *kōan* “Sound of One Hand” are also

⁶³ *Hakuin: Zen to shōga* (Tokyo: Asatsu-DK, 2004), p 155.

⁶⁴ Bankei Yōtaku, 1622-1693

written in Japanese, and he must have been strongly influenced by Bankei. About 310 years after his death, I fully realize the importance of what Bankei did, because the *unsui* today do not understand *kōan* if it is written in *kambun*, and I have had to translate it into Japanese. Hakuin's teaching approach in Japanese not only indicates that he developed the Zen for the Japanese and made it Japanese. But, probably more appropriately, it is such a teaching approach that primarily proceeds from his great zeal for conveying Zen to the populace.⁶⁵

The Zen master Nonomura Genryō, 71 years old, at Heirinji recounts:

First of all, Hakuin is a gifted calligrapher, painter, and writer. Further, he is very "human" and has no attachment to position and status. We seldom see such a great religious man. His success is partly because he lived in a rural area like Numazu. If he had been in Edo, there would be a different story. Second, he tried to familiarize the lower class with Zen. As you know in *Jōdo-shinshū* of Shinran and *Jōdoshū* of Hōnen, Sōtō also tried to bid for popular support, which was eventually successful to some extent. However, Rinzai, called "Rinzai Shōgun," had developed only upward, the warrior class, and Hakuin tried to improve this tendency and to bring Rinzai to the level of Sōtō teaching activity. This is a key for Hakuin's success that struck a chord with the people. Third, Hakuin's Zen is intuitive and instinctive (in the sense of "no mind") and nothing theoretical at all, and it is not separate from reality. Because his Zen is not in the abstract, it survives eventually and penetrates to the populace. This intuitive Zen includes many aspects which only Japanese understand and which even Japanese do not understand. The deeper the "receiving device" of our mind is, the deeper we understand Hakuin. Remember the story when Hakuin was asked to write his words for congratulating a baby's birth and what he wrote: "Father dies, child dies, grandchild dies." How we see Hakuin, which is always a key question for us. Whenever we ask the question, he will live from now onward.⁶⁶

The Zen master Yokota Nanrei, 45 years old, at Engakuji recounts:

Hakuin was a man whose religious mind sprouted from getting rid of his falling into the pits of hell. He held his extraordinary sense for death since his childhood. This is the fundamental fear deeply rooted in the human mind.

⁶⁵ This is a transcription of my interview with him on June 9, 2005. The translation is mine. Kōno Taitsū (b. 1930-) is a former master of the Shōfukuji monastery in Kōbe as well as a former president of Hanazono University. Currently, he has founded a popular monastery opened for the public at his temple, Ryōmonji in Okayama.

⁶⁶ This is a transcription of my interview with him on August 4, 2007. The translation is mine. All of my brothers practiced under Nonomura Genryō (b.1938) for three years.

Let me talk about my experience. Although I was often asked, “Why did you often go to temples in your childhood?” the people, who did not have the same experience and feeling as I did, cannot at all understand me well enough. If I look over the past, I had a very similar infancy to Hakuin’s. He often visited *Tenjin* and chanted *Kannon-gyō* [*sūtra*], right? I did exactly the same things. I was treated as completely unusual in my hometown. Even I asked myself, “Am I odd?” However, when I first met Hakuin, he got me out of this situation: I thought, “What a coincidence! Just as I expected, there was a person who did the same thing as I do!” He helped me out of my life as a stranger, although it is very presumptuous to say that I did what Hakuin did. Whenever I read Hakuin’s texts, I was always encouraged by the feeling that “it is not only me.” When I was a kindergartner, if I heard *sūtras* from a temple, I was naturally attracted to the sound. When I saw festivals of *Jizō* or *Fudō*, I was naturally attracted to join them. So I had already memorized the *Heart Sūtra* in my elementary school days. I often chanted *sūtras* and enshrined a Buddha statue in my room. Hakuin also did the same thing, right? After all, this is the most religious root.⁶⁷

The chief priest of Myōshinji denomination, Hosokawa Keiichi, 69 years old, recounts:

Zen master Hakuin, called the reviver of the Rinzai sect, thinks that no one understands the subtle Zen of the Five Mountains and thus eventually nothing is conveyed. He sees the significance of Zen’s existence in its preaching the Great Dharma, or “saving all sentient beings,” and developed his own unique teaching activity. Speaking as of our time, as if a passage of a popular song is used as a TV commercial song, Hakuin showed through his art the Zen teaching which everyone can immediately understand. When we think of this enthusiasm, one of the reasons why Zen has been kept away from people, that is, giving its difficult images, lies in the lack of our efforts to expound the Zen in more simple and lucid ways. This is something responsible we have to pursue today.⁶⁸

These five stories, exemplifying the “received tradition” of Hakuin, left me with an

⁶⁷ This is a transcription of my interview with him on July 18, 2008. The translation is mine. Yokota Nanrei (b. 1964) is the master of the Engakuji monastery; Engakuji (as the headquarters of Engakuji denomination) is the place where my mother was born and grew up. Yokota often visited my grandfather, when he was young (before he started his Zen practice). I still remember when he was at my house and we had meals together.

⁶⁸ This is my interview with him on July 29, 2008. Hosokawa Keiichi (b. 1940) is my uncle, my aunt’s husband. He has been the chief of the Myōshinji denomination for the last 12 years and will retire in May 2009.

impression as well as a question. Even though it is clear that all these speakers are standing in their high positions in the tradition, my impression had to do with the way they narrated their recollections. They made their presentations in a straightforward, confident manner, displaying little doubt or hesitation. It was almost as if they were providing eye-witness accounts of how the past really was or of what had happened, and thus who Hakuin was. The idea that a competing account or one which relativizes their own certitude might exist seemed not to have been even an option in their minds. Partly overlapping their images of Hakuin with their own experiences, they underline the significance of Hakuin's Zen and show their different emphases, made with supreme confidence. For example, while Matsubara, as a preacher, primarily emphasizes Hakuin's tireless teaching activity, other Zen masters, Kōno, Nonomura, and Yokota, emphasize, respectively, his *kōan* practice, the experiential nature of his Zen, and the origin of his religiosity. Hosokawa, as the leader of the denomination, emphasizes Hakuin's energetic attitude for teaching as a model for improving the current tradition's teaching activities. This emphasis in their narratives is very important because it vouches for their certainty, and illustrates the point that who it is that remembers (in this case, prominent figures) becomes a crucial factor in framing memories.

On the other hand, the question I had was tied to this impression of their certainty. How do they know what they know? How does this then get passed on as "authoritative knowledge"? To begin with, do we know what kind of narrative we are dealing with here? The research done in cultural memory studies, usually focused on how people remember major, often traumatic events, can instruct us as we look at another cultural mechanism implicating memory: tradition. How then are their narratives so certain? Are we so certain that those speakers are really telling the truth about the historical Hakuin? How can their memories be "real" and "true," and what

makes them so? How can we be sure of not missing crucial aspects? To what extent are their memories social, cultural, and ideological? In essence, I wondered how these speakers gained and built their accounts of the past, especially of the past that occurred before their lifetime. I was almost tempted to ask each of them how he, a person who was not even alive at the time, could be so sure of what he was saying. After all, neither those speakers nor anyone else in their generations actually witnessed all the aspects of Hakuin—indeed Matsubara, the oldest among those speakers, was not even born until nearly fourteen decades after Hakuin’s death. When we think of how they remember Hakuin, this observation, while exposing an inescapable social phenomenon that the present influences the past, highlights the remembering process that is socially conditioned and culturally mediated in present contexts, the process in which people construct their relations to the past. And this very fact indicates that while it is the individual who remembers the past, remembering is more than just a personal act, but also a social and cultural act. We do not deny that those speakers had learned about Hakuin under circumstances in their sociocultural contexts, for example, where they were born and grew up, where they were trained and studied, and where they lived and worked. Such a learning process of the past inevitably leads them to establish their master narratives or “texts” of that past about who did what to whom, for what reasons, and in what context. It then is the master narratives that are formulated under the larger framework of the social and cultural milieus in the tradition to which the speakers belong. And there is little reason to doubt that this is how they developed their versions of accounts and memories of Hakuin. Questioning the Zen authorities’ memories reveals an important sociological assertion that memory is not as private as we are inclined to think.

Memory Certitude and the Role of Ideology

Here, I discuss the relationship between ideology and how the Zen authorities' memories are so "certain" or how these become "real" and "true," with no hint that they are missing other crucial aspects. By the term "ideology," I refer to Carol Gluck's definitions relying on Clifford Geertz's insight that "ideology renders social life significant for those who must live it,"⁶⁹ arguing that it is both real and true for those who live it. Here are Gluck's five main views: 1) Ideology not only reflects and interprets the social realities that sustain it, but it also constructs those realities and remains in constant dialectical relationship with them. 2) Because different people understand their worlds differently, there exists no single ideology, but a diversity of ideologies (or ideological formations) within a society. Thus, which, or whose, set of values and meanings becomes dominant, and by what means, are important questions to ask. 3) Ideology as a force "so permeates the society that...it seems commonsensical, natural, and at times invisible." However, it can be reflected in the means by which this permeation occurs. 4) Although ideological discourse seems to be singular and static, "it is in fact a plural and dynamic field of ideas and practices within which there are not only continuities and persistent determinations but also tensions, conflicts, resolutions and irresolutions, innovations and actual changes." 5) "All societies...produce ideologies which in turn help to reproduce the social order."⁷⁰ These definitions not only avoid the simple equation of ideology with its pejorative meaning as a systematic or manipulative political program (such as government indoctrination) or as a false consciousness, but they also allow for a more positive, complex, and nuanced treatment of the subject.

In fact, Gluck understands ideology as an essential social element for a

⁶⁹ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

society's production and reproduction mechanism—its very ability to be a society—because she understands that societies produce ideologies (or ideological formulations), yet are also produced by them. For these reasons, the ideology that sustains the society's formation and continuity, therefore, necessarily becomes real and true for those who live it. Applied from these perspectives, the above-mentioned Zen authorities' memories of Hakuin are indeed not only social and cultural, but also ideological products. Not merely because all the memories are narrated by the tradition's ecclesiastic authorities, but precisely because those memories are all reduced to the so-called Hakuin trilogy that has been accepted as the only "orthodox" interpretation of this Rinzai master in the Zen tradition, they are therefore ideological and must become "real" and "true" for those who live in the tradition. Interestingly, while Gluck discusses a multiplicity of ideologies, not a single ideology, and argues for the importance of asking which set of values and meanings becomes dominant, this question supports my inquiry of how we can be sure of not missing crucial aspects, which I questioned in order to argue against the certitude of their memories. The Zen authorities have completely missed a crucial aspect of Hakuin, which is his considerable role as a social critic and reformer. Nobody even mentioned this, not in those selected quotes or in longer conversations. Of course this aspect has never been included in the trilogy. Given hints from Gluck's views of ideology, while the selected aspects of Hakuin have been commonsensical, natural, and thus non-problematic, or, in her words, "invisible," the selective readings of their memories remarks their ideological nature in the tradition.

If the social and cultural milieu shapes our received image of the past and if the remembering process is a social, cultural, and ideological act, what is the relationship between tradition and memory? What should it be? How is memory culturally (re)produced and maintained in the course of the tradition? How does the cultural

memory play into the transmission of tradition? In essence, how do we understand the relationship between the dynamics of tradition formation, (re)invention, and maintenance, and the role of cultural memory in the tradition? In the following sections in this chapter, I deliberate on these questions by focusing on three important correlative notions: “tradition,” “tradition invention,” and “cultural memory.” I begin by considering the notion of what I term the “tradition mechanism” and understanding its role in society.

What is Tradition?

The term “tradition” itself indicates that there are things handed down or transmitted, *tradita*, and there is a continuity from the past to the present. How is tradition formed? Who are the agents of its production and (re)production? Does the above-mentioned definition of tradition fail to question the notion of continuity or maintenance? But does it help significantly to call into question the tendency of tradition to claim unchange in the face of change? How do we understand the tradition program that (re)produces the legitimacy of its continuity, yet needs to adapt to social change? How is tradition maintained? Considering these questions, I examine the notion of tradition by focusing on Peter L. Berger and Edward Shils.

Berger, in his work *The Sacred Canopy*, argues that man and society are mutually formed, and maintains that society is the product of men and vice versa. This is a useful starting point in understanding how tradition is formulated (and continuously reformulated) and who the agents for the formulation are. He says:

Society is a dialectic phenomenon in that it is a human product, and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts back upon its producer. Society is a product of man. It has no other being except that which is bestowed upon it by human activity and consciousness. There can be no social reality apart from man. Yet it may also be stated that man is a product

of society...[I]t is within society, and as a result of social processes, that the individual becomes a person, that he attains and holds onto an identity, and that he carries out the various projects that constitute his life. Man cannot exist apart from society. The two statements, that society is the product of man and that man is the product of society, are not contradictory.⁷¹

This analysis, insisting that society formations are tied to the human thought and action that produce and are produced by them, underlines the idea that society, culture, and tradition are primarily a human creation and predominantly social as well as ideological. In Berger's sense, such society, or tradition, does not march disembodied through time as something being continued from the past, but exists as a given object in a concrete and particular social context. Therefore, society is continuously produced and reproduced by people.

This dialectical process of society creation, Berger argues, includes three "moments" or steps: externalization, objectivation, and internalization.⁷² That is to say, first, people produce the social and cultural forms around them through their outpourings of expression of thought and activity (externalization); second, these expressions eventually take on the status of objective reality that in turn confronts its original producers as giving the facticity external to themselves (objectivation); and third, this objectivation is ultimately reincorporated in the subjective processes of consciousness (internalization), which again in turn shapes the society to which they belong. Essentially, although what we call society, culture, and tradition emanate from human thought and action, as Berger argued, those objects become objectified in a way that makes us lose sight of their origins in ourselves and come to determine the structures of our subjective consciousness.

This last line of social determination is very important, describing the process

⁷¹ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of A Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), p. 3.

⁷² For more information, see Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*.

of internalization and illuminating society that serves as an ideological constraint for human thought and action. It is important not merely because the view of this social determination supports Berger's argument that the man becomes the product of society, but also because it shows it is this constraint that helps to constitute social norms and to produce legitimation in order to insure those norms. In this sense, a given legitimation becomes socially defined and determined, as it serves to maintain the society that produces it. Berger sees in religious traditions an especially effective means of this legitimation, because, he thinks, religion is able to relocate human constructions from their places in history and impute them with a sacred frame of reference. In understanding such religious traditions, the society which is maintained through the legitimacy of religion, Berger finds the important role of religion as a legitimating agency in its workings of transforming human products into supra or sacred "facticities" based on which members of the society engage in their beliefs and practices.

Berger's position of man as the agent of society creation is buttressed by Edward Shils, who, in his encyclopedic work, *Tradition*, in 1981, insists that the decisive criterion of tradition is that "having been created through human actions, through thought and imagination, it is handed down from one generation to the next."⁷³ While Berger argues that culture is continuously produced and reproduced by people, Shils also contends, "Traditions are not independently self-reproductive or self-elaborating. Only living, knowing, desiring human beings can enact them and reenact them and modify them."⁷⁴ Thus, Shils also understands tradition as a human creation. However, he does not assume that this tradition as a human creation is static in nature and maintains its unchanged continuity. Nor does he assume that each

⁷³ Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14-5.

generation creates its own system of beliefs, patterns of practice, and institutions. Instead he assumes that tradition changes and is dynamic in nature, and that it produces and reproduces itself in its attempts at maintenance while also changing (though it instigates human beings to bring these actions).

Regarding this tradition mechanism, Shils' concern is to understand the tradition's simultaneous, but contradictory, functional responsibilities of maintenance and change. How does tradition maintain itself while, at the same time, it needs to adapt to constant social change? How does tradition give the legitimacy of continuity to what is in practice always changing? If tradition continues to be produced and reproduced, as I follow Berger's position, and if the tradition is a socially constructed object, how is this construction legitimated in the continuation of the tradition? In this light, tradition can be a very important part of the process of change. Shils writes, "Traditions change because the circumstances to which they refer change. Traditions, to survive, must be fitting to the circumstances in which they operate and to which they are directed."⁷⁵ Regarding this maintenance/changing mechanism of tradition as it serves as the essential function of the tradition's subsistence, he observes as follows:

Traditions develop because the desire to create something truer and better or more convenient is alive in those who acquire and possess them. Traditions can deteriorate in the sense of losing their adherents because their possessors cease to present them or because those who once received and reenacted and extended them now prefer other lines of conduct or because new generations to which they were presented find other traditions of belief or some relatively new beliefs more acceptable, according to the standards which these generations accept.⁷⁶

The common point here is that tradition can be reshaped to fit the present situation in which it finds the legitimacy of maintaining, while this legitimacy must

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 258.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

simultaneously accept its legitimacy of making it change. In this conception, the tradition is a social and cultural response to what the present milieus in which the tradition stands require to meet their demands. If a tradition, whether it is an established one or not, can meet those present demands—social, cultural, or historical—it can form, develop, change, and maintain itself; if not, it simply deteriorates or dies out altogether. This viewpoint reveals what is called the “presentist” function of the tradition mechanism. Knowing the fact that there is no such thing as a completely pure tradition, the manner in which a tradition is handed down or transmitted from one generation to the next, which operates on maintenance as well as change and which Shils sees as the decisive criterion of tradition, can be the source of its legitimating power.

Tradition can be responsible not only for maintenance, but also for change. The tradition does not proceed from one institutional structure to another by abandoning all of its old beliefs, practices, and customs because, as Shils convincingly argues, “The adoption of a new tradition in replacement of the old is a change in tradition; the replacement is never complete and the outcome is more or less of a fusion or amalgamation.”⁷⁷ It is within the framework of the old notions or under the pretext of the traditional ideas that the adaption of new elements is exercised and a new tradition is eventually produced. The product as a social and cultural amalgamation is, in a sense, the past in the present, but it can be a very recent innovation as it is always framed in terms of the present.

In agreement with Berger and Shils, I propose that there are at least three elements in tradition that should be included in any discussion of tradition building and maintenance: 1) the identity aspect, 2) the normative aspect, and 3) the hermeneutical aspect.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 259.

1. The Identity Aspect of Tradition

The identity aspect of tradition indicates that tradition generates a sense of membership, or belonging in general, and formulates group identities. This aspect represents tradition as an identity production mechanism. Every single community, regardless of its size and duration, possesses or attempts to possess its own social and cultural identity. These communities try to define themselves partly in the relationship to the memories they (re)produce and share, fulfilling the necessity to meet their present needs and interests, the memories that establish the connection between cultural, collective memory and tradition on the one hand, and the formation of identity on the other.

This perspective can be found in a range of communities, from the family in a small social, cultural unit to the state in a large social, cultural unit. One of the best examples can be seen in the organization structure of the Myōshinji denomination, in which Myōshinji stands at the head of thousands of branch and sub-branch temples. All the temples in this denomination, along with other Rinzai denominations, share their memories of Hakuin as the reviver of the Zen tradition, as these memories include an interpretation that all Rinzai priests inherit spiritual authority that can be traced back to Hakuin. Carrying the Rinzai banner for *kōan* and meditation practices, this denomination in particular also emphasizes itself as the Rinzai orthodoxy of the single extant lineage that has descended from Nanpo Jyōmyō through Hakuin and Kanzan Egen (and this is a diachronic genealogy directly connected to Bodhidharma and Śākyamuni). At the denominational level, this Myōshinji community identifies itself as the Zen of Hakuin and distinguishes itself from other Zen traditions and other Buddhist institutions, as the identity construction is also used as a way of creating the community's spiritually and socially privileged eliteness among Japanese religious circles. At the constitutional level, the temples and priests in the community

acknowledge that they belong to the Myōshinji as its members, and in fact they perform their jobs and duties under the flag of Myōshinji authority. It is actually under this identity marker that they have been receiving their social legitimacy and reliability; otherwise, they are just temples and priests of unknown origins. They are Myōshinji belongings. Their identity lies in the tradition that shapes it. This identity production mechanism is one of the tradition's major functions.

2. The Normative Aspect of Tradition

The second element is the normative aspect of tradition. This aspect sees tradition as sets of norms, models, and assumptions of thought and action handed down from the past, which serve as a normative framework for beliefs and practices in the present. Religious memories can be the main example of this normative aspect of tradition. For instance, Japanese Rinzai Zen authorities place their “authorized and authentic memories” of Hakuin at the center of their religious beliefs and practices, and they have called themselves the “Zen of Hakuin.” The Zen tradition strives to possess a coherent or unified memory which the tradition claims to be unchanged, authentic, and thus fixed. However, in reality such a coherent or unified memory is the invention (and its constant reinvention) of the tradition in terms of the present, and, in fact, religious traditions can be neither coherent nor unified social vessels of the past, or free of tensions. In this light, I think that while the essentially normative character of the religious tradition is reinforced in the cultural memory of the tradition defining itself, the tradition's normative character also becomes a socially defined category.

According to Shils, tradition possesses an inherently normative element in that tradition is intended to influence the thought and action of the audience to which it is addressed. He sees the normative consequences, or even the intention, in reproducing patterns of culture and reconstituting the necessary continuity between the past and the

present. He writes, "It is this normative transmission which links the generations of the dead with the generations of the living in the constitution of a society."⁷⁸ Thus tradition ensures the identity of a society through this transmission or continuity achieved due to a consensus between present living generations and generations of the dead, the consensus through which the normativeness of the tradition is (re)constituted. Shils, however, does not assume that this consensus is static in essence. For him, as we have seen earlier, tradition is not static at all, but rather very dynamic in nature because it undergoes changes due to its necessity to fit the immediate social circumstances in which it stands: tradition must change because the circumstances change. Indeed, Shils understands tradition as being "far more than statistically frequent recurrence over a succession of generations of similar beliefs, practices, institutions, and works."⁷⁹ Hence, the consensus in question changes, and is maintained, through interpretations by current generations whose reinterpretations, according to Shils, in order to become a tradition, must enter into memory, here identified as "the vessel which retains in the present the record of the experiences undergone in the past and of knowledge gained through the recorded and remembered experiences of others, living and dead."⁸⁰ In this light, memory is more than an act of recollection, and the memory, constantly reproduced over time, actually serves as a key engine in the mechanism of tradition formation, maintenance, and transmission. In Shils' words, "It is this chain of memory and of the tradition which assimilates it that enables societies to go on reproducing themselves while also changing."⁸¹ The tradition mechanism of formation, maintenance, and transmission reflects, and is reflected by, a chain of memory constituted and reconstituted by present (or new)

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 167.

generations through their reinterpretations of what earlier generations believed. The normativeness of tradition is the inertial force that holds this chain of memory in a given form over time.

3. The Hermeneutical Aspect of Tradition

The last element of tradition is its hermeneutical aspect, anticipated by Shils. This aspect indicates that tradition is an interpretive scheme of the past in the present. This view of tradition as a framework of interpreting the past is primarily based on the formula of Gadamerian hermeneutics. Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his work, *Truth and Method*, points to the positive aspects of prejudice that he positions as the first condition and the inevitable component of understanding (or interpretation). As he understands that “a hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices that we bring with us,”⁸² such prejudice is the one without which understanding is impossible. He understands that tradition constitutes present realities, precisely because he thinks that interpretation makes tradition (for Gadamer, tradition is a chain of interpretations), that all interpretation is based on prejudice or presuppositions, and that there is no uninterpreted mode of experience, as interpretation is always in our own time. An important point is, for example, Gadamer’s notion of “effective history.” By this, he understands the historical and cultural continuum in which the past operates on the present; the present operates on the past. That is to say, tradition is not simply the deposit of the past, but the tradition to be understood becomes not only a “reappearance” of the past (“the ‘adding’ of the past history to the present understanding”), but also a “creation” in the present (“the ‘adding’ of the present understanding to the past history”). This process is the operation of the hermeneutical

⁸² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, translated and revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donal G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), p. 306.

act, or the dialogical relationship between the text or tradition and the interpreter. It is the basis of what Gadamer calls “fusion of horizon,” which allows him to overcome the temporal historical distance between the past of the text or event and the present in which the interpretive subject lives and to assert that any encounter with historical (especially literary) documents is part and parcel of our history of interpretations. For instance, Robert Bellah notes, “We, as twentieth-century persons, and, most of us, Americans, bring our horizon to the text, and whatever comes out is the result of the meeting of Dōgen’s horizon with our own horizon.”⁸³ Similarly, Matsubara Taidō’s memory of Hakuin is at the meeting of his own horizon with Hakuin’s horizon in the present. By this notion, Gadamer shows not merely his idealization of the reciprocal relationship between the tradition and its interpreter, but his emphasis on the produced interpretation (which is always in our own time) as being a historical truth. Certainly, this emphasis on the historical and cultural legitimacy of interpretations fails to take into account the possibility of a “systematically distorted communication” operating in the time—a claim of the truth as being ideological. However, a crucial aspect of the Gadamerian hermeneutics is rather to see this truth in the historicity of interpretation in this time, and is to underline the hermeneutics of privilege in that human interpretation belongs to the tradition or the historical context in which the interpreter stands. In this light, tradition serves as an interpretive scheme of the past in the present, the central scheme through which the interpretation is identified as both real and true. For Gadamer, the present understanding is important, because it is in the place that the truth of interpretation, and thus that of tradition, lies. This gives insights for the question: where is the authenticity of tradition located?

The three aspects of tradition, namely, its identity, normative, and

⁸³ Robert Bellah, “The Meaning of Dōgen Today” *Dōgen Studies*, ed., William R. LaFleur (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p. 150.

hermeneutical aspects, are essential for understanding the tradition's practical functions in a chain of its formation, development, and maintenance. As Berger and Shils have argued, when a tradition produces and reproduces itself while also changing, if need be, these three functions can be important control units for that tradition's movements. Although a series of the tradition's movements are very dynamic in nature, it is interesting to consider what exactly the tradition is doing in its mechanism. What does tradition production and reproduction mean? What does tradition change indicate? What does tradition maintenance really mean and how should it be understood, given the fact that the tradition can be a very important part of the process of social change? What does tradition invention indicate, then?

It is crucial to understand the concept of this tradition invention, knowing the fact of the tradition mechanism, that tradition, whether an established one or not, serves as the vehicle for interpretation or memory that can be refashioned to fit the present. Further, the tradition serves as a place in which the collective memory of the past is reconstructed and in which it is transformed into cultural standards that have shaped our thought and action performances in that tradition. While defining the tradition as the social transmission of cultural inheritance, such ideas of tradition lead us to investigate the invention of tradition both as the ways of maintenance and change and even as refashioning in a response to constant social change.

Tradition Invention

My interest in tradition invention began when I first noticed that Japanese Rinzai Zen has preserved the image of Hakuin, but it has done so selectively, and this has achieved continuity and was even imbued with added authority through selection and repetition. This Hakuin is a fairly recent innovation, and it is this created figure

that we have long identified as the historical Hakuin. How then has the image of Hakuin been crafted in the Zen tradition? How can it be seen as an invention? These questions show not only the constructed nature of tradition, but also how the inventedness of tradition, or the constructed versions of the past, simultaneously serve to formulate social cohesion, legitimate authority, and socialize populations in “a common past.” What is this tradition invention?

By the term “invention of tradition,” I mean that the past is refashioned to suit the dominant demands, agendas, and interests in terms of the present. This invented tradition serves as the very source of its authenticity and legitimacy, partly out of necessity and partly out of a perceived validation of the dialogical nature of tradition. This is a mechanism for tradition maintenance, but also for creative social change. The invention of tradition can be a relatively quick moment, whether it is stable or not, and a fairly recent innovation, while aiming to imply a long-term continuity with the past. It can be used as a means of establishing or legitimating institutions, symbolizing social unity in the shared past, and socializing members to the idealized past as well as to the existing order, and even exercising power. It can be selective and collective in nature, or it can be a form of both socially organized remembrance and socially organized forgetting, and those invented memories serve the current purposes of those in power or those who see themselves as members of the tradition. The invented tradition is not, therefore, genuine; there is no such thing as a completely pure tradition. Eric Hobsbawm’s analysis’s “invention of tradition” remains important in these perspectives.

For example, indicating the recent origins of modern societies, Hobsbawm writes:

Nothing appears more ancient, and linked to an immemorial past, than the pageantry which surrounds the British monarchy in its public ceremonial manifestations. Yet...in its modern form it is the product of the late nineteenth

and twentieth centuries. 'Traditions' which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.... The term 'invented tradition' is used in a broad, but not imprecise sense. It includes both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period—a matter of a few years perhaps—and establishing themselves with great rapidity.... It is evident that not all of them are equally permanent, but it is their appearance and establishment rather than their chances of survival which are our primary concern.⁸⁴

He also writes:

[T]he peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious.... It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, that makes the 'invention of tradition.'⁸⁵

These are powerful statements about the transmission of tradition being made of tradition and by tradition. Interestingly, Hobsbawm asserts that the traditions we have thought of as old in their origins have always been invented at more recent points of time, at most, in the past couple of centuries and often only in several decades. In his book, *The Invention of Tradition*, Hugh Trevor-Roper argues that the kilt, being a shared symbol of Scottish culture, is an invention by an early eighteenth-century English industrialist. What Hobsbawm understands as "invented tradition" here means "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."⁸⁶ In this sense, all traditions are an invention to some degree. This invention, and its constant reinvention, is a powerful mechanism for tradition maintenance and formation. In

⁸⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions" in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Canto edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1. This book was first published in 1983.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

short, inventing a tradition indicates the dynamic process by which people appeal to an inherited and allegedly unchanging tradition, yet recast it in terms of the current concern. It is a mechanism for tradition maintenance and also for creative social change. The fundamental concept of this mechanism of tradition invention, therefore, should be understood not only as a pervasive and enduring motif in history, but more importantly also as a living force influencing people's thought and action up to today.

Further Hobsbawm states the possibility of social change in the dynamic process in which traditions are invented. He writes:

[W]e should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated: in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or the supply side.⁸⁷

According to Hobsbawm, invented traditions occur when the older tradition cannot sufficiently meet the new needs of the population it serves. More specifically, they overtly and implicitly appear at historical points of time when the components of the older tradition do not function as a mechanism to maintain tradition. Then, the older tradition must be reframed by new possibilities. There the idea of "adaptation" takes place to maintain the tradition. This adaptation raises a new, valuable meaning suited to the tradition's own new needs in the present. This implies "the genesis of meaning," and it locates the locus of a new authenticity in the tradition. These perspectives of tradition invention reflect the equation of the occurrence of invention with the transition from the old tradition to the new one because the former is no longer available, adaptable, or viable or at least because it needs to be reshaped to adjust to the immediate circumstances in which the old one currently stands. In short, this

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

model shows, in Hobsbawn's words, that "where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented."⁸⁸

This perspective may show a possibility for inventing tradition. However, I argue that Hobsbawn's position is not defensible because, in fact, even where the old ways are alive, what I would call a kind of "hermeneutical invention" takes place. Whether or not the tradition is still alive, available, adaptable, or viable is not the issue; instead, people try to create, construct, and invent their traditions based on and for their interests. They seek to establish or legitimate their idealized thought and activity, culture and institution, and status and authority, while also seeking to establish social cohesion. For example, Inoue Shun has argued that the martial arts such as jūdō as a symbolic icon of the "traditional Japanese spirit" were reinvented as a counterweight to the West during the rise of militaristic nationalism and the incidental ascendancy of Japanese exceptionalism under wartime spiritual mobilization. Lee Thompson has demonstrated that much of the ritual and rules, such as the *yokozuna* system, of sumō, Japan's "ancient" national sport, is actually a modern innovation. Andrew Gordon has reconsidered the traditional style of Japanese labor management, the "family-ism," or *kazoku-shugi*, and "warm-heartedness-ism," or *onjō-shugi*, working models which have been regarded as "a timeless Japanese custom," to be a post-industrial, management-level invention. I propose that the invention of tradition also occurs where there are needs and agendas to provide a new framework; even for the tradition that has been largely unquestioned, along with the thought and action associated with the tradition, the tradition is constructed. This view of invented tradition does not limit its definition only in the automatic equation of the invented tradition with the result from the inability and inadjustability of the old tradition. Instead it gives a wide range of possibilities of the invented traditions. The

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

need of every (new) generation requests a social change inside the older or current tradition, and people proceed to invent and reinvent their traditions, which seek to locate new loci of authenticity. When people need an older tradition to be refreshed, they remold that tradition to fit closely to their needs, agendas, and interests in the present.

How then can the present Rinzai Zen be an invention of tradition? What is actually being preserved in the popular memory of the past and what has been officially invented? The Zen tradition has maintained Hakuin as a symbol of its own brand of the elite Rinzai culture among Japanese Buddhist circles. It has focused on stressing what I have called the Hakuin trilogy, i.e., Hakuin as the tradition's reviver, an ardent meditation master, and an artist, in order to establish and elevate his institutional role and functional status in the tradition. In the trilogy, this exclusive selection of the essential multiplicity of the historical Hakuin shows a reductionism, and what we have been told is that "Hakuin" is, therefore, a cultural creation. These highly selective readings of this figure, which have been the collective memory of the Zen tradition, clearly reflect what the tradition wants and demands to establish its idealized image and past. Hakuin has been elevated as the only successor of the single extant Rinzai lineage in the present. He is elevated as the creator or systematizer of the current *kōan* system used in all the Japanese Rinzai monasteries today. Along with an emphasis on how he devoted himself uncompromisingly and tirelessly to his meditation practice (and *kōan* study), he is also touted as the zealous and indefatigable Zen master who taught people of all classes. Although we might want to ask why Hakuin must be elevated and who other candidates for his position could be, Myōshinji's position is that it was Hakuin who renewed the Myōshinji branch of Rinzai Zen. His calligraphy and paintings have been the visual symbolization of his religious experience. In the end, the climate of Japanese Rinzai Zen mirrors in essence

the climate of Hakuin's Zen. All in all, these aspects of Hakuin have been fully used to establish and further elevate the tradition's authority, legitimacy, and orthodoxy in Japanese religious history as well as in religious institutions in the establishment and continuation of the Zen tradition.

This Hakuin remembrance is selective. His thoughts and activities that do not suit the tradition's ideals are simply neglected and even hidden in creating and maintaining the images appropriate to the symbol, role, and status of Hakuin as the tradition's hero. The tradition has manipulated or sculpted unique "authentic" and "real" images of him, which it thought should be advertized, propagated, and conveyed. I do not claim that all previously dominant interpretations of Hakuin have misunderstood Hakuin's historicity and religiosity. But I do claim that those interpretations are the result of the tradition's creative forgetting of who Hakuin really was, or, in other words, the tradition's programmed and invented images for its commercials. Those images are certainly not entirely mistaken, but neither do they wholly represent this Zen figure. In fact, the tradition has entirely overlooked his considerable role as a social critic and reformer and his political critique against power and authority. The tradition also ignores many aspects of his art, not merely as his religious teachings, but also as his political, social, and moral messages.

Further, although Hakuin is regarded as the origin of all the religious heritage of Japanese Rinzai Zen because his lineage, the so-called Ō-Tō-Kan school, is the single lineage that survives today, Hakuin's ties with this lineage needs to be further investigated. Seeing the lineage as a later invention, I argue that what we have been given as the single extant lineage of Rinzai Zen is a replication of the pious reconstructions of a single, static conception of lineage published as "the history of Chan"—an approach critiqued by John McRae as the "string of pearls fallacy."⁸⁹ I

⁸⁹ For more information, see John McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and*

suggest that this single succession of lineage serves as the controlling element constituting the social shape of the past and the construction of identity in which a process of legitimation of the tradition and of social hierarchization is generated. In this sense, the previously elevated and aggrandized claims around the “historical Hakuin” reveal that they are not only an active forgetting of and a repression of the historical figure, but also a cultural invention and ideological construct. The Rinzai Zen tradition has done all of these constructions and inventions beautifully. What is remarkable to me about the invention of tradition is not that tradition is invented—presumably almost all traditions, at least to some degree, as I have discussed, are invented, if we include interpretation as a kind of hermeneutical invention—but it is the ways in which the tradition is invented and why and how it becomes “persuasive,” “real,” and “true” that I find fascinating.

We should remember that the invention of tradition is not value-neutral—it cannot be a pure and objective product in a series of tradition mechanisms. We should remind ourselves that the Hakuin we remember today is a construction and invention. Keeping in mind Hobsbawn, as well as the materials in the previous chapter, we should also remember that the Hakuin who has been held up as an almost iconic figure of the Zen tradition is a fairly recent innovation in the history of Hakuin remembrance.

How then does memory play an important role in the invention of tradition as well as the construction of the image of Hakuin? How has the memory of Hakuin been culturally crafted to meet the tradition’s present needs and agendas? How does the cultural memory, socially constructed and shaped through selective remembrance, forgetting, and invention, work in the dynamic mechanism of tradition and the making of a religious community? I discuss cultural memory in the next section.

*Cultural Memory: Retrieving the Past in the Present; Concealing Multiplicity of
Memory*

The Presentist Tendency in Cultural Memory

What is cultural memory? How is it (re)shaped in a given society and how does it retrieve the past in the present? What are the characteristics of this socially organized and mediated, yet culturally refashioned and presentist memory? How is it possible to understand the functions of the cultural memory in the dynamics of tradition formation, (re)invention, and maintenance, and thus transmission? In essence, what is the relationship between cultural memory and tradition?

At first glance, what we imagine as “memory” seems to be just “remembrance” and “remembering” of the past as it “really was.” However, memory is not the mere system of storage and retrieval of past “facts.” Actually it is always shaped and reshaped, and produced and reproduced, in response to demands, agendas, and interests in the present. The memory thus cannot be simply understood apart from various forces that shape it in a given present social context, and therefore, it remains a socially and culturally determined category. This perspective shows a presentist memory function, by which I mean that it is in this present social context that the past is retrieved collectively and becomes persuasive, meaningful, real, and true. What memory brings to us is not the past as it “really was,” but the past as it is remembered, refracted through the present. Clearly, the one-sided focus on memory from the presentist approach and thus exclusively social, the focus which might lead to the view that simply dissolves the subject into an ideological discourse, is problematic because it excepts the hermeneutical significance and meaning of memory as a human creation. Here I am primarily interested in cultural memory in the presentist approach in order to understand memory as essential to our ability to give meaning to the past as well as to the world in which we live.

By “cultural memory,” I mean a culturally constructed memory in light of the needs, interests, and agendas of the present. It denotes exclusively constructions of the past as they are held by people in a given social, cultural, and historical context of the present. I argue that cultural memory is the memory through which people in the present use the past to drive an agenda in the present. This cultural memory can be manifested or embodied by cultural practices, ceremonies, rituals, performances, festivals, or monuments through which people’s attitudes toward the past are expressed and their relations to the past are collectively constructed. Cultural memory is not about revealing past events as accurately as possible; neither is it necessarily about preserving cultural continuity. Rather it is about making “meaningful,” “persuasive,” “true” statements about the past in a particular given context. It is not merely explaining and reconstructing the past, but also formulating and creating the present. I suggest that cultural memory is not a simple storage place for information of past events which can be retrievable later on, but it is memory in which the past is actively constructed depending on certain social and cultural milieus of the present and in the service of necessary selections and inevitable exclusions. Cultural memory, then, as a unifying process, product, and means made by and of tradition, gives shape to a framework of meaning through which the tradition forms, invents, and transmits itself as it simultaneously needs to create social change. Cultural memory can be responsible not only for continuity but also for change.

In some of the earliest cultural studies on memory, the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwach (1877-1945), explores the relationship between society and memory, or, more strictly, between a social group and its collective memory. It was Halbwach who made a shift of the concept of memory from a psychoanalytical and biological framework in which memory is conceived as individual, to a social

framework in which memory is conceived as always social and collective.⁹⁰

Halbwach understands memory as a social phenomenon. How do people recollect the past? How does the present effect the past? How does the present situation affect the selective perception of past history? Memory, shaped within the current social milieu, is not just a recollection, but essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present. It is within society that people normally acquire, recall, recognize, and localize their memories. Memory is always social, collective, and constructive. This idea indicates that memories are essentially not free of social constraints and influences because these memories are inevitably mediated and organized by a given social context. For him, this socially constructed memory is always collective in the sense that the members of a community come to remember collectively a single or commonly shared past and that the socially constructed nature of the past is constitutive of the collectivity.

Lewis Coser, who explicates Halbwach's arguments and who also understands memory as socially reconstructed, emphasizes that "the present generation may rewrite history but it does not write it on a blank page."⁹¹ (When he says this, he also means that there is no clear-cut separation between the past and the present in the production of memory; there is only a reconstruction between the two.) Further, Jan Assmann, based on Halbwachs' study of memory as social and collective, develops his idea of cultural memory's capacity to reconstruct. He contends, "No memory can preserve the past. What remains is only that which society in each era can reconstruct within its contemporary frame of reference."⁹² Therefore, cultural memory is an ideological construct.

⁹⁰ For more information, see Lewis A Coser, ed. and trans., *Maurice Halbwach: On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁹² Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity" in *New German Critique*, no. 65, translated by John Czaplicka (Spring/Summer, 1995), p.130.

The sociologist Paul Connerton addresses what Halbwach failed to question, due to his almost one-sided emphasis on the collective nature of memory as prominently social.⁹³ Connerton asks how societies remember the past and how group memories are transmitted from generation to generation and considers commemorative ceremonies to be effective mnemonic devices because of their formalization and performativity: the two features that shape the ritual re-enactment of communal memory in which groups maintain and symbolize their continuity from the past in the present. He argues that communities depend on performative rituals that invoke some memories of the past for their persistence. This perspective leads to the view that commemorative ceremonies serve as a community's necessity to resist change. It is by ritual performances that cultural memory is conveyed and sustained. It is Connerton's response to Halbwach's position that does not explain the social persistence of the past events, because memory is always a collective construction.

From the perspectives of Halbwach and Connerton, there are some points I want to discuss. Regarding the idea of memory as collective, Halbwach argues that a given community remembers the shared recollections of the past or even a single common past collectively and also argues that the commonly shared memory is in essence the constructed past which is constitutive of the collectivity.⁹⁴ These arguments bring out the position that a change of such a collective memory means a social change or transformation in the community that holds the memory. My point here is the relationship between the persistence of the collective memory and the continuity of the community that holds the collective memory: the duration of

⁹³ For more information, see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 38.

⁹⁴ Regarding memory as social and collective, Barbara Misztal uses an interesting example. She writes, "Although citizens of Quebec, whose license plates proudly state 'I remember,' do not really remember the French colonial state, this past is a crucial element of the national memory of Quebec." See her work *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003), p. 13.

collective memory becomes the barometer for the community's continuity. I develop further the notion that the collective memory, being the shared image of the community's past, but also being what is symbolizing the community's cultural identity collectively, serves as the central mechanism through which the community's continuity, stability, and unity, and thus authenticity and legitimacy, are (re)constituted. In this light, the collective memory, or cultural memory, serves as not only a component of the tradition, but also as a vehicle of the tradition.

What is at stake for uncritical acceptance of Halbwachs' concepts of memory? If we follow his presentist approach of social memory, it means that we have to take the view that the established social context and identity determine the content of collective memory. This view undervalues the importance of other different, multiple memories, which are being excluded and repressed in the construction of the community's official memory of the past history. Halbwach's model shows that memory production is monolithic, at the risk of failing to question the notion of an established memory in the tradition. When he says this, he also claims the memory production mechanism as a means of exercising power. He was unable to explain the essential multiplicity of memory and thus of tradition as well, precisely because of his concentration on the collectiveness of social memory. The relationship between the past and the present cannot be one-dimensional. Unfortunately, Halbwachs' view may itself be nothing more than a useful perspective to re-evaluate the ideological nature of memory, and its memory production mechanism itself, and the tradition that shapes the established memory of the past as collective or "official."

When the presentist approach of memory provides the view that memory is a socially constructed phenomenon in the present social context, it also supports the position that present concerns, interests, and needs inevitably determine what we remember about the past and how we remember it. But it further assumes that the

division between what should be remembered and what should be forgotten in the formulation of the collective memory of the past can be actually seen as a social convention. It is the society or, more accurately, the present social contexts, that determines, controls, and ensures what we remember, what elements of the past we remember, and how we remember them.

Let us look back at Hakuin's case. His religious writings and considerable production of brush paintings are taken as visual embodiments of a capacity for religious experience in the Zen tradition. And, it is true that most, if not all, his art correlated with this strong concern for experience that has been reified by the tradition. Yet Hakuin also produced remarkable paintings representing his political and social critiques, which are by no means isolated concerns of his. Some are aesthetically crude, to be sure. The setting up of Hakuin as the originator of the *kōan* system is also a part of the tradition's touting campaigns emphasizing religious experience as its hallmark and claiming that the members are the legitimate descendants of Hakuin. In short, Hakuin as a master is remembered; Hakuin as a social critic and reformer is forgotten.

Every community has a memory of its own, but such cultural memory is always a social product or ideological construct, because it is (re)constituted in, and thus adjusted to, the tradition's demands in the present. We should keep in mind that the memory is not the past as it "really was," but the past as it is remembered: we are considering not the "facts" of an actual past, but the workings of the cultural memory in the dynamic process of tradition (re)production and transmission. Having said this, however, this cultural memory should dissolve simply into an ideological discourse. Such cultural memory is far more than a creation because people have lived their lives in it in Japanese religious history; otherwise, cultural memory is deprived of its appeal as a human creation. This is my reason for wanting to have our amalgamative applications to the subject from both hermeneutical and ideological claims.

Functions of Cultural Memory

Based on the basic concepts of memory as social and collective and the connection between memory and tradition, I think that cultural memory should also be expressed as a memory that is institutionally constituted and sustained through cultural means and forms used by people to construct their relations to the past in a given present context.⁹⁵ As Marita Sturken, emphasizing the constructive nature of cultural memory, has noted that “memory that is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet...is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning,”⁹⁶ I think that the cultural memory may then refer to the memory that is strategically shaped and institutionalized through cultural means in response to the present society’s demands and agendas.

It may be useful here to remember Andreas Huyssen’s words: “The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory.” He continues, “The fissure that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation is unavoidable...this split should be understood as a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity.”⁹⁷ This unavoidable gap between the past and present, or between experiencing an event and remembering it, filled by any creative but “authentic” as well as “real” interpretations of the past, constitutes cultural memory, making it powerfully alive, meaningful, and “true” in the present. In this light, cultural memory, as a tradition’s meaning-making faculty, not only reflects the past but also refashions the present. A perfect example of this can be seen in Rinzai

⁹⁵ Michael Schudson considers cultural memory to be “people’s memories constructed from the cultural forms and to cultural forms available for use by people to construct their relations to the past.” For more information, see his work “Distortion in Collective Memory” in *Memory Distortion*, ed., Daniel L. Schacter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 348.

⁹⁶ Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 3.

⁹⁷ Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 3.

Zen's essential claims of Hakuin as the origin of Japanese Rinzai Zen and as the successor of the single extant lineage in the tradition, which can be traced back to Bodhidharma and Śākyamuni. Cultural memory as the reconstruction of the past depends on the identities and contexts of the present tradition, which tries to produce, reproduce, and maintain memory while also changing it, in the way that simultaneously reflects, programs, and frames the tradition.⁹⁸ While cultural memory can be responsible not only for maintenance, but also for social change, the reciprocal relationship between cultural memory and tradition has created and transmitted a chain of history, the particular history we call "Japanese Rinzai Zen" today.

Cultural memory, functioning as a set of unifying beliefs, practices, and values designed to provide traditions with identities, is a storage of "factual" sources for reproducing and maintaining the social order. This cultural memory, for example, when employed as a reservoir of official remembrances of the historical heroes, can be also seen as a mechanism of an invented tradition that not only constructs and controls "useful" and "effective" memories of these heroes, but also excludes any potential possibilities or challenges about them in its purpose of making the official version of the past. The exclusion and repression of Hakuin's political and social critiques from the so-called "trilogy" that represents who he "really was" is an apt example of this. This role of cultural memory in the dynamics of tradition is important to consider because it reveals its essential work as the identity production mechanism of legitimating the authority of the tradition that shapes memory, establishes social cohesion, and promotes shared culture. It also enables the creating of social change and tradition invention, partly out of the hope for stability and continuity and partly out of the necessity or urgency for change. Cultural memory, produced and

⁹⁸ For more information, see Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, p. 14 and Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 18.

reproduced in the service of the present dominant interests, which are also a set of practices of what should be remembered and what should be forgotten, serves as a key mechanism of tradition formation, (re)invention, and maintenance.

Politics of Forgetting: Its Functions and Three Possible Techniques

The question of how “forgetting” works is a fascinating theme in the study of cultural memory. What does it mean to forget? How does forgetting work in the construction of memory as well as tradition, and also in the reciprocal relationship between the two? How does it operate on the identity production mechanism of the memory? I argue that the shift of focus from what is remembered to what is forgotten reveals how the act of forgetting strategically operates on the creation of cultural memory. Forgetting is as vital as remembering in the production of memory. Far from being an absence, a passivity, forgetting can be dynamic and creative.

Paul Ricoeur wrote, “Seeing one thing is not seeing another. Recounting one drama is forgetting another.”⁹⁹ This is the very nature of memory or narrative production. Taking the narrative as an example, he illustrates that “the narrative necessarily contains a selective dimension”¹⁰⁰ and points out that this selection as a strategy of forgetting in the work of narrative configuration leads to what he calls “prime danger”: “the handling of authorized, imposed, celebrated, commemorated history—of official history.”¹⁰¹ In this vein, Jan Assmann argues, “Remembering means pushing other things into the background, making distinctions, obliterating many things in order to shed light on others.”¹⁰² Memory is formulated in tandem

⁹⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans., Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 452.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 448.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 448.

¹⁰² Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans., Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 3.

with forgetting. Ricoeur and Assmann are pointing out more than these things. I suggest that when one claims that this forgetting formulates the “official,” “traditional,” or “true” memory, one also claims that the forgetting forms a repression of the essential multiplicity of memories and creates a sense of amnesia as well as even a vacuum of cultural otherness. This is a key point of forgetting in the creation of an established memory.

This act of forgetting becomes clear in the idealization of cultural heroes and historical glory days in a tradition. In these contexts, people tend to exclude any versions of the past that contradict or become unbalanced with the ideal end of their recollection. In this sense, our relation to the past might be better described by forgetting, rather than by merely remembering.

In the case of Hakuin, there are possibilities. One is the Hakuin trilogy we have seen above, and the triad understandings of Hakuin clearly reveal the politics of memory formulation. Another possibility is popular memory versus official memory. That is to say, while there are certainly many legends of Hakuin scattered across Japan, those stories are not included at all when the tradition speaks of this Rinzai master. Those legends, which I prefer to call the “popular memory of Hakuin,” are not just anecdotes handed down in regions, but also variants of the text-based stories authorized within the Zen tradition. While people in the villages believe in those anecdotes and they think the Hakuin in them is their real Hakuin, the central authority and office do not accept that Hakuin.

A fitting example of this is the story of Hakuin’s enlightenment experience at the age of 24, which is compiled in the texts, *Nempu* biography, *Yaemugura*, and *Itsumadegusa*. The forgetting of the “popular memories” in the villages has hidden the diversity and contingency of the versions of memories that the tradition wants to convey, even though it cannot be denied that the popular memories may be the origin

of Hakuin's experience story, and therefore, this is the ideological work of the tradition. The example of Hakuin reveals that the Zen tradition, as an established tradition, but also as a crafted cultural memory, is an active or creative forgetting, a socially organized forgetting, a repression of the historical figure. In this sense, forgetting, which is another pole of memory-production censorship along with remembrance, can also be seen as highly organized and strategic in the making of official memory (and thus official history as well).

As Hakuin's case has shown, the past is not simply received by the present. Here the idea of "reception" should not be understood simply in the narrow sense of receiving and transmitting. Assmann argues that while the past is invented, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present, "to be sure, all this implies the tasks and techniques of transmitting and receiving, but there is much more involved in the dynamic of cultural memory than is covered by the notion of reception."¹⁰³ The reception is more complicated than we imagine, and in fact, therein operates the elements of selection and exclusion that makes the constructed cultural memory inclusively hierarchal and exclusively unified. Further, importantly, "the reception in the present" indicates that the value and validity of cultural memory lie in its "actuality" and "practicality," rather than its "factuality," because the unique element of the "real" or "true," which cultural memory entails persuasively to us, comes from not the exact historical past, but rather from an ever-changing present in which the historical past is ideally remembered, yet remolded, as a fact of importance. This cultural memory, featured by selective forgetting, serves as the crucial dynamic by which a given tradition performs itself in the construction of the idealized image of its own identity and past.

Another point which the above-mentioned Hakuin case exposes is that the

¹⁰³ Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 9.

selective function of forgetting not only refashions cultural memory and shapes its continuity, thus creating an orthodoxy, but also ends up making a distinction from other memories or cultural identities, and as a result, indicating that departures from this distinction lead to heterodoxy or cultural otherness. This means that the selective function of forgetting works not only as an effective means of shaping the tradition's collective memory of the past, (re)producing the stability of its social order, and preserving its continuity to the past (in reality and more strictly, the continuity corresponding to our relationship to the past). But it also serves as a tradition's identity-making mechanism through which its authority, legitimacy, and orthodoxy are ideally constituted and reconstituted in the service of the present. What kinds of techniques work on the act of forgetting, then? I examine this in the following section.

Three Possible Techniques of Forgetting

1. Canonizing Narratives

I think that the forgetting takes place not only by rewriting history, but also in at least three possible ways. The first is the canonization of the narratives and images of the past. Assmann defines "canonization" as follows:

Canonization means an intervention that subjects the constant flow of traditions that are being handed down to a strict process of selection. This intervention consolidates the selection and sanctifies it, that is to say, it exalts it to the status of an ultimate authority and in this way calls a halt to the stream of tradition once and for all. From now on, nothing can be added or taken away. The contract turns into the canon.¹⁰⁴

From this position, the Hakuin trilogy can be seen as the canonization of Hakuin. I maintain that this selective and exclusive nature of controlled narratives, in the cases of the trilogy and the biography or hagiography (as being almost "canonized" writings

¹⁰⁴ Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, p. 19.

as well as canonical scholarship) that is reduced to that trilogy, reveal the very closed readings of the past.

2. Destroying Memory

A. The Meiji Cultural Revolution

The second possible technique of forgetting is the “destruction of memory” in its places and objects such as sites, architectures, books, inscriptions, and iconic representations. This technique might be the easiest one for forgetting, yet one of the features is the exercise of power on the forgetting, for example, when used as a means of political oppression and conflict. A good example of this destruction of memory is the Meiji cultural revolution, the violent movement (*haibutsu kishaku*) against Japanese Buddhism, particularly during the early Meiji period in the 1870s.¹⁰⁵ This was a movement in which many temples were destroyed and monks were forcibly laicized. As a result, this was also the time when Buddhist clergy and leaders began to seek possible ways to reconfigure their tradition for survival. In fact, they actively and officially participated as National Evangelists (*kyōdoshoku*), or government propagandists, not as Buddhist clerics per se, in projects of joint proselytizing with Shintō in the Great Promulgation Campaign, which was a political attempt to make a state religion out of Shintō and foster so-called “State Shintō.” In this sense, these Buddhists became a part of the ideology of the national polity (*kokutai*) and in building the imperial-centered nation.

Another related example of this “destruction of memory” can also be seen in the government law that made a drastic change or transformation in the conventional Buddhist ecclesiastic status and life: the legally permitted clerical marriage and

¹⁰⁵ For more discussions in detail, see Chapter 1.

meat-eating in 1872 was a result of this anti-Buddhist hostility.¹⁰⁶ Because the law was promulgated with the purpose of forwarding clerical disestablishment, it lifted restrictions against the Buddhist clergy and legally permitted them to marry, eat meat, grow their hair out, wear nonclerical garbs, and, importantly, return to lay life. As a result, the concept of “family life” was added to the lists of things to be considered by the Buddhist clergy, a list which previously had been concerned only with Zen practice, Buddhist services and ceremonies, funerals, and teachings. This movement played an influential role in overshadowing the traditional lifestyle and status of Buddhist celibacy as sacred. The response of these Buddhists, and especially of Zen, to a series of this “destruction of memory” was to redefine Zen as a “pure” and “experiential” tradition, a tradition “uncontaminated by a long but superficial ‘cohabitation’ with Chinese and Japanese ‘Japanese religions.’”¹⁰⁷ In this light, the Zen tradition we remember today is largely an ideological by-product of the Meiji era, the product of the “Japanization” (the term including a sense of “purification” from foreign cultures) of the tradition in adapting to the spirit of the time.

B. Book-Banning

Is there any example of the destroying of memory in the case of Hakuin?

Hakuin’s work *Hebiichigo*, written in 1754, can be seen as an example of forgetting by destruction. It was banned from being published by political authorities soon after

¹⁰⁶ For more information, see Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Contained in Article Number 133 of the Grand Council of State (*Dajōkan*), the *Nikujiki Saitai* law promulgated on May 31, 1872, reads, “From now on Buddhist clerics shall be free to eat meat, marry, grow their hair, and so on. Furthermore, they are permitted to wear ordinary clothing when not engaged in religious activities.” See Jaffe, p. 72. The Japanese original version reads: “自今僧侶肉食妻帯蓄髮等可為勝手事。但、法要ノ外ハ人民一般ノ服ヲ着用不苦候事。” As a result of this governmental law, we might be able to consider the shift of clerical succession from the master-disciple relationship to the hereditary succession to be appropriate.

¹⁰⁷ Faure, *Chan Insights and oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 115.

its publication. We are not sure exactly how many copies of *Hebiichigo* were autographed, how many were issued in total, how many of them were withdrawn from circulation, or how many, in any versions, still exist today. However, it is interesting to point out that we have at least three autographed manuscripts, one published version of an autographed manuscript, and one copy version subsequently published¹⁰⁸ and that precisely because of the historical fact of the ban on the publication, today the published version of the *Hebiichigo* is much rarer than the autographed versions. There are possibly three reasons for this book-banning in my estimation.

i. Three Possible Reasons for Banning *Hebiichigo*

The first possible reason is the fact that *Hebiichigo* contains references to the Tokugawa shogunate. In particular, it refers to Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate or Edo regime, referring to him as *Daijū shinkun*,¹⁰⁹ or “the Divine Ruler,” a name for Ieyasu, and also to his way of politics and his work entitled *Tōshōgū goikun*,¹¹⁰ or, better known the “Legacy of Ieyasu.” The historical document, called *Kinsho mokuroku*, or “Catalogue of Prohibited Writings,” published in 1771, notes that any reference of not only the imperial household, the samurai class, recent events, Christian related works, and pornography, but also the Tokugawas is severely regulated and banned from being published, from being possessed, and thus primarily from being read. Further, it gives a warning that any such writings are automatically proscribed and their purveyors will be punished

¹⁰⁸ I have gathered three autographed manuscripts (the Shōinji, Kiichiji, and Eisei-bunko Museum versions), one published version of an autographed manuscript (the Matsugaoka version), and one copy subsequently published (the Kōunji version). For more detail information of *Hebiichigo*, see Chapter 5. Recently I have found the information that an autographed version exists in a temple in Gifu Prefecture, but I have not seen it yet.

¹⁰⁹ 大樹神君 (*Daijū shinkun*). The term *Daijū* means “great tree” and refers to the shogun.

¹¹⁰ 東照宮御遺訓. It is a work said to have been written a hundred years after Ieyasu’s death. In *Hebiichigo*, Hakuin does not question its authenticity.

severely.¹¹¹ In fact, as shown in the figure below, the list of the banned books includes some titles related to the Tokugawa family: *Tōshō sōgyōki kōi*, *Matsudaira ki*, *Matsudaira keizu*, *Tōshōgū goikun*, and *Tōshōgū goengi*. Hakuin referred to the *Tōshōgū goikun*. This writing was banned from being published or even read, much less evaluated for its content.

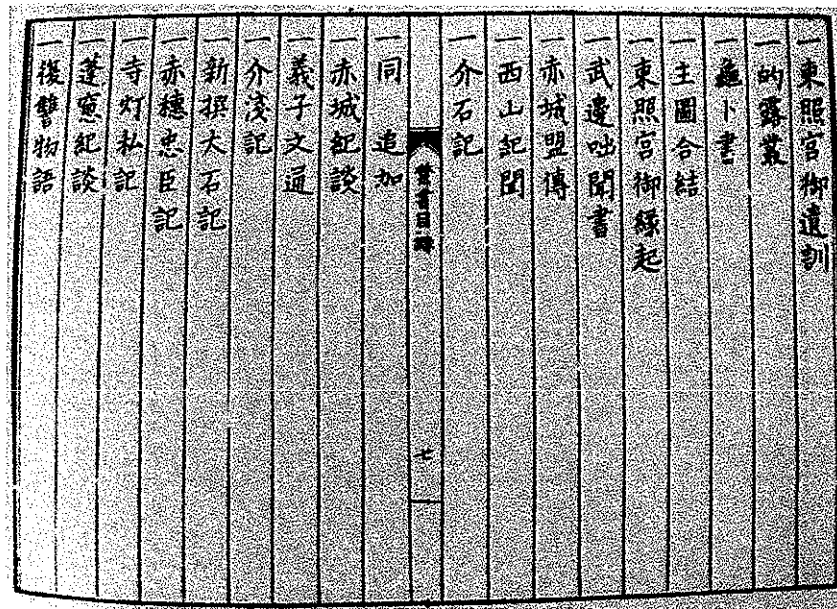


Figure 12: *Tōshōgū goikun* listed in the “Catalogue of Prohibited Writings”¹¹²

The second possible reason for the banning of *Hebiichigo* is that Hakuin gives his criticism of the daimyō’s luxurious, extravagant, and intemperate lifestyle. There are always these kinds of “scandals” in all eras; at the same time, there are also people trying to reveal these stories in all eras. Hakuin exposes those daimyō who buy singing and dancing women and other women for pleasure from Kyoto and exchange them

¹¹¹ For more information, see *Nihon shomoku taisei*, vol. 4., eds., Kikuya Nagasawa and Ryuichi Abe (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1975), p. 214.

¹¹² Kikuya Nagasawa and Ryuichi Abe, eds., *Nihon shomoku taisei*, vol.4 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1975), p. 212.

with other women after a while as if they were changing fans and pipes. It is likely that the direct cause of banning the writing would be the reference to the daimyō themselves, although the references to their lifestyle would be understandable; the exposure of such intemperate everyday life is, of course, undesirable.

The third possible reason is that *Hebiichigo* includes critiques of the *sankin kōtai* system, which is one of the Tokugawa shogunate's central economic and political policies. In principle, this policy required the daimyō to spend every other year in Edo and to leave their wives and families there permanently as hostages.¹¹³ It was designed to control the daimyō by compelling them to consume their financial sources with the costly processions to and from their domains and was aimed at maintaining the rule of the shogunate. Although this policy, as a political demonstration, certainly caused serious financial damage to the daimyō, as a result, it also caused the daimyō's luxurious displays and ostentatious performances as symbolizing their status and dignity to impress onlookers. Hakuin often saw such processions passing through near his temple.

Regarding Hakuin's critique against this government policy, for example, Hakuin calls the *sankin kōtai* procession "a horde of several thousand insincere flatterers"¹¹⁴ and criticizes it as wasting money and labor. We can presume that the ban on publication was to restrain Hakuin's political and social critiques against power and authority. His political, social criticism remained largely, if not completely, overlooked,¹¹⁵ for about 260 years. This was active suppression of his views in his

¹¹³ For more information, see Hirofumi Yamamoto, *Sankin Kōtai* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998). According to Yamamoto's analysis, the *sankin kōtai* policy was promulgated as an established system in 1635 under the shogunate of Tokugawa Iemitsu the Third (1604-1651), although this kind of the system had already been almost made by that time. The basic structure of the system established by the shogunate was to come to Edo in April between the daimyō in the East and the daimyō in the West alternatively. A basic idea of this system existed even before the Tokugawa era, according to Yamamoto.

¹¹⁴ Philip B. Yampolsky, trans., *The Zen Hakuin: Selected Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 218.

¹¹⁵ The author of the copy version subsequently published (the Kōunji version), published in 1862, does not know that the *Hebiichigo* had been banned to be published. This is clear in the postscript of the

own day. But it is this *repression itself* which has become a hallmark of the crafted Hakuin legacy. The forgotten experience, or here “destruction of memory,” of *Hebiichigo* has certainly created, or at least fostered, a vacuum among the circles of Japanese Zen, while being replaced with its lost location behind the “official” cultural memory of the historical Hakuin. That vacuum led to the disregard and ignorance of Hakuin as a social critic and reformer, and that which has masked the tradition’s lack of capacity to face up to the twentieth-century militaristic nationalism and the war affairs in which the tradition actively participated. Today the tradition has forgotten the fact that it has had its legitimate legacy to face up to its traumatic experience in the twentieth century. In short, Hakuin, as a real thinker, provided legitimate moral options for the Zen community. The leaders chose to “forget,” if they were ever even able to know of Hakuin’s alternate identity.

C. Making Silence

The last technique of forgetting is silence. This technique has been practiced by constrained choices of narratives and memories. The Zen tradition never speaks of what it implicitly rejects and dispossesses. The exact opposite technique is normative categorization implanting the criteria of evaluating as to who Hakuin should be. This type of forgetting by silence (leading to rejection and dispossession) can be classified as something of a passive forgetting, yet in this case it can appear as an ideological control function. But, it can also be an active forgetting as a strategy of avoidance or flight. According to Ricoeur, this active forgetting has its accomplice in a “conspiracy of silence.” He writes that the accomplice is, “as is seen in forgetting by avoidance (*fuite*),...its strategy of evasion motivated by an obscure will not to inform oneself, not to investigate the harm done by the citizen’s environment, in short by a

version.

wanting-not-to-know.”¹¹⁶ He further observes:

This forgetting entails the same sort of responsibility as that imputed to acts of negligence, omission, imprudence, lack of foresight, in all of the situations of inaction, in which it appears after-the-fact to an enlightened and honest consciousness that one should have and could have known, or at least have tried to know, that one should have and could have intervened.¹¹⁷

This dimension of forgetting by silence, in Ricoeur’s sense of avoidance or flight as being active, carries a discourse of memory construction and becomes a means to unmask how a cultural memory, or any established memories, are being highly selective and exclusive as well as inclusive. When will the Zen tradition accept Hakuin’s social and political critiques, acknowledging to itself that it “should have and could have known” or at least “have tried to know” and “should have and could have intervened”? The tradition knows *Hebiichigo* and other writings concerning his strong and consistent protests, but why do they not include this aspect of Hakuin in how Hakuin is celebrated?

A sense of forgetting by silence has a special significance in contemporary Japanese Zen. Knowing the darkest chapter of Japanese history, which is closely linked with the war operations where Zen played both spiritual and physical roles, for which the Zen tradition has primarily maintained its consistent silence, why has the tradition conflated its silence with Hakuin’s legacy? The tradition has been blind to this important legacy and model for morality, sincerity, and justice. I think that the war experience, or, more strictly, Zen’s active participation in it, has been traumatic enough to activate an avoidance of Hakuin’s legacy. Because of his moral voice against abusive power and authority and his strong expression for social justice, among the circle of Rinzai Zen tradition his real religious legacy has become

¹¹⁶ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, pp. 448-49.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

free-floating and has been buried in complete oblivion as being negative or almost taboo. His actual legacy has deviated from the creation of the idealized image of the contemporary Rinzaï tradition. The finality of this forgetting by silence has created the situation that a memory of Hakuin as a social critic and reformer has been forgotten and silenced in the collection of the “official,” dominant cultural memories of this figure as well as in the tradition.

Counter-memory and Unsettling Tradition: Revitalizing Essential Multiplicity of Memories

One of the well-known scenes in Japanese films is the scene in Kurosawa Akira’s *Rashomon* (1950) in which an unnamed woodcutter, an itinerant priest, and a ragged commoner were talking about a mysterious story, inclining their heads as they wait out a big downpour under the ruined gate called *Rashōmon*. More specifically, they were talking about an actual incident that had happened just three days before when the notorious bandit, Tajōmaru, murdered a samurai and violated his wife in a forest. But the film gives mutually contradictory testimony made by the witnesses, Tajōmaru, the murdered samurai, his wife, and the woodcutter.¹¹⁸

The point of this movie is that individuals remember the same event differently. However, a question arises: when one of these completely contradictory memories becomes compiled and authorized in the form of an “official” memory or even later in works of written texts such as biographies, how do we understand the established memory? If Tajōmaru’s memory becomes accepted as “official,” then the wife’s memory is not right? How do we understand their contradictory memories? Is it possible to see that their different memories show not just the individual differences of

¹¹⁸ The murdered samurai gives his witness through a medium or *itako*. Kurosawa Akira (1910-1998) set his contemporary concerns in past events. Through this movie, he was talking about the wartime memory: murder, rape, and the subjective perception on recollection.

sensibility, but the essential multiplicity or multivocality of the elements that are, or tend to be, forgotten in the established memory? I argue that the concept of “counter-memory” can be useful in this scenario and that it reveals the violence embedded in the production mechanism, creating the totalizing nature of controlled narratives that are published as “official,” “traditional,” or “true” memory. What is this violence? The violence is to conceal the essential multiplicity of memories in the construction of an established cultural memory as “official.”

What I want to point out here is that the memory production mechanism conceals the essential multiplicity of memories behind the creation of the established “official” memory. Conversely, the rehabilitation of those concealed or repressed memories, simultaneously exposing their “heterogeneity,” deconstructs, or at least unsettles, the politics of the memory production mechanism operating on the dynamics of tradition formation, (re)invention, and maintenance. In short, the concept of counter-memory considers the traditional or “official” memory to be an ideological construct, while unsettling the construction of the tradition that shapes and reshapes the memory in a chain of its transmission mechanism.

It is Foucault who used the term “counter-memory” and who understands that power plays the dominant role in the construction of memory.¹¹⁹ His insights tell us that the idea of counter-memory offers a critique of dominant ideology, illuminating the hegemonic processes of remembering and revealing the connection between the hegemonic order and the historical representations expressed by totalizing memories and narratives. It is Foucault that makes an important shift of focus from memory to counter-memory in order to unmask how discourse as a practice of power shapes our

¹¹⁹ For more information, see Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” *The Foucault Reader*, ed., Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). Also see Donald F. Bouchard, ed., *Language, Counter Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

received image of the past. The concept of counter-memory becomes a useful way to understand the ideological structure of the memory production mechanism and the constructed nature of cultural memory.

By the term “counter-memory,” I mean a memory that allows us to recover the forgotten, concealed, and repressed voices from the past in the creation of the dominant, official memory. It exposes the politics of these memory production and maintenance mechanisms made by the exercise of power and authority in a given tradition. It can be a useful tool in overcoming the presentist approach’s failure to make a distinction between the “truth” and ideology, while this perspective reminds us to pay attention to what kinds of voices we have heard in the public forums.

Jan Assmann uses the term “deconstructive memory” for this counter-memory’s function that reveals the constructed nature of an established memory.¹²⁰ He argues that this deconstructive memory exposes the distinction between what is true and what is not true in constituting religious “truth,” and paradoxically, the discovery of the capable legitimacy of what has been regarded as not true deconstructs the religious “truth” constituted by that distinction. According to Assmann, this idea of “distinction” is clearly shown in the example of master narratives. He writes:

All cultural distinctions need to be remembered in order to render permanent the space which they construct. Usually, this function of remembering the fundamental distinctions assumes the form of a ‘Grand Narrative,’ master story that underlies and informs innumerable concrete tellings and retellings of the past.¹²¹

This view of his idea, “Grand Narrative,” as a cultural-distinction maker reminds us of Foucault’s insight that tradition plays the role of a master narrative that controls the

¹²⁰ For more information, see Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

proliferation of discourse. More specifically, Foucault, in his well-known argument of “what is the author,” argues, “The author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill the work; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition and recomposition of fictions.”¹²² These redefinitions of “Grand Narrative,” “master narrative,” and the “author” enable us to avoid a kind of historical reductionism that is found in the case of the narrowly constrained approaches to Hakuin the Great Rinzai Zen Master: the narratives or memories of the Hakuin trilogy have been the “distinction” or “Grand Narrative” for who Hakuin was; other images of this figure are not accepted as “authentic.” Those “noninterpretative” images of Hakuin are certainly considered at the level of “probably” or “maybe,” or at most, “I heard it”; they never enter the Rinzai canon of Hakuin. The controlled narrative leads to this type of memory reductionism establishing the inclusive hierarchy or the exclusive unity of idealized identity, masking an active forgetting or a repression of the historical past as well as the historical figure. In Hakuin’s case, the memory of this figure as a political protester becomes a counter-memory challenging the only dominant representations of the official memory of this Rinzai Zen master. The counter-memory then reveals the politics of the reciprocal relation between memory and tradition in which the heterogeneity and multiplicity of the memories are silenced in the construction of the official memory.

When I understand that memory is programmed and controlled as being “official,” “traditional,” or “true,” this means that I am simultaneously dealing with a counter-memory that is, or tends to be, forgotten, concealed, and repressed in

¹²² Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 118-19.

relationship to the dominant ideology that seals guarantees on the memory as authoritative, legitimate, and orthodox. The counter-memory approach not only avoids a historical reductionism, but also reveals and rehabilitates the essential multiplicity of memory, which is concealed in the production of cultural memory in the dynamic process of tradition formation, (re)invention, and maintenance.

Approaching cultural memory from the perspectives of the dynamics of tradition and the role of cultural memory within it leads to the notion of “textual community” outlined by Brian Stock, which I examine in the next section.

The Memory and the Making of Tradition: Application to “Textual Community”

I have discussed the dynamics of tradition creation and development, and thus transmission, and the role of cultural memory in the tradition while underlining the reciprocal relationship between memory and tradition. Although I have shown how cultural memory plays an important role in the creation of tradition, I continue to pursue this question here, looking at it from Brian Stock’s concept of “textual community.”¹²³ My point is that a religious community or tradition is a continually emerging phenomenon constructed through its representations in a specific historical context. I suggest that such tradition is not primarily a concrete social reality, but rather a social and cultural object that has always been in the making through the highly selective decisions of people who see themselves as members of the tradition. It is constantly fluctuating, designed to meet the demands, agendas, and interests in the present for what the tradition should be, and, in this light, the tradition is performative while being socially and culturally defined and determined.

¹²³ For more information, see Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

Reflecting “Textual Community”: Rinzai Zen as an Interpretive Community

Stock examines this concept of textual communities as part of his analysis of how the interaction between orality and literacy led to social organization in medieval Europe. With the term “textual community,” Stock argues that “we can think of a textual community as a group that arises somewhere in the interstices between the imposition of the written word and the articulation of a certain type of social organization” and that “it is an interpretive community, but it is also a social entity.”¹²⁴ Throughout his analysis of textual communities, however, Stock does not mean that the simple existence of a text automatically creates a textual community or social organization, and in fact, he gives no guarantees about this relationship. What he really wants to emphasize is that the interpretive and social processes involving the text are primarily required for the formation of the community in question. Thus he emphasizes the existence of interpretation/interpreter, suggesting, “What was essential to a textual community was not a written version of a text, although that was sometimes present, but an individual, who, having mastered it, then, utilized it for reforming a group’s thought and action.”¹²⁵ He further writes:

What was essential for a textual community, whether large or small, was simply a text, an interpreter, and a public. The text did not have to be written; oral record, memory, reperformance sufficed. Nor did the public have to be fully lettered. Often, in fact, only the *interpretes* had a direct contact with literate culture, and, like the twelfth-century heretic Peter Waldo, memorized and communicated his gospel by word of mouth.¹²⁶

In Stock’s understanding, even memory can be a “text” as it is widely defined here.

While this description indicates that the sort of collectiveness led by the formation of

¹²⁴ Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 150.

¹²⁵ Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 90.

¹²⁶ Stock, *Listening for the Text*, p. 37.

the community involves not only social, but also psychological and cultural dimensions, the community is a collective whose thought and action are grounded on the “texts” in question and a group of readers, interpreters, and listeners. It is a socially organized group structured around its acceptance of a text, or, more strictly, the interpretation of a text. In this light, it is more accurate to say that textuality creates a social organization through interpretations. And this indicates that such textuality reflects the text’s potentiality that leads to the shared experience of interpretation among the audience, the social meaning of the text, and the social cohesion of the group. This view provides a model of identifying any belief, practice, and tradition mediated by textuality as a socially and culturally determined category.

Regarding the term “interpretive community,” we cannot fail to point out Stanley Fish’s argument that meanings are produced by neither text nor reader but by what he calls the “interpretive community.”¹²⁷ Fish, focusing on the ideological framework of meaning and value, emphasizes that a particular text’s meaning is totally controlled by the constraints attributed to membership in an interpretive community. The point is this: nobody can be a free agent in dealing with a text; instead each person reads, interprets, and understands a text according to the ideological group, or interpretive community, to which he belongs and thus according to the same strategies of interpretation as the group’s. In the end, for Fish, any interpretation of a text is the ideological product of an interpretive community. Beside Stock’s position of the society formation as social and cultural, now it can be also seen as ideological.

However, what are the problems of uncritically accepting Fish’s argument of the interpretive community? Uncritical acceptance leads us to take Fish’s position, which is the inevitable result of his theory, that those who agree with a text’s meaning

¹²⁷ For more information, see Stanley Fish, *Is there a Text in This Class: The Authorities of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

and value will inevitably be members of the same community, while members of different communities will disagree. This means that there must be as many communities as there are different interpretations, which is problematic. I think that we cannot have such a clear and monolithic distinction between the interpretation and the formulation of a community based on the interpretation. A community or tradition should be understood as a more complex or tangled vessel that is shaped around the complicated negotiations in the interaction of agreement and disagreement and even of what should be remembered and what should be ignored in the present.

Why then is Hakuin always regarded only as a rigorous meditation master, enthusiastic preacher, and versatile artist? Isn't he also a political protester against the power of the Tokugawa elites? Why has the discussion of whether the notion of the buddha-nature points to "inherent enlightenment" or "becoming enlightened" long been the hallmark of Japanese Zen? Why do some Mahāyāna Buddhist texts accept the possibility of women's enlightenment and others not? I suggest that presenting and representing oneself as a community or tradition through various interpretations is a performative choice, a strategic move that questions and reinforces traditional classifications in order to create and maintain the tradition itself. For Fish as a literary theorist, the idea that the same interpretive community governs all the same interpretations works theoretically, but in practice, becomes unworkable. These politics can be applied to Stock's insights of the formation of textual communities, while taking note of both Stock and Fish is critically important in understanding the formation of the textual community from both hermeneutical and ideological claims.

How then can Japanese Rinzai Zen be seen as a textual community? Stock's inclusion of memory as a "text" is very useful in understanding the relationship between cultural memory and the formation of a textual community, and thus in responding to this question. This does not mean that contemporary Rinzai Zen

centered on Hakuin is not grounded on his actual writings and the historical biography of him. The Rinzai authorities certainly depend on those materials in their closed and selective readings for their creation of the Hakuin trilogy; otherwise, there are no sources to produce and reproduce those images of Hakuin. My point here is that these interpretations produced are the tradition's cultural memory of Hakuin. This is well supported by Edward Shils, who demonstrates that tradition maintains itself while also changing through interpretations, whether they are new or not, by generations, whose reinterpretations, assertions, and actions must enter into memory to become a tradition.¹²⁸ In this light, I take Stock's position of memory as a "text," and see the Hakuin trilogy as the text of the development of the Zen tradition in question.

Contemporary Rinzai Zen is a collective whose thought and action are primarily grounded in the Hakuin trilogy in the sense that the tradition identifies this figure as the *de facto* founder of the tradition. The religious authorities in the tradition have formulated the trilogy of him, i.e., as a reviver, meditation master, and artist, while establishing the idealized past and identity of the tradition itself: indeed, many interpretations of Hakuin have reflected the tenets of the Zen tradition. These authorities have emphasized the priority of religious experience under the banner of Rinzai Zen, and they have advertised Hakuin's *kōan* study, meditation practices for the achievement of the *kenshō* experience, and his art as the product of his experience in their hagiographical manner. In their advertisement for the audience outside the tradition, they have fully used Hakuin's meditation as health hygiene and also stressed his teaching enthusiasm, which penetrated all the classes. These selective memories are a creation, and therefore ideological, and these have developed and maintained the Rinzai Zen tradition in the course of its transmission. In this light, the religious authorities who are participating in the construction operations of this Hakuin are not

¹²⁸ For more information, see Shils' *Tradition*, p. 167.

just transmitters of the tradition, but also the inventors of the tradition. While the Hakuin remembrance has been constructed depending on the demands, agendas, and interests in terms of the present through highly selective choices of the original sources, the selective data of religious figures often represent the “best” a given culture had to offer its deceased and, used alone, are potentially misleading indicators in cultural historical reconstructions.

It is important to point out that neither memory nor interpretation can be value-neutral. It cannot be a pure and objective product. As a religious tradition is shaped and reshaped around a text (in the sense of multiple definitions, including cultural memory) and its interpretation, I suggest that the Hakuin who has been held up as the trilogy is a fairly recent innovation in the history of Hakuin remembrances and the contemporary Japanese Rinzai tradition out of which those remembrances have been ideally refashioned. It is important not to forget that these (re)constructions are always carried out in the tradition’s conflict between the necessity to reproduce itself and also the necessity to change itself for a continuing chain of its maintenance and transmission. In a sense, this (re)construction mechanism of tradition formation, maintenance, and transmission is the inevitable result of Stock’s notion of the textual community: interpretation or memory creates a community.

In the next chapter, I discuss the development of the Hakuin trilogy that has shaped and identified contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen. How have Hakuin’s identities been made and emphasized as he has been manipulated by the ventriloquism of the tradition?

CHAPTER THREE

THE RISE OF ESSENTIALIST AND ORIENTALIST TRADITION: IDEOLOGICAL USE OF ZEN IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY JAPAN

The formation of twentieth-century (and to a large extent, what is emerging as the twenty-first century) Japanese Zen and its development cannot be fully understood without considering a single individual—Suzuki Daisetz (1870-1966), better known in the West as D. T. (Daisetz Teitarō) Suzuki (hereafter, Suzuki).¹²⁹ He labored to transmit Zen to the West and interpret it in ways that made it a topic of interest to the Western scholars of religion, and it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that he is the most important popularizer of Zen to the West. Today, even after about four decades have passed since his death, his name is still influential among Japanese Buddhist circles.

Most importantly, he formulated the interpretations that have become the standards of what Japanese Zen is. Although significant scholarly response to early Japanese Zen leaders such as Suzuki has increasingly emerged in recent years, there still seems to be a generally accepted opinion that no one should study Japanese Zen without consulting Suzuki's works. He can rightly be regarded as an author of contemporary Rinzai Zen.

In this chapter, however, I do not attempt to address the strengths of the philosophical ideas of this demanding thinker, along with his friend, Nishida Kitarō. Rather I try to reassess Suzuki's creation of an authorized discourse on Zen and Japanese culture in the tradition it claims to represent, the discourse remaining trapped in essentialist, Orientalist, and nationalist purposes. I examine this discourse by looking at his controversial claims of "Bushidō," "Japaneseness," and "Zen

¹²⁹ "Daisetz" is the Zen *koji* name that young Suzuki received from Zen master Shaku Sōen. The earliest date of occurrence of the name Daisetz is in a document written by Shaku Sōen in 1894, when Suzuki was twenty-four years old. *Koji* means "lay Buddhist practitioners."

experience” and show how these claims played the ideological role of “Japanese Zen” during the pre- and the post-war times, asking how they simultaneously serve as political, nationalistic ideologies. Importantly, all of these three claims share the same approach of inversion that does not see Zen as a product of Japanese culture, but, on the contrary, that sees Japanese culture as a multifaceted expression of Zen. Questioning the traditional ideas of Suzuki’s Zen, I show how the discourse in question was propagated, revealing the reinvention of the Japanese Zen tradition in the twentieth century.

Before I start to discuss Suzuki’s Zen, let me note my two reasons as to why this topic belongs in a discussion of Hakuin. My first reason results from the strong influence of Suzuki’s Zen on the formation and development of contemporary Japanese Zen. This Zen order has been informed not only by the historiography of how it succeeded Chinese Chan, but also by the Orientalist and essentialist tradition of the Meiji Zen leaders such as Suzuki, among others, that gave rise to the various disciplines that have defined (or at least strongly influenced) the field of Zen studies today. Thus, in particular, it is important to understand how Suzuki and other earlier leaders understood the religious experience that has been the hallmark of the tradition. Further, Suzuki’s interpretations of Zen, whether they are reflected in his concept of Bushidō or experience, have played a crucial role in establishing the tradition that Zen is unique to the Japanese and Japanese culture under which milieus the Zen of Hakuin has been delineated.

My second reason concerns Suzuki’s complicit support of Japanese militarism by creating a view of Zen that allowed it to serve as the historical and present ground for “Bushidō ” as a spiritual system. The *sankin kōtai* Hakuin talks about in *Hebiichigo* is directly the Tokugawa militarism. He discussed the nonessentiality of the Daimyō procession as an established precautionary measure of the shogunate, or a

symbol of “Tokugawa-defense forces,” and protested the political power and authority in his own ways. I hope to bring this once radical and courageous but long-silenced voice into the conversation about the precious legacy for human morality that the contemporary Japanese Zen tradition actually possesses, yet has repressed.

The Zen of Suzuki

Suzuki was born in the city of Kanazawa in Ishikawa Prefecture in 1870. In 1891 he began to practice Zen at Engakuji in Kamakura, one of the headquarters of Japanese Rinzai Zen, with the master Imakita Kōsen (1816-1892) and his successor Shaku Sōen (1857-1919; hereafter Sōen). In 1893 he joined the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago as the interpreter for Sōen, who was recognized as the first representative abbot of Rinzai Zen in this congress. In 1896 Suzuki was said to have attained his *kenshō* religious experience. In 1897 he moved to La Salle, Illinois, where he lived until 1908 to study with Paul Carus, the editor of the journal *The Open Court*. Here, Suzuki worked as an assistant in translating *The Gospel of the Buddha* into Japanese and other Asian texts into English.¹³⁰ He eventually returned to Japan in 1909. In 1911 he married American Beatrice Erskine Lane (1878-1939) and in 1921 he established a Buddhist association, “The Eastern Buddhist Society,” in Ōtani University in Kyoto where he started an English journal titled *The Eastern Buddhist*. In 1966 he passed away at the age of 96.

Throughout his life, he gave countless lectures both in and outside Japan and wrote numerous books in Japanese and English, such as *Zen to Nihonbunka* [Zen and Japanese Culture] (1940), *Mushin to iu koto* [The Mind of Emptiness] (1939), and *Nihonteki reisei* [Japanese Spirituality] (1944), and also *Zen-Buddhism and Its*

¹³⁰ *The Gospel of the Buddha* is titled in Japanese *Buddha no fukuon*. His English translations include *Lao-Tze's Tao-The King* (“*rōshi doutoku kyō*”) and *Awakening of Faith* (“*daijyō kishin ron*”). He also published “Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism” (“*daijyō bukkyo ron*”).

Influence on Japanese Culture (1938), *Living by Zen* (1949), *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist* (1957), and *Zen and Japanese Culture* (1959). In particular, his work, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (1934), influenced and helped make the first step for establishing the worldwide popularity of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

One of the best endeavors Suzuki made as “a Zen child of the age” is his pious reconstructions of what he considers to be “Japanese culture” as the representative of the East¹³¹ and of what he considers to be “Pure Zen,” which turns into an aesthetic teaching which he claims forms the quintessence of that Japanese culture, thus exclusively equating Zen with “Japanese spirituality.” For example, he says in his autography:

I spent about ten years in America and then came back to Japan after traveling around Europe for about a year. Once I returned, I encountered so much of what I had never noticed before. There are so many good points in the West, and Japan has to certainly take them in. But either Japan or the East itself owns so much of what it has to convey to the West, which, in particular, must be the area of philosophy and religion. This must be done, and it is the incentive that has instigated me until today.¹³²

Furthermore, in his proposal for establishing the Matsugaoka Bunko Foundation in 1945, he says:

An awakening to Japanese spirituality was enormously enriched in substance during the Kamakura era with the advent of Zen Buddhism as a factor of fundamental import. Not only was Zen Buddhist forthwith received by the warrior class, but it infiltrated deeply into the core of the capital city of Kyoto and affected its culture. It also drove countless warriors into Zen training. In the course of the Tokugawa era, which continued for almost three hundred years, Zen Buddhism was inseparable from the Japanese way of life in many respects. To get an understanding as to what the Japanese people are up to, it is vital to have knowledge on Zen at least to some extent. Zen’s significance,

¹³¹ Suzuki gave his lectures on “Zen and Japanese Culture” at Oxford University, Cambridge University, and several universities in the U.S. in 1936. He published his book *Zoku Zen to nihonbunka* [Continued, *Zen and Japanese Culture*] in 1942.

¹³² *Zaidan hōjin Matsugaoka Bunko* (Kamakura). This is the pamphlet published by the Matsugaoka Bunko and the date of its publication is not mentioned. The translation is mine.

as far as it concerns the Japanese, does not consist merely of its history. If we have something to contribute to the world culture, Zen must be one of the most hopeful candidates. I believe that a spiritual bond strong enough to integrate the nations of the East should be justifiably sought in Zen.¹³³

It is through this motivation of identifying Zen as the essence of Japanese culture (and thus Japanese spirituality) that Suzuki crafted the connection between Zen and Bushidō, or “the Way of warrior,” eventually leading to a concept of what he calls “Japaneseness” or “uniqueness of the Japanese,” a very controversial formulation. This connection, in which Suzuki camouflages the militaristic spirit with Zen spirituality, is his construction and ideological use of Zen shaped under the fervent nationalistic circumstances at that time.

We might ask how this construction could have been uttered at all and why the obvious shortcomings of Suzuki’s Zen were apparently invisible to Suzuki himself and to many of his Japanese audience. Why have many scholars accepted his idea of Zen as “traditional” and “authentic,” when it clearly represents the product under the influence of Japanese nationalistic militarism? The nationalist mentality that eventually gave rise to Japan’s colonization and atrocities in its neighboring countries before 1945 was supported by the ideology of the Bushidō spirit. Knowing this fact, how is it connected with Zen? We should also ask what was at stake in Suzuki’s recognition of the intimate connection between Zen and Bushidō and “Japaneseness”? What is at stake in our uncritical acceptance of his claims of Japanese Zen? The problem with his Zen claims is his conflation of the Zen spirituality with the Bushidō spirit, a move in which the legitimacy of nationalistic militarism, ethnocentrism, and chauvinism is ideally reified, (re)constituted, and authorized. It is imperative to have a clear understanding of this conflation as the ongoing traditional motif of Japanese Zen

¹³³ Katsuyo Ban, *The Establishment of the Matsugaoka Bunko Foundation and How Dr. Suzuki Viewed Chinese Buddhism*, a paper presented at *Godaisan gakujutsu Symposium* in China (July 25, 2007).

up to the present day. This constitutes a crisis for Zen, surely. We must keep in mind that the Japanese Zen we remember today is not only the Zen of Hakuin, but also the Zen of Suzuki as a Rinzai orthodoxy. We cannot fully understand Japanese Zen in general and Suzuki's Zen in particular unless we become more sensitive to the ways that the historical, social, and institutional factors shape our received images of the past.

Suzuki's Conflation of Zen with Bushidō

How did Suzuki understand the relationship between Zen and Bushidō? What did he see as the shared attitudes between these two subjects? How did he create his notion of Zen in the conflation with Bushidō? I examine the constructed nature of Suzuki's political and ideological use of Zen with Bushidō, which simultaneously supports Japanese nationalism and militarism. For example, he asserts the close relation of these two subjects, and explains the former is the prerequisite factor for the latter:

[Z]en was auspiciously introduced into Japanese life, especially the life of the samurai.... In those days we can say that the Japanese genius went either to the priesthood or to soldiery. The spiritual co-operation of the two professions [Zen and warrior] could not help but contribute to the creation of what is now generally known as Bushido, 'the way of the warrior.'... What finally has come to constitute Bushido is the act of being an unflinching guardian-god of the dignity of the samurai, and this dignity consists of loyalty, filial piety, and benevolence. But to fulfill these duties successfully two things are needed: to train oneself in moral asceticism, not only in its practical aspect but in its philosophical preparation; and to be always ready to face death, that is, to sacrifice oneself unhesitatingly when the occasion arises. To do this, much mental and spiritual training is needed.¹³⁴

He maintains that this "much mental and spiritual training" is Zen practice. This

¹³⁴ Daisetz T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 69-70.

statement clearly reveals the highly constructed nature of his notion of “Bushidō.” The ideas of Zen and Bushidō are primarily fused with two principles which he considers to be the common spirituality representing the uncompromising attitude of Zen and Bushidō, respectively, toward the achievement of *kenshō* or *satori* experience and in battle: “single-mind with one goal” and “no fear of death.”

In this vein, Suzuki also constructed his own intellectual and idealized forms of “the nature of the Japanese people,” or what he calls “Japaneseness,” in an attempt to essentialize his “Zen,” the form that reveals a disposition of Japanese chauvinism in those days. Robert Sharf, in his article *The Zen of Japanese Nationalism*, criticizes Suzuki’s conflation of Zen and Bushidō as establishing the *nihonjinron* (literally, “discourse on Japanese people”) idea that it is necessary to “defend indigenous cultural institutions from the onslaught of western civilization.”¹³⁵ It is important to examine how Suzuki’s conflation of Zen with the idea of Bushidō is a construction of the twentieth-century intellectual Zen world.

In the case of Suzuki’s conflation of Zen with Bushidō, there are two important assertions to be noted. The first is that the moral and philosophical principles of Zen are identified with those of the samurai spirit. The second is that Zen was firmly established in the Kamakura period (1192-1333), especially in face of the Mongolian invasions. The first point shows his intentional combination of Zen and Bushidō, revealing how the former can be used to legitimate the latter under the surge of Japan’s nationalistic militarism. The second point exposes the methodological problem that makes his claim hermeneutically impossible as “ahistorical”; thus he misleadingly oversimplifies Japanese history without being concerned with a particular subject’s historicity. The purpose of this second point is not only to strengthen the historical

¹³⁵ Robert H. Sharf, “The Zen of Japanese Nationalism” in *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, ed., Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 136.

connection between Zen and militarism, but also to serve as a strategy to legitimate the militarism of the early twentieth century.

Suzuki argues that Zen activates the samurai's fighting spirit on moral and philosophical grounds, saying:

Morally, because Zen is a religion which teaches us not to look backward once the course is decided upon; philosophically, because it treats life and death indifferently. This not turning backward ultimately comes from the philosophical conviction; but, being a religion of the will, Zen appeals to the samurai spirit morally rather than philosophically. From the philosophical view, Zen upholds intuition against intellection, for intuition is the more direct way of reaching the Truth. Therefore, morally and philosophically, there is in Zen a great deal of attraction for the military classes. The military mind, being—and this is one of the essential qualities of the fighter—comparatively simple and not at all addicted to philosophizing finds a congenial spirit in Zen. This is probably one of the main reasons for the close relationship between Zen and the samurai. Secondly, Zen discipline is simple, direct, self-reliant, self-denying; its ascetic tendency goes well with the fighting spirit. The fighter is to be always single-minded with one object in view: to fight, looking neither backward nor sidewise. To go straight forward in order to crush the enemy is all that is necessary for him. He is therefore not to be encumbered in any possible way, be it physical, emotional, or intellectual.... A good fighter is generally an ascetic or stoic, which means he has an iron will. This, when needed, Zen can supply.¹³⁶

The ascetic elements of Zen, such as “simple,” “direct,” “self-reliant,” and “self-denying,” are regarded as the elements fostering a sense of dignity, loyalty, and obedience in the spirit of the samurai as unflinching fighters who do not look backward and who are not afraid of death once their fate is determined. These two mental attitudes, “no looking backward” and “no fear of death,” are identified by Suzuki with the core of Zen spirituality in regard to not only moral and philosophical issues but also to practical ones.

In particular, in Suzuki's understanding of the work *Hagakure*, an early eighteenth-century work on the ethic of the samurai, those two attitudes clearly

¹³⁶ Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, pp. 61-62.

represent the samurai's willingness to sacrifice their lives for honor, loyalty, piety, and even benevolence. This mentality indicates that the samurai should not hesitate to die to achieve their goal, which is to kill their enemies in battle. If they remain alive without achieving their objective, it is disgraceful as samurai—they would be regarded as cowards. In contrast to this, if they die to achieve their goal, it denotes that they know what Bushidō really is, and their death is considered brave and heroic, and by this justification, they are “saved.” This mentality is best understood as the primary criteria of the Bushidō ideal and has a high spiritual status. The mentality and spirituality of the samurai not only show the Zen-based climate, but also end up propelling them into their moral deeds, which are “legitimated” by Zen spirituality insisting on individual self-cultivation as its fundamental ascetic training.

Bushidō emphasizes loyalty and filial piety, obedience and straightforwardness, and thriftiness and diligence. While the Bushidō code embodied the central value system in the Tokugawa period, its defining feature is in the values primarily oriented to goal-attainment and, as Robert Bellah argues, “it typifies selfless devotion to the collectivity and its head, even to the point of death.”¹³⁷ We can attribute in large part the very high valuation placed on the militarism in Japan even after almost three hundred years of peace to the symbolic importance of Bushidō.

Suzuki's interpretations of Bushidō as the concrete manifestation of the ethic and spirituality of Zen are very problematic because his logical construction conflates Zen with Bushidō in his own time. Zen was used as a spiritual, moral, and practical means for making Bushidō an effective part of the power structure in the spirit of that time. His Zen serves the spiritual and mental support of Japanese militaristic nationalism. Indeed, the concept of Bushidō fostered and supported the nationalistic

¹³⁷ Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan* (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 97.

militarism that motivated Japan to invade and colonize its neighboring countries and that eventually plunged it into the Second World War. His construction of Zen with Bushidō religiously legitimates Japan's militaristic nationalism, but this means that the authenticity of his Zen lies in its adjustment to and solidarity with the spirit of the time. What is regarded as criticism of Suzuki's Bushidō is in fact criticism of the ideological commitments of Zen under the influence of Japanese nationalism.

Suzuki intentionally extends Zen spirituality to the samurai spirit and conflates the "shared" ideas, despite the fact that there are different meanings and practical usages of the two concepts. This view shows his invention as well as his essentialization of Zen with political expediency. Here is a reason to reconsider our uncritically received understanding of the widespread view that Suzuki's Zen is traditional and authentic. Criticizing his invention of Zen is not just reevaluating a contrived understanding of Zen, but a way of responding to the dominant ideologies bounded and constrained in a particular historical context.

The second case of Suzuki's conflation of Zen with Bushidō can be seen in his oversimplification of Japanese history which does not take into account the historicity of either Zen or Bushidō. Suzuki claims that Zen reached its decisive establishment with the Mongolian invasions in the Kamakura period, by which he seems to argue that Zen's militaristic heritage supposedly descends from this moment in time. In this claim, he re-imagines the interaction between Zen and militarism in his own historical context and projects it onto the thirteenth-century event, which stands at a historical distance and which thus exists in a completely different cultural, political, and ideological sphere. In this problematic ahistorical approach, he particularly focuses on the Hōjō government in those days. He writes:

[T]he Hōjō regime was militaristic, as it succeeded the Minamoto family, who had risen against the Taira family and the court nobles.... The Hōjō regime is noted for its severe frugality and moral discipline and also for its powerful

administrative and militaristic equipments. The directing heads of such a strong governing machine embraced Zen as their spiritual guide, ignoring tradition in the matter of religion; Zen thus could not help but exercise its varied influence in the general cultural life of the Japanese ever since the thirteenth century and throughout the Ashikaga and even in the Tokugawa period.... It is, however, generally animated with a certain revolutionary spirit, and when things come to a deadlock—as they do when we are overloaded with conventionalism, formalism, and other cognate isms—Zen asserts itself and proves to be a destructive force. The spirit of the Kamakura era was in this respect in harmony with the virile spirit of Zen.¹³⁸

This statement shows the close connection between Zen and militarism under political power. More interestingly, Suzuki also pays special attention to the Kamakura period itself as the particularly unique time in Japanese history in which a harmonious relationship between Zen spirituality and the fighting spirit of warriors developed.¹³⁹ In addition to this, he explores the religious attitude of Hōjō Tokimune (1251-84), a powerful political leader of the Hōjō government, whose spiritual fortitude effectively repelled the Mongolian invasions. Suzuki thus admires Tokimune as “one of the greatest personages whom Japan has produced”¹⁴⁰ and Tokimune’s deep devotion to Zen practice under the National Master Bukkō (1226-86), the founder of Engakuji. Suzuki crafted the idea that the Kamakura period produced the decisive unification between Zen spirituality and the warrior spirit. In fact Suzuki writes, “Tokimune was a great Buddhist spirit and a sincere follower of Zen, and it was due to his encouragement that Zen came to be firmly establishment in Kamakura and then in Kyoto and began to spread its moral and spiritual influence among the warrior classes.”¹⁴¹

Suzuki’s idea of this decisive spiritual connection between Zen and the warriors in the thirteenth century can be regarded as his highly constructed strategy to

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 62-63.

¹³⁹ We must keep in mind that Suzuki practiced Zen at Engakuji in Kamakura.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 69.

legitimate his political and ideological uses of Zen with Bushidō under the influence of Japanese nationalism in his own time. The problem here is his methodology, which completely ignores the historical distance between the thirteenth and twentieth centuries and thus is hermeneutically impossible. From this point of view, Suzuki's construction of Zen with Bushidō is nothing but the recreated "picture" woven together from scattered pieces in history. His image of Zen as complementing Bushidō is a "montage" created by appropriating historical material that is from almost 650 years ago.

It should be argued that Suzuki's works should be regarded as propagation performances or techniques in the political construction of Zen and Bushidō. Although he propagates a harmonious relationship between Zen spirituality and the fighting spirit of warriors, the Zen tradition has no real continuity in this regard, or at least it lacks the type of continuity that he claims it to have. It may be useful to remember Faure's terminology "teleological fallacy," which means the propensity to read the past in terms of the present, to read Zen as having its finality in modern Japan. Suzuki's Zen with Bushidō is an ideological creation, locating its *in illo tempore* as Kamakura Zen, but presupposing the existence of the Zen of that time as its ultimate goal.¹⁴²

We might ask, why did Suzuki's works become successful? I think that the success of his works was related not to their literary and philosophical qualities. Instead it is due to their adjustability to and solidarity with the historical conjuncture. This conjuncture prompted the emergence in Japan of a positive modality of nationalist and Orientalist discourse, which found in the image of Zen fostered by Suzuki a particularly appropriate object.

¹⁴² In a sense, the previously dominant study of Hakuin is also a "teleological scholarship."

Suzuki's Creation of Japanese Uniqueness

In Suzuki's invention of Zen, there is a problematic understanding of Bushidō. If, however, one delves deeper into his analysis, one sees that he concurrently develops an idea that Zen epitomizes the Japanese character. By the "Japanese character" here, I mean the uniqueness and superiority of Japanese people, culture, and spirituality, that is to say, what Suzuki labels "Japaneseness." Sharf categorizes this position as *nihonjinron*—"a popular discursive enterprise devoted to the delineation and explication of the unique qualities of the Japanese, which invariably touts the cultural homogeneity as well as the moral and spiritual superiority of the Japanese vis-à-vis other people."¹⁴³ Activated by Suzuki and his epigones such as Nishida Kitarō and Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, in fact, the idea of "Japaneseness," along with "Bushidō," became an important discourse in twentieth-century Japan. The concept of "Japaneseness" shows in part his essentialization of Zen in claiming Japan's cultural superiority to the West and to other Asian countries. In understanding his "Japaneseness" discourse, it is important to take account of this chauvinistic aspect.

What is Suzuki's understanding of "Japaneseness"? How did he establish his concept of "Japaneseness" theory by conflating Zen with Bushidō? In order to respond to these questions, I begin by considering the *Hagakure*, the epitome of Bushidō, which delineates what the samurai should be¹⁴⁴:

The samurai is good for nothing unless he can go beyond life and death. When it is said that all things are of one mind, you may think that there is such a thing to be known as a mind. But the fact is that a mind attached to life and death must be abandoned, when you can execute wonderful deeds.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Sharf, *The Zen of Japanese Nationalism*, p. 136.

¹⁴⁴ The Bushidō, the ethic of the samurai, covers a wide range of ideas from a concern for the fulfillment of the duties of everyday life to the preoccupation with death. In fact, in Bushidō, militarism and a preoccupation with death remain important in modern times.

¹⁴⁵ Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, p. 74.

The *Hagakure* emphasizes the importance of emancipation from the attachment of life and death, locating it as the criteria of being good warriors. For Suzuki, this idea is exclusively equated with Zen spirituality, as we have seen above in his application of Zen spirituality to the Bushidō spirit. However, it is remarkable that he in turn identifies this warrior spirituality with the nature of Japanese people. He writes:

The Japanese have been taught and trained to be able to find a moment's leisure to detach themselves from the intensest excitements in which they may happen to be placed. Death is the most serious affair absorbing all one's attention, but the cultured Japanese think they ought to be able to transcend it and view it objectively.¹⁴⁶

This statement obviously deals with the issue of death to become a good warrior. Here the matter of death is considered a very essential element for being ideal Japanese people (and thus for Japanese culture), who seem to regard “no fear of death” as artistic beauty.

Further, referring to the Japanese term “*isagi-yoku*” (lit., “gracefully” or “readily”), Suzuki develops the relationship between Zen spirituality and the samurai spirit to create the idea of “Japaneseness.” He states:

‘To die *isagi-yoku*’ is one of the thoughts very dear to the Japanese heart. In some deaths, if this characteristic is present, crimes committed by the offenders are judged even charitably. *Isagi-yoku* means ‘leaving no regrets,’ ‘with a clear conscience,’ ‘like a brave man,’ ‘with no reluctance,’ ‘in full possession of mind,’ and so on. The Japanese hate to see death met irresolutely and lingeringly; they desire to be blown away like the cherries before the wind, and no doubt this Japanese attitude toward death must have gone very well with the teaching of Zen. The Japanese may not have any specific philosophy of life, but they have decidedly one of death, which may sometimes appear to be that of recklessness. The spirit of the samurai deeply breathing Zen into itself propagated its philosophy even among the masses. The latter, even when they are not particularly trained in the way of the warrior, have imbibed his spirit and are ready to sacrifice their lives for any cause they think worthy. This has repeatedly been proved in the wars Japan has so far had to go through. A foreign writer on Japanese Buddhism aptly

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 81-82.

remarks that Zen is the Japanese character.¹⁴⁷

This daring and powerful statement implies that his creation of “Japaneseness” is unique. In point of fact, he seeks the common features of Zen spirituality and the samurai spirit, and develops a highly constructive image which in turn becomes the icon of the unique quality of the Japanese. His idealized image of “Japaneseness” is the product of the dominant ideologies of the nationalistic militarism and chauvinism that existed in Japan in the last century. The images of “Japanese character” stand for the nationalistic ideology in wartime Japan.

From this point of view, Sharf’s idea of *nihonjinron* strikes me as quite intriguing. He writes:

Nihonjinron thought is distinguished precisely by its thoroughly ahistorical character. Individual artifacts of culture are isolated, stripped of their historical context, and raised to the status of icons of the Japanese spirit. No shifting semiotic field is invoked in the analysis of a temple garden, a tea bowl, or a ritual suicide. Rather, these cultural products are offered up as vivid manifestations of the timeless and unchanging Japanese character. Such a radically ahistorical stance is a convenient means of concealing the very real historical situation—the threat posed by rapid technological and industrial modernization, imperialist aspirations, and diplomatic failures—in which *nihonjinron* rhetoric flourished.¹⁴⁸

Suzuki’s concept of “Japaneseness” is nothing but a super-constructive product grown out of his invention of Zen and Bushidō as ahistorical entities, thus making the concept seem universal and eternal. However, again, here lies a methodological problem: Suzuki’s idea of “Japaneseness” is a hermeneutically incorrect understanding of Japanese identity as “ahistorical.” In short, his fatal mistake is his oversight of the historicity of the materials he uses. As Sharf argues, “*Nihonjinron* is in large part a Japanese response to modernity—the sense of being adrift in a sea of tumultuous

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 85. This statement clearly exposes the central point of Suzuki’s category of “Japaneseness.”

¹⁴⁸ Sharf, *The Zen of Japanese Nationalism*, p. 138.

change, cut off from the past, alienated from history and tradition.”¹⁴⁹ Precisely because of this reason, even though one might ask where his “Japaneseness” concept comes from, no one can find the origin of it and the concept only raises questions. The rhetoric of such a *nihonjinron* contains a “timelessness” and “ahistoricalness,” maintaining a universal, eternal peculiarity. Suzuki’s idea of “Japaneseness” is his invention of Japanese identity.

Zen Religious Experience as Pure and Universal

The central characteristic of twentieth-century Japanese Zen is its exclusive focus on the priority of religious experience. Suzuki, represented in the same way as Japanese Zen intellectual apologists such as Nishida, Hisamatsu, and many other thinkers in the Kyoto School, for example, Nishitani Keiji and Tanabe Hajime, was deeply influenced by the Western modern model of religious experience and thus Western philosophy in formulating his notion of Zen experience. For Suzuki, religious experience is not merely a central feature of Zen, but the whole of Zen. By religious experience, he means “the unmediated experience of the absolute in which the dualism of subject and object, observer and observed, is transcended.”¹⁵⁰ This view of Suzuki’s religious experience is clearly represented by Nishida’s idea of what he calls “absolute nothingness,” “pure experience,” or “pure subjectivity,” which Suzuki later makes “the central hermeneutical principle in his presentations of Zen.”¹⁵¹ By “pure experience,” for example, Nishida, as well as Suzuki, means to “know reality exactly as it is...without the admixture of any thinking or discrimination” and indicates that “pure experience is identical with immediate experience. When one immediately

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 137.

¹⁵⁰ Sharf, “Experience,” *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed., Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 101.

¹⁵¹ Sharf, “Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience,” *Numen* 42 (1995): 248.

experiences a conscious state of the self, there is still neither subject nor object; knowledge and its object are entirely one. This is the purest form of experience.”¹⁵² These views of Zen experience construed by Suzuki and Nishida are also shared by German philosopher Eugen Herrigel (1885-1955), whom Suzuki positions as a man who knows Zen.¹⁵³ For Herrigel,

„Zen‘...in erster Linie nicht Spekulation, sondern unmittelbare Erfahrung dessen sein will, was als grundloser Grund des Seienden vom Verstande nicht ausgedacht, ja nicht einmal nach noch so eindeutigen und unwiderstehlichen Erfahrungen begriffen und gedeutet zu werden vermag: man weiß es, indem man es nicht weiß.“¹⁵⁴

This view of Zen by Herrigel as the “unmittelbare Erfahrung,” or immediate experience, identifying “the bottomless ground of Being”¹⁵⁵ is described in his actual experience of breakthrough that he sought through his archery training with a Zen master. He writes:

Da, eines Tages, nach einem Schuß, verbeugte sich der Meister tief und brach dann den Unterricht ab. ‚Soeben hat ‚Es‘ geschossen‘ rief er aus, als ich ihn fassungslos anstarrte. Und als ich endlich begriffen hatte, was er meinte, konnte ich die jäh aufbrechende Freude darüber nicht unterdrücken.

‚Was ich gesagt habe,‘ tadelte der Meister, ‚war kein Lob, nur eine Feststellung, die Sie nicht berühren darf. Ich habe mich auch nicht vor Ihnen verbeugt, denn Sie sind ganz unschuldig an diesem Schuß. Sie verweilten dismal völlig selbstvergessen und absichtslos in höchster Spannung; da fiel der Schuß von Ihnen ab wie eine reife Frucht. Nun üben Sie weiter, wie wenn nichts geschehen wäre!‘¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 248. From these views of Suzuki’s and Nishida’s, it can easily identify how much Hisamatsu’s idea of “oriental nothingness” was heavily influenced by them. In fact, Hisamatsu is a direct student of Nishida and also contributes to making some collections of Suzuki’s voluminous writings.

¹⁵³ For more information, see Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, p. 70. According to Faure’s analysis, a Jewish-Hungarian intellectual and critic Arthur Koestler pointed out Herrigel’s Nazi background and suggested that Zen might have affinities with fascism [which here means Nazism].” Thus it is interesting to think about the possible connection between Herrigel’s Zen and Japanese militarism.

¹⁵⁴ Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in der Kunst des Bogenschiessens* (München-Planegg: Otto-Wilhelm-Barth-Verlag, 1959, c1948), p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ This is my translation. The phrase “grundloser Grund des Seienden” literally means “bottomless or groundless ground of Being (reality or existence).”

¹⁵⁶ Herrigel, *Zen in der Kunst des Bogenschiessens*, pp. 65-66.

For Herrigel, Zen experience is an “incontestable experience” or “entirely innocent experience” in which one becomes oneness with the “groundness of Being.”¹⁵⁷

The most important claim of Suzuki’s Zen is that Zen is a pure, unmediated, and non-dual experience itself. He positions this experience as *kenshō* or *satori*, and sees that Zen, whose essence is such that the experience is distinctively universal, lies behind “all authentic religious teachings, be they Christian, Islamic, Hindu, or whatever.”¹⁵⁸ In short, Suzuki advances the notion that Zen transcends all doctrine, all ritual, all institutions (sectarian boundaries), and all religions and that it is, therefore, something mythically absolute of experience. Thus in the final analysis, as German theologian Ernst Benz (1907-1978) emphasizes, “Zen ist keine Philosophie, es ist keine Metaphysick, es ist keine Religion.”¹⁵⁹ Benz states:

Zen ist frei von all solchen dogmatischen und religiösen Lasten. Damit wird Zen nicht nur seiner buddhistischen Herkunft, der Bindung an jegliche positive Religion entschränkt—es beansprucht, die Quintessenz aller positiven religiösen oder philosophischen Systeme zu sein. Zen verkündet von sich selbst, daß es der Geist des Buddhismus ist, in Wirklichkeit ist es der Geist aller Religion unde Philosophie.¹⁶⁰

Zen is neither a philosophy nor metaphysics nor a religion. Rather it is the spirit of all religion or philosophy. As a consequence of the influence of Suzuki’s Zen in the West, the Zen that opened the possibility of access to it for all because it is free from everything, Benz describes the situation as if “big and small fish live contently together in the same ocean.”¹⁶¹ Suzuki’s approach of Zen as pure and universal has been undoubtedly succeeded by a number of Japanese intellectuals, in particular,

¹⁵⁷ This is my translation.

¹⁵⁸ Sharf, “Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience,” p. 248.

¹⁵⁹ Ernst Benz, *Zen in Westlicher Sicht: Zen-Buddhismus – Zen-Snobismus im Anhang Zen-Aussprüche* (Wilhelm/Oberbayern: Otto Wilhelm Barth-Verlag, 1962), p. 22.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22. This is my translation. I interpret this sentence that Zen can be practiced by Buddhists, Christians, or whoever.

around the circles of the Kyoto School thinkers. The Japanese Zen we have been taught as being traditional is the one strongly influenced by this Zen, or the Zen of Suzuki.

Regarding Suzuki's intellectual Zen, he places his understanding of Zen, the Zen as the unmediated or pure experience and the non-dual identity of the absolute, in the interests of a clear nationalist discourse. For example, as we have seen in his claims of Bushidō and Japaneseness above, Zen is distinctively unique to Japan and Japanese people, and it is the spiritual source of Japanese culture, while the traditional arts of Japan, like the tea ceremony, *suiboku* painting, calligraphy, martial arts, landscape gardening, architecture, the Noh play, and so forth, are, in Sharf's words, "all ultimately expressions of Zen gnosis."¹⁶² Paul Demiéville has rightly pointed out: "Presque toute la culture de ce pays...est interprétée en fonction du Zen, qui deviant une cle passe-partout donnant accès non seulement à l'esthétique (peinture, poésie), mais aussi au militarisme japonais."¹⁶³ While for Suzuki all Japanese culture results from Zen and not *vice versa*, his Zen promoted and served as a spiritual and mental center for twentieth-century Japanese nationalistic propaganda and supported Japan's nationalistic militarism that drove the country to invade its neighboring Asian countries, eventually leading it into the Second World War.

While many intellectuals have developed the debate over both the defense and criticism of Suzuki's Zen, as well as the involvement of the Kyoto school in Japanese nationalism, we need to nail down the fact that the Zen of Suzuki clearly supported Japanese nationalism. In a sense, this was a way in which Zen could survive, responding to the tradition's demands of the present needs and agendas for maintenance, adjusting to the spirit of the time. To put it in another way, the dominant

¹⁶² For more information, see Sharf, "Experience," p. 101.

¹⁶³ Paul Demiéville, review of Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 61, no. 1-2 (1966), pp. 92-93.

ideology then is reflected in the practical beliefs and actions of those whose thought is constrained by that ideology. Thus the mode of Suzuki's Zen (and Nishida's) and his concept of Zen experience make that invisible dominant ideology visible. Suzuki's Zen played a ventriloquist for the dominant ideology in wartime Japan.

One of the contemporary problems regarding Suzuki's Zen, as well as Nishida's, is that so many intellectuals and priests still faithfully adopt their Zen as the "true" form and traditional identity of Zen Buddhism, even though it is actually a twentieth-century construct. Any truth claim that Suzuki advocated in his Zen idealization is automatically such a construct as well. It is important to reconsider how the intellectual Zen was shaped in a cultural, social, and historical context in which those intellectuals were inevitably involved.

Here we consider two possible views of the rise of the intellectual Zen represented by Suzuki and Nishida. The first view is the intellectual Zen as a product of Zen reform movements that had faced the devastating critiques and persecutions of Buddhism initiated by the Meiji government, which was the so-called *haibutsu kishaku*, positioned as part of the government's efforts at modernization.¹⁶⁴ Against this destructive movement against Buddhism, on the one hand, some Buddhist reformers insisted that Buddhism's corruption, led by the social and institutional systems of the Tokugawa Buddhist establishment, did not result from the problem of Buddhism's spirituality or even from Buddhism itself, but rather that "the problem lay...in the institutional and sectarian trappings to which Buddhism had fallen prey."¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, some reformers asserted that "the official suppression of Buddhism [*haibutsu kishaku*] was in fact a purifying force, which would purge Buddhism of its degenerate accretions and effect a return to the original 'essence' of

¹⁶⁴ For my discussion of *haibutsu kishaku* in detail, see Chapter 1.

¹⁶⁵ Sharf, "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience," p. 247.

the Buddha's teachings."¹⁶⁶

One of the notable analyses that Sharf has made regarding these reformers is that they sought a "modernized form" of Zen under the dominant ideological climate of the state's modernization process. I would add that we need to see those reformers' more practical and more realistic strategies for maintaining the tradition in their creation of that "modernized form of Zen." As a consequence, these Zen apologists in their reform movements developed their "iconoclastic," "anti-institutional," "anti-clerical," and "anti-ritual" elements of intellectual Zen and emphasized Japanese Zen as "pure experience itself", in Sharf's words, as "a spiritual technology providing the means to liberating insight and personal transformation."¹⁶⁷ By rendering the "essence" of Zen, they elevated the primary importance of religious experience and its role more than anything else. In a sense, modernization extends to conceptualizations of religious experience.

The second view considers the intellectual Zen of Suzuki and Nishida to be a religious response to the war ideology of the country, the forces of Western modernization, and the confrontation of Western cultural imperialism or hegemony sustained by the West's political, technological, and military dominance. Under this Western cultural hegemony, "castigated as primitive, idolatrous, and intellectually benighted, Asian religion was held responsible for the continent's social, political, and scientific failings."¹⁶⁸ These are the precise contexts in which "we must understand the Asian appropriation and manipulation of the rhetoric of experience."¹⁶⁹ It is in these contexts that the Japanese intellectual Zen elevated and fabricated the concept of religious experience (and its role) in thought and practice, as more intuitive, mystical,

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 259.

¹⁶⁸ Sharf, "Experience," p. 102.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

experiential, and thus “purer” than the discursive faiths of the West. As a result, the Japanese intellectual Zen contributed to a distinctive claim: “if the West excelled materially, the East excelled spiritually.”¹⁷⁰ This rhetoric of religious experience, the rhetoric of exalting the cultural superiority of Japan, served as an effective means of resisting Western cultural hegemony. This ideological use of Zen to provide a rationale for Japanese claims of uniqueness and cultural superiority is the center of the reconstructed Zen, which is what we have called and identified as traditional Japanese Zen.

Suzuki’s Zen as “Reverse Orientalism”

An important critical investigation of the intellectual Japanese Zen has been made not only by Sharf, but also by Bernard Faure. In particular, he considers the intellectual Zen of Suzuki and Nishida to be an ideological construct shaped as a response to Western Orientalism. While he also explores “Suzuki effects” and “Nishida effects” among the postwar Japanese intellectuals from the Matsugaoka institution, the Kyoto School, and the “New Kyoto School,” it is noteworthy that he argues with the Zen of Suzuki and Nishida, which Sharf has positioned as “Zen nationalism,” as “reverse Orientalism,” “second Orientalism,” or “Zen Orientalism.”

I take up the question of this kind of “Orientalism,” the way in which the Kyoto School and Suzuki have served the “Orientalist” purpose. By “reverse Orientalism,” Faure argues that the so-called Oriental discourse is not solely a product of the Occident, but rather that many discourses of a mysterious, spiritual, and unique East, particularly Japan here, have been produced and peddled not by western but by the Japanese intellectuals themselves as they served wartime nationalism and

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

developed in the form of “Japanism,” or *nihonjinron*, in the pre-/post-war periods. Suzuki and Nishida, among others, exercised an Orientalism, a ‘secondary’ Orientalism or Zen Orientalism in their construction of Zen as “pure experience,” offering an idealized, ‘nativist’ image of a Japanese culture deeply influenced by Zen. In support of Faure’s position, I develop the argument that this concept of “reverse Orientalism” or “Zen Orientalism” can be seen as a deconstructive enterprise of the tradition formation mechanism as well as its authenticity production mechanism, exposing the fact that “Orientalism” is generated by and for the sake of the Orient (here representing Japan in particular) over and against the West. Zen Orientalism, then, constitutes cultural nationalism, which is chiefly represented by the *nihonjinron* discourse and its chauvinist rhetoric, predicated on an inversion of Orientalist schemas.

Suzuki’s and Nishida’s concept of Zen (or religious experience), “absolute nothingness,” “pure experience,” or “pure subjectivity,” all serve the “Orientalist” purpose that produces the ideological dimensions of Zen rhetoric as a form of Zen Orientalism. For example, Suzuki and Nishida insisted that those concepts of Zen are unique for Japan and Japanese people, and Japanese traditional cultures are the ultimate expressions of the concepts. Suzuki emphasizes that these concepts of religious experience are not understandable to Westerners who have no background in Zen. Nishida emphasizes that the universal union between Eastern and Western cultures could be sought in Japan, Japanese people, and Japanese culture, which possessed pure experience. In other words, with Suzuki, Zen coopted the entire field of Japanese culture and claimed the status of a distinctively unique spirituality that simultaneously characterized Japaneseness. With Nishida, Zen claimed a crosscultural status due to its absolute purity and thus universality which were then also claimed as unique to the Japanese. These are the representative examples of Zen Orientalism

claimed by Suzuki and Nishida. Regarding this point, the category of religious experience “came to function performatively and to produce specific effects outside the field of philosophy.”¹⁷¹ Being a cultural and political strategy to elevate idealized identities, the rhetoric of religious experience must be investigated as an ideological construct.

Suzuki’s and Nishida’s ideas of “absolute nothingness” or “pure experience” are universal and ahistorical. Early Zen apologists such as Suzuki and Nishida were strongly influenced by Western intellectuals such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, William James, and Rudolf Otto since at least the early nineteenth century. These last focused on the religious experience as one of pure consciousness or immediate, unmediated awareness, or a sense of feeling, emotion, or intuition; thus it is something which cannot be explained, and which, therefore, is not to be explained. Suzuki and Nishida’s privileging of the experience was forged by borrowing these ideas of Western scholarship.

Following Steven Katz’s critical position that there are no unmediated or pure experiences processed through and organized by the context in which they occur,¹⁷² it cannot be the case that that “pure experience” or “absolute nothingness” of religious experience, represented by Suzuki and Nishida, is free from and thus independent of any sociocultural context. These definitions of Zen religious experience must be understood as universal and ahistorical, and I agree with Faure’s position that “the notion of pure experience is by no means the pure experience itself”¹⁷³ because such an experience is always derived and reconstituted in a particular cultural, social, and

¹⁷¹ Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, p. 80.

¹⁷² For more information, see “Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism” in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed., Steven Katz (New York: Oxford University Press) and “The ‘Conservative’ Character of Mystical Experience” in *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*, ed., Steven Katz (New York: Oxford University Press).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

historical context. Suzuki's and Nishida's concepts of religious experience, "absolute nothingness" or "pure experience," remain unconsidered as ideological constructs. And precisely this ideological nature of their concepts is what makes the rhetoric of religious experience a truth claim.

Concentrating particularly on Nishida's idea of "pure experience," Faure explains that it is "the point of view of ultimate truth in which the subject/object dichotomy does not obtain, historical values of the conventional level must appear rather meaningless"¹⁷⁴ and that it is "independent of any sociocultural context."¹⁷⁵ For Nishida, the concept of "pure experience" is grounded in ultimate reality, or "absolute" emptiness, and hence is synonymous with his other concept of "absolute nothingness." Suzuki also uses this term in order to emphasize the uniqueness of Japanese spirituality. While Nishida's formulation of "pure experience" is primarily based on Zen, Suzuki claims that this concept of Nishida's is difficult to understand unless one is passably acquainted with Zen experience and that his mission was to make the extremely inexpressible Zen realm intelligible to the West.

However, it is noteworthy that Nishida formulates this concept of "pure experience" into the ultimate realm of the cardinal Zen notion of "no-mind," or *mu-shin*, as the purest manifestation of Japanese spirituality. Nishida thus identifies the "pure experience" with Japanese spirituality as, in his own words, "the realization of the absolute at the bottom of ourselves [the Japanese people]."¹⁷⁶ Hence for Nishida, "pure experience" is considered to be the myth of Japanese uniqueness that reveals the logic of his *nihonjinron* discourse. Only the Japanese people who hold this "pure experience" at the foundation of their spirituality can make "a point of union between

¹⁷⁴ Faure, "The Kyoto School and Reverse Orientalism" in *Japan in Traditional and Postmodern Perspectives*, eds., Charles Wei-Hsun Fu and Steven Heine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 248.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

Eastern and Western culture.”¹⁷⁷ This is a myth. Who can be even close to that state?

I have discussed the Japanese intellectual Zen shaped by Suzuki and Nishida. I have pointed out that the intellectual Zen’s claims on Bushidō, Japanese uniqueness, and religious experience are a twentieth-century construct by the Zen apologists influenced by Western modern philosophy. I have also pointed out that the valorization of the experience was the intellectual Zen’s critical response or resistance against Western modernization and cultural imperialism. Hence, it was also the intellectual Zen’s ideological attempt against such Western hegemony to protect and establish the identity of Zen as distinctively unique and universal, later imposing the identity on the notions of the Japanese nation, Japanese culture, and Japanese spirituality. This is “Zen Orientalism.” The problem is: there are so many Japanese scholars and priests who faithfully believe in such Zen as essential and true today. The critical, ideological examination of this intellectual Japanese Zen, which has partly established the Rinzaï orthodoxy today, shows how what we remember as “Japanese Zen” has been produced, shaped, and identified culturally, socially, and ideologically over time, and how it is actually a modern ideological use of Zen. What we have identified as Japanese Zen, or the Zen of Hakuin, has been formulated and developed at the core by this entire Orientalist and essentialist tradition.

In the next section, I examine the Zen of Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, who was also influenced by Suzuki and Nishida and who became a leading Zen philosopher during the post-war period, with a particular focus on his position of Zen and art. Along with Suzuki and Nishida, he was also one of the influential intellectuals in contemporary Japanese Rinzaï Zen.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 267.

Religious Experience and Aesthetic Experience: Hisamatsu Shin'ichi and Locating Japanese Uniqueness in Post-war Japan

In this section, I explore one of the representative claims in post-war Japanese Zen, “aesthetics as a manifestation of Zen spirituality,” made by Hisamatsu Shin'ichi (1889-1980), a leading intellectual authority of the twentieth-century on Zen. In particular, I consider his invention of Zen aesthetic experience elaborated in the ideological use of Zen religious experience, and investigate his conflation of Zen with his own unique idea of “Japanese culture,” including what he calls “Japanese uniqueness.” In fact, Hisamatsu played an active role during post-war Japan in the process of the intellectual construction of Zen and in determining the religious and cultural influences that eventually gave rise to the establishment of the images of “the uniquely Japanese” in contemporary elite Zen. In order to supplement the idea of Japanese uniqueness, Hisamatsu regarded Zen aesthetics as the product of Zen religious experience, more specifically as the artistic self-expression of Zen religiosity. I am interested in examining how Hisamatsu invented Zen aesthetics in his intellectual construction of Zen, and how he conflated it with Japaneseness (predominantly Japanese culture) as epitomizing Oriental uniqueness. I am interested in looking at his “shogunism” or “absolutism” for Zen aesthetics, revealing his nationalistic claims and subtle racist points about the West.

I begin by discussing several features hidden in Zen aesthetics and examine the relationship between Zen religious experience and Zen aesthetic experience. What is Zen aesthetic experience? What is Zen religious experience? How do these two experiences interrelate? How do Zen aesthetics serve both as a manifestation of Zen spirituality and as nationalistic and “shogunistic” claims? How does the ideological use of Zen and aesthetics produce a problematic claim of “the uniquely Japanese” as superior, revealing a racist attitude toward the West and other Asian countries? I show that intellectuals have constructed their own intellectual Zen ideas, providing evidence

at odds with the prevailing view that Zen aesthetics express an Oriental uniqueness that reached its peak in Japanese culture.

Aesthetic Experience and Religious Experience

One of Hisamatsu's important works published in 1971, *Zen and the Fine Arts*, is actually an English version of his work *Zen to Bijutsu*, published in 1958. Here I show his creation of the relationship between Zen and Zen aesthetics. First, he provides seven characteristics hidden in Zen arts: 1) asymmetry, 2) simplicity, 3) austere sublimity or lofty dryness, 4) naturalness, 5) subtle profundity or deep reserve, 6) freedom from attachment, and 7) tranquility. These seven characteristics have a mutual relationship and equal significance, and the order of these seven does not indicate the degree of their importance. Second, the nature of Zen spirituality is classified into seven elements: 1) no rule, 2) no complexity, 3) no rank, 4) no mind, 5) no bottom, 6) no hindrance, and 7) no stirring. These seven elements simultaneously represent the essence of Zen religious experience, that is to say, what we know as *kenshō* or *satori*. Third, each of these seven elements corresponds respectively to the seven characteristics embedded in Zen aesthetics. Hisamatsu argues that the seven characteristics of Zen arts are regarded as the products of Zen religious experience and that the artistic expression must be unique to Oriental culture, or more strictly, Japanese culture.

This is the conflation of the seven elements of Zen art with the seven characteristics of religious experience. In this light, Zen aesthetics becomes the visual or artistic symbol or expression of Zen thinking and spirituality. A key point is that each of those seven characteristics of Zen is a fundamental element in the nature of Zen religious experience. From this perspective, Zen aesthetics becomes the ultimate production of Zen religious experience, corroborating the position that religious

cultivation is equivalent to aesthetic cultivation. For Hisamatsu, the fundamental subject of Zen aesthetics is a true Zen-oriented man, and he regards Zen aesthetics as artistic self-expression, displaying a very important point that this view of the relationship between Zen and aesthetics is based on his own religious experience.

However, I argue that this creative manipulation between religious experience and aesthetic experience produces a “shogunistic” tone for Zen aesthetics. The idea that Zen aesthetics are nothing but the product of religious experience has been at the core of Rinzai orthodoxy. As a result of this idea, by taking into account only the artistic senses of religious experience, Zen art as the visual texts of religious teachings has been neglected. In fact, this attitude of Hisamatsu has strongly influenced a major intellectual movement supported by particular Japanese scholars who have exclusively overlooked other religious meanings and messages hidden in Buddhist artwork such as Hakuin’s paintings, ink drawings, and calligraphy. This model of understanding how Buddhist art should be exposes his invention, which in the end essentializes Zen thought with a special concentration on religious experience. If this is the only possible way of understanding Zen aesthetics, it is not a shared level of truth for everyone, even for all Japanese and, importantly, even for most Japanese Zen priests. This shogunistic position which prevailed among the Zen circles implies that only a person who has had a decisive enlightenment experience or a person who has an intense background in Zen can understand Zen aesthetics. Who can be the candidate for this position? This point clearly reveals his “shogunism” for Zen aesthetics.

It is clear that Hisamatsu discusses Zen aesthetics not from the view of an artist, but from the absolute standpoint of a Zen master who had a decisive religious experience. He understands that the nature of Zen aesthetics is that of the experience, and it can be found only within the appearance of the absolute realm of religious experience of a true Zen practitioner. The superiority or inferiority of Zen aesthetics is

thus determined not by the skill of the artistic techniques, but by the depth of religious experience of the man. Such a “conspiracy of silence” embedded in the essence of Zen aesthetics displays an invention of what Japanese Zen should be.

There have been widespread, long-lasting tendencies among Japanese intellectuals of the twentieth century to emphasize the idea that religious cultivation is identified with aesthetic cultivation and to essentialize Zen religious experience as the only possible way of understanding Zen aesthetics. In the process of essentializing Zen, intellectuals eventually created an intellectual construction of Zen aesthetics while conflating Zen with their own unique idea of Japanese culture (and “Japaneseness”). As a result, they regarded Zen aesthetics as a uniquely Japanese trait. There lies a nationalist or even a subtle racist mode among Zen intellectuals. In the next section, I start with Hisamatsu’s nationalistic claim for a “uniquely Oriental art.” His nationalistic claim consists of two parts: a different geographical sphere and a historical time.

Hisamatsu’s Subtly Racist Zen: Oriental Uniqueness of Japanese Culture

[T]he existence of these unique fine arts in China, Korea, and Japan accords perfectly with the germination, the rise, and the decline of Zen. It was in the areas where Zen flourished that the manifestations discussed here appeared. We can say that this indicates the necessary regional relationship between Zen and these arts. Further, the lack of expressions of this sort in other areas is also considered to derive from the lack of the appearance of Zen anywhere else than China, Korea, and Japan. Zen did not exist in Tibet, India or Central Asia, even though they are areas of the East, just as it did not appear in Europe or America. So it can be said that in those areas where Zen did not exist neither did the fine arts under discussion, and that, consequently, this singular group of fine arts—together with Zen—is unique to the Oriental countries of China, Korea and Japan.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Hisamatsu, *Zen and the Fine Arts*, p. 40.

In order to explain the “authenticity” of Zen aesthetics and to essentialize Zen, Hisamatsu focuses on the limited geographical sphere in which this kind of fine art appeared. The limited area points out only the place where there is the rise, development, and fall of Zen. The places where Zen did not appear, such as Tibet, Central Asia, and the West, are not included. According to Hisamatsu, the uniqueness of Zen fine arts are found only in the Orient in limited geographical areas. In other words, the aesthetic expression of Zen is the unique product of only one part of the world.

In addition to the limited geographical areas, Hisamatsu discusses the specific time periods when Zen cultures appeared in those limited areas. He states:

[I]t is noted that these cultures appeared in specific periods in history. They appeared for about ten centuries, roughly from the sixth through the sixteenth century. Accordingly, the Fundamental Subject of expression must be something that was at work expressing itself during these ten centuries.¹⁷⁹

He continues:

Zen arose in China around the sixth century.... From the sixth century on through the seventh, eight and ninth century, Zen developed steadily; in the period of the Sung it reached its zenith. This unitary group of fine arts, concurrently, also went through the same developmental process in China.... Then, in the Kamakura period, Zen entered Japan. There the same cultural complex flourished together with Zen through the Muromachi and Momoyama periods. It was toward the end of the Momoyama and during the early Edo periods in Japan that these fine arts reached one of their peaks.¹⁸⁰

Hisamatsu looks at the particular historical periods when Zen flourished in limited areas of the Orient. More specifically, this kind of fine art appeared for a limited period of time, about ten centuries from the sixth to sixteenth centuries. In particular, in Japan, the origin of the unique Zen arts dates back to the Kamakura period and

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 40.

reached its peak in the Muromachi period. Here Hisamatsu's ideas concerned with the relationship between Zen and Zen aesthetics are completely limited by time.

We must keep in mind that Suzuki identifies the rise of real Zen in the thirteenth-century Kamakura period. Again, while the Kamakura era is often considered a major cultural break, such a view is a mere rewriting of the tradition prepared during the Meiji era. In order to essentialize Zen, Hisamatsu limits the geographical areas where Zen appeared in history, and further confines the historical time when Zen flourished in those areas, and such an idea is, therefore, prominently ideological. The Zen arts produced in other places and times are not accepted as symbolic of Oriental uniqueness.

Furthermore, Hisamatsu argues:

Recently in the West, in the field of architecture and the decorative arts, people have come to talk much about simplicity; but that simplicity does not seem to include—or, rather, I would say, definitely does not include—the other six characteristics. Zen art necessarily includes all seven characteristics as an inseparable whole, and the cultural forms we have been talking about do in fact possess all of the seven features. Today, in Japan, a great many of these objects and cultural forms are preserved as cultural properties, both tangible and intangible. In this respect Japan remains a treasure-house of this cultural complex, and, I can say, almost nowhere else—including the West—does there exist another culture with such characteristics. I cannot say absolutely that there is no other such culture, but, generally speaking, among the Western cultures there is none that so perfectly possesses such characteristics. In the East, this cultural complex did not appear at random, scattered here and there, but in a great, unitary system. Further, it permeated every aspect of human life—painting, calligraphy, ceramics, and the people's daily life. That Japan constitutes a treasure-house of these cultural expressions should be a matter of great pride for her.¹⁸¹

This is a powerful statement claiming that Japan is superior in terms of Zen culture. The uniqueness of Japanese aesthetics is focused on “Japan” as the only nation that has preserved the rich cultural properties that are supposedly embodied in Zen. He

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 37.

clearly says in the quote above that “Japan remains a treasure-house of this cultural complex, and, I can say, almost nowhere else—including the West—does there exist another culture with such characteristics.” While stressing the uniqueness of Japanese Zen culture, this view reveals his emphasis on the decisive lack of Zen cultural background in the West, which is actually his main purpose, to claim the near impossibility of understanding Zen.

Again, what was his central idea regarding the relationship between Zen and Zen aesthetics? It was that religious cultivation is identified with aesthetic cultivation. Therefore, it must be underlined that his implication of the lack of Zen culture in the West immediately reveals not only a nationalistic claim of “Japanese uniqueness,” but, more importantly, also a subtle form of racism advocating that the West cannot understand Zen aesthetics, and certainly not Zen spirituality itself. And what is being missed, he subtly suggests, is truth itself. The Westerners, who have no historical background in Zen, Hisamatsu implies, find it nearly impossible to understand the nature of Zen aesthetics. As the only nation of Zen culture, Japan has the only claim to uniquely Oriental Zen aesthetics. In order to insist upon and maintain the uniqueness of Zen aesthetics as the allegedly unchanging symbol and heritage of Japanese Zen culture, this invention of Zen is actually a subtle racist attitude toward the West, disclosing a conflation of Zen aesthetics and the uniqueness of the Japanese.

This is his very problematic view of Westerners. Is Zen teaching really such a demarcated thing? We know that Hisamatsu’s tendency of Zen to emphasize the priority of experience at the risk of advocating nationalist and chauvinist voices stands certainly in extension of what Suzuki and Nishida claimed in their invention of Zen. A heavier crisis is the fact that the Rinzai orthodoxy today is in essence the apologist of these intellectuals.

In this section, focusing on the case of Hisamatsu, I have discussed a post-war

Zen invention constructing the ideological relation between aesthetics and religious experience and crafting the creation of the uniqueness of Japanese culture/spirituality. Firstly, I have shown each of the seven characteristics embedded in Zen aesthetics, and focused on the relationship between Zen religious experience and Zen aesthetic experience. I highlighted the notion that religious cultivation is equivalent to aesthetic experience. In short, the nature of Zen aesthetics is nothing but that of Zen religious experience, as this claim reveals its “shogunistic” attitude. Secondly, I have shown Hisamatsu’s nationalistic claim for the Oriental uniqueness of Japanese Zen aesthetics, by exposing his ideas of different geographical spheres and historical time periods. I discussed his view of the aesthetic expression of Zen as a unique product from only one part of the world and also from only a specific historical time period. Such a Zen is therefore an ideological construct. To put it simply, Zen aesthetics is the artistic expression of the Japanese alone, because Japan is the only nation with a rich Zen culture, producing a racist view of the West. The Westerners, who have no historical background in Zen culture, found it difficult and practically impossible to understand the nature of Zen aesthetics. Because religious cultivation is synonymous with aesthetic cultivation, to understand the essence of Zen artistic expressions, the West has to be able to understand the ultimate nature of Zen, or more accurately to achieve *satori*. This is the heart of the Zen invention, which we have identified as “traditional” and “authentic,” centering the importance of religious experience in terms that make Zen spirituality something eternal and universal, transcending sectarian boundaries in the creation of Japanese uniqueness, but exercising the power and authority for that creation. The legacy of this Zen invention has been succeeded by later scholars and intellectuals who actively shaped the direction of the elite, conservative Zen establishment on up until today. Keeping in mind this Zen tradition, I have recognized that our understanding of the Zen of Hakuin as representing Japanese Rinzai is not

such a thing at all, but it is the Zen informed by the entire Orientalist and nationalist tradition that has given rise to the various disciplines that have defined what Japanese Zen should be. Nevertheless, I should not only understand this Zen invention in twentieth-century Japan as a mere ideological product, but I also understand it as an aspect of tradition as a continuously emerging phenomenon, and not simply as a concrete reality in history.

CHAPTER FOUR

BIOGRAPHICAL CREATION AND “HAKUIN” AS A TEXTUAL AND RELIGIOUS PARADIGM

This chapter examines the *Hakuin Nempu* (hereafter, *Nempu*), the almost “canonized” biography of Hakuin, and its unique role in the Zen tradition as a text employed to elevate Hakuin to his present position of prominence. The study of the *Nempu* has been a cornerstone of scholarship on Hakuin as well as being used primarily as the historical source of this figure’s life in the Zen tradition in the last several decades. The scholars, priests, and other intellectuals closely related to the tradition have developed their close readings of Hakuin, and they have prioritized Hakuin under the banner of “hard uncompromised training and endless teaching activity.” This primary emphasis of Hakuin, needless to say, has been the basis of what I call the “Hakuin triad.”

Particularly remarkable is the scholarship of two scholars on the *Nempu*: that of Rikukawa Taiun and Katō Shōshun.¹⁸² On one hand, Rikukawa published his crucial work, *Hakuin oshō shōden*, in 1963 and in this he compared the *Nempu* and its original manuscript. He showed the similarities and differences between the two texts, by placing them side by side in parallel columns, and reached his conclusion that the *Nempu* is much inferior in historical evidence to the original manuscript and that the former is more tremendously simple compared to the more natural, lively descriptions of the original form. On the other hand, Katō published his well-known work, *Hakuin oshō nempu*, in 1985. This work is his transliteration with full annotations; this is the most recent and is considered to be the most reliable source of Hakuin’s chronology. It is important to note that all of the currently published biographies, essays, and studies

¹⁸² For more details of their scholarship, see Chapter 5. I have reviewed their research and contribution to twentieth-century Hakuin studies.

of Hakuin have been based on Katō's work, without any exceptions, because this is the only transliteration of the *Nempu* currently available, along with Rikukawa's work.

As these two works show, there has not been enough critical investigation of the *Nempu*. While the history and the changed contents of the *Nempu* have been studied at some level, the *Nempu*'s historicity and the constructed nature as a social and ideological product have largely remained overlooked in the Zen tradition. Further, the *Nempu*'s ideological role in crafting Hakuin as the ideal figure of the tradition and how the biography has played an important role in the dynamics of the tradition have become an entirely new field of study. This is why my primary concerns are focused on these points here.

In this chapter, I use the term "biography" equally with the term "hagiography" here because I take my position that what I call "biographical" process is in most cases only an unconscious duplication of the hagiographical process. In fact, both are characterized by an idealist attitude, in that both exalt and aggrandize the image of a subject to make it a religious ideal of the tradition to which it belongs. Both consider a subject as some kind of individual personage whose essence is ideally reflected and shaped as being valuable and a model for the tradition to which it belongs. How does this biographical creation work in the case of Hakuin?

Again, the biography exalts or aggrandizes the image of the subject, making it a religious ideal of the tradition. However, precisely because of that, the biography works on the very process of establishing a new religious vision in the tradition's formulation and transmission mechanism. I argue that such biography no longer serves as a historical paradigm, but as a religious and textual paradigm.¹⁸³ I then also argue that it is a social product heavily crafted around a net of complex social, cultural

¹⁸³ See Faure, "Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm," *History of Religions* 25, no. 3 (1986): 187-98. Faure's argument has been the inspiration for this chapter.

circumstances, and it is an ideological construct. We will not know how the biography works and who Hakuin was, unless we become more careful as to how social, cultural, and institutional factors (re)constitute our received image of the past.

I proceed in two stages: 1) I begin by discussing the main points of a number of scholars, Frank Reynolds and Donald Capps, Patricia Cox Miller, and Derek Krueger, which are also reinforced in some points by Roger Chatier and Walter Ong. 2) Based on these theoretical reflections, I examine the *Nempu* by focusing on demonstrating the historicity of the *Nempu* and the biographical creation of the images of Hakuin.

Theoretical Reflections of Biographical Process

1. Biography as a New Locus of New Religious Identities

In understanding the biography's role in a given tradition and how biography works in the processes of tradition formation and transmission, I consider the biographical process to be a creative force for the establishment of a new religious vision. Frank Reynolds and Donald Capps, who define "sacred biography" as accounts written by devotees of a religious founder, savior, or charismatic leader, address two ways of the biographical process: humanizing the subject by emphasizing his common human facets, on the one hand, and spiritualizing the subject by omitting his human foibles, on the other. This approach is clearly problematic because of the presence of the mixed ways. However, notably, Reynolds and Capps argue that sacred biographies "both recount the process through which a new religious ideal is established and, at the same time, participate in that process."¹⁸⁴ This is a crucial argument that sacred biography participates in the making of a new religious vision. In this point, it can also

¹⁸⁴ Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps, eds. *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion* (Paris: Mouton, 1976), p. 3.

be argued that the biography as a producer of a new religious vision serves as an ideological indicator of the formation of a community. By considering a biography as a document that will yield valuable information of a new religious vision, the biography completely ignores its nature as a historical paradigm, and becomes an arbitrary social, cultural, textual reconstruction. Another important point is this: that naturally a “new religious vision” cannot itself escape from being constructed. In fact, Hakuin is credited with a high reputation as the reviver of Japanese Rinzai Zen, a reputation that is clearly the product of a much later period and reflects the climates of contemporary Rinzai Zen.

2. Biography as an Textual Invention

A central argument regarding such a creative process in biography can be focused on the constructed nature of biography. Patricia Cox Miller emphasizes this point in light of Eusebius’s “biographical accounts” of Origen. For Miller, the biography of the holy man is “an imaginal place between where the history of a man’s life and his biographer’s vision of human divinity meet and mingle,”¹⁸⁵ and thus it becomes a literature interacting between historical fact and divine fantasy. Miller argues that the primary purpose of the biography is “to create a convincing portrait of a magnificent man by capturing in the ideals which that man represented.”¹⁸⁶ This indicates that Eusebius was not primarily interested in the historical Origen. The description of the life of Origen was intentionally decorated as an ideal model of holy men. An interesting point is that Eusebius writes the biographical accounts of Origen for not only Christian but also pagan circles in order to establish Origen’s status as a

¹⁸⁵ Miller, Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. xii. She uses the term “imaginal” throughout her work not only as the adjectival form of “image,” but also to avoid the pejorative connotation of the terms “imaginary” or “imaginative.”

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

thinker/philosopher at large, and therefore, Eusebius “casts the Christian theologian Origen in the stereotypical guise of a Hellenistic holy man.”¹⁸⁷ Here Eusebius’s biographical accounts no longer have historical value but rather literary and religious value instead, revealing the dynamic mechanism of the invention of tradition, and its constant reinvention, determined by certain social, cultural, and institutional forces affecting how the past should be remembered and transmitted.

A similar type of construction is found in the study of the Chan/Zen tradition. For example, the Chan/Zen tradition has kept several different versions of the biographies of the semilegendary Bodhidharma, who has been positioned as the founder of Chan, although his life is completely obscure. Nevertheless, Bodhidharma is credited with several important Chan texts that are obviously much later products of the so-called Northern School of Chan: multiple texts are considered the work of a single author—for example, Bodhidharma. This type of historical reductionism can be found in the study of other Chan patriarchs, Hui-neng and Nanyue Huairang, each considered by later tradition as the founders of the mainstream schools during his time, the so-called Southern School and the Hongzhou School, which eventually influenced the Rinzai School. The life information of all of these religious figures is completely unknown; we do not know even if they were alive and we know about them only from the texts written in a much later period. In this case, I think that the biographies of these figures function as religious literature dealing with what Levi-Strauss calls “virtual focus,” that is to say, “a virtual object whose shadow alone is real.”¹⁸⁸ In support of Bernard Faure, an important argument should be added that these figures in question serve as a blank space on which Chan/Zen tradition projects all the necessary “biographical” elements in order to establish and keep the tradition’s authority,

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁸⁸ Faure, “Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm,” p. 197.

authenticity, legitimacy, and orthodoxy. In other words, the patriarchal lineage or tradition is a construction and reconstruction designed to fit the tradition's needs and agendas at the present. The biographies of these figures have produced, maintained, and supported up through today a social organization, culture, or tradition called Chan/Zen. This is how the nature of tradition works.

3. Biography as Shadowing Religious Authorities

Regarding the constructed nature of biography, Derek Krueger argues that biographical descriptions are often borrowed from religious authorities, such as sacred texts and saints, in order to make those biographies distinct from other literatures. The biography bears the obsession with borrowing from various sources to make it authoritative, authentic, legitimate, and orthodox to a given tradition, and it is, therefore, an ideological product. As he observes in cases of this in Christianity, in which, for example, Theodoret's descriptions of Symeon the Stylite imitate and are framed into biblical models: Symeon began his life as a shepherd, just as Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and Micah did; Symeon's strange behavior (or practice) of standing on a pillar was similar to Isaiah's walking naked or Jeremiah's wearing a loin cloth; and Symeon cured a paralytic as Jesus did or at least Theodoret wanted Symeon to be like Jesus or to be Christlike. Pointing out these biographical accounts modeled into biblical types, Krueger notes that "the biblical age become at once past, present, and timeless."¹⁸⁹ This aspect of biographies can be found in the case of Zen tradition in general, and the Hakuin tradition in particular, for example, in which the stories of Hakuin's life overlap with Śākyamuni Buddha. While I will consider this below with some examples, the point is this: to create an ideal image by borrowing from various

¹⁸⁹ Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 27.

sources of religious authorities is a powerful and effective way of not only producing a new community or even converting others, but also of maintaining and transmitting the tradition.

Let me summarize here. There are three points: 1) biography serves as (re)producing a new religious ideal and then possibly a newly emerging community; 2) the subject of biography is purposely garnished in essence as an ideal model of a holy man through the process in which “historical fact” and “divine fantasy” interact; and 3) biographical descriptions are often borrowed from various sources of religious authorities such as sacred texts and saints. The general argument supporting these three discussions is that biography is a social, cultural, and ideological product complying with, adjusting or reconciling, and reflecting a larger particular historical context out of which its authority, legitimacy, and orthodoxy are all generated. All the discussions support my fundamental position that biography no longer serves as an historical paradigm but as only textual and religious paradigms. This position is buttressed by Roger Chartier’s and Walter Ong’s arguments concerning the relationship between text and its meaning—especially Chartier’s, that textual forms produce meaning.

4. The Politics of Biography

Chartier, in a part of his arguments of his notion of “communities of readers,” discusses what he labels “interpretive communities,” whose members share the same reading styles and the same strategies of interpretation. He contends that meanings are constrained, controlled, and produced by neither the text nor the reader itself but rather by the community, namely, the larger ideological milieu into which they are all irresistibly forced to be involved. This view emphasizes the social cultural framework of a text’s meaning and value as being those always in relation to the community as

ideology—this is the very structure of the meaning production in tradition. What then is notable is that meaning takes place in relation to the interpretive norms and expectations of a particular community of readers and that the structure of the printed book reflects those interpretive norms and expectations. He reaches to argue that forms produce or shape meaning, the argument in which he simultaneously considers the dynamics of the role of the book format both as a product of and a creator of a social organization, in his specific term, “communities of readers” or “interpretive communities.”

Based on the argument that form produces meaning, Chartier considers “the ways in which the form that transmits a text to its readers or hearers constrains the production of meaning,”¹⁹⁰ and contends that “texts’ meanings are dependent upon the forms through which they are received and appropriated by their readers (or hearers).”¹⁹¹ For instance, regarding the book as a form, the format of the book, its page layout, graphics, illustrations, headings, and typographical conventions serve as an “expressive function” to formulate and construct meaning—this is form’s essential role in the production of meaning. In a similar case, Ong, also focusing on the effect of print technology found in indexes, labels, contents, and the page organization, argues that the printed book creates a sense of closure and finalizes completion. He also argues that it is no longer a book that is merely recording spoken words, but serves as an independent object in its own right, suggesting that as a “commitment of the word to space,” writing “restructures thought.”¹⁹² This is a clear position supported by the example of the *Hakuin Nempu*, which I will consider in the next section. Ong’s view

¹⁹⁰ Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 1.

¹⁹¹ Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 3.

¹⁹² Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (New York: Nethuen, 1982), p. 7.

can be shared with Chartier's position that forms shape or produce meaning. Different from Chartier, however, Ong discusses this point of view from identifying the book less as a meaning-producer (as Chartier does) but more as a distinctive shift from orality to literacy caused by print technology.

To use Chartier's words, "Organized by an intention, the author's or the publisher's, such formal devices aim at qualifying the text, constraining its reception, and controlling its interpretation."¹⁹³ Looking at how readers produce and reproduce meaning as they understand a text, here it is important to underline an incidental claim that forms affect interpretation, which eventually gives rise to the creation and recreation of a community of readers. Chartier's analysis that forms produce meaning can be applied to the case of Hakuin's biography *Nempu* as a good example. Compared to its original manuscript, the format of the biography in question is very organized and simple, and the author's intention is clear: to elevate Hakuin's religious status and role to an ideal inside Zen tradition and to convey them to subsequent generations of the tradition. Chartier's argument that forms produce meaning is very useful, corroborating his thoughtful observation, "The book always aims at installing an order, whether it is the order in which it is deciphered, the order in which it is to be understood, or the order intended by the authority who commanded or permitted the work."¹⁹⁴ Based on all the discussions made by the scholars mentioned above, now I consider the case of Hakuin. I argue that controlling how Hakuin was remembered and imagined became a major agenda in the Rinzai tradition, and that the biography, which serves as a textual and religious norm, supports and is supported by, this agenda. A critical investigation of biography concerning its creative process and imagination as well as its role in tradition formation and transmission reveals the politics of textual

¹⁹³ Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 82.

¹⁹⁴ Chartier, *The Order of Books*, p. viii.

production and reproduction.

Hakuin as a “Biographical” Process and Creation in the Nempu

Restructuring Hakuin’s Life: Making a Meaningful Figure

A version of Hakuin’s life is relatively well known by the previous works by Rikukawa Taiun, Akiyama Kanji, and Katō Shōshun. Yet too often less attention has been paid to the fact that the *Nempu*, the “canonized” biography, which has been considered to be the primary historical account of his life and career, is a rather arbitrary reconstruction to give a coherent account of who he was. The generally accepted stories of Hakuin’s life are today all based on this biography, supplemented with his autobiographies such as *Itsumadegusa* and *Yasenkanna*. Only the *Nempu* has been authorized as the historical biographical source in the tradition.

While the original manuscript of the *Nempu* was first introduced to the public in 1935 and later Rikukawa’s effort of his comparative studies between the two materials was made, this newly available original source is particularly significant because it reveals the constructed nature of the *Nempu* in its content and rearrangement in structure, thus ending up restructuring it and making it “canonized.” It also becomes important because it reveals the inadequacies or unreliability of not only the *Nempu*, but also of many subsequently published biographies and essays having been previously written based on the *Nempu*. Interesting to point out, the *Nempu* was first published much later after Hakuin’s death and the original manuscript was extensively edited. Regarding the restructuring of Hakuin’s life, our concern here, the order of the textual entries was rearranged and “corrected” to fit what Tokugawa-period Hakuin’s descendants regarded as the correct sequence of his life events, e.g., his meeting with Hakuyūshi. This reveals the compiler’s important agendas of how the memory of Hakuin should be conveyed in the tradition from

generation to generation, e.g., his ardent practice and untiring teaching activity, because a biography is primarily a collection of memories. Thus when the *Nempu* is compared to the original manuscript, incidental distortions cannot be avoided. However, these discrepancies lead us to expose a textual authenticity of how Hakuin must be. Whether with or without accessing the original manuscript, previous scholars and intellectuals have certainly had little choice in criticizing the canonized biography's constructed elements but to follow its extensively reedited chronologies that simultaneously serve as the claims of religious ideology.

The official title of the *Nempu* is *Ryūtakū Kaisō Shinkī Dokumyō Zenji Nempu*, or “The Chronological Biography of Zen Master Shinkī Dokumyō, Founder of Ryūtakū.” It was revised, edited, and compiled by Taikan Bunshū (1766-1842), a disciple of Tōrei Enji (1721-1792), Hakuin's first disciple, who was the author of the original manuscript of the *Nempu*. In the *Nempu*, Taikan keeps Tōrei's name as the compiler. The *Nempu* contains the events and experiences of Hakuin's career without any critical analysis and presents his life year by year in strict order. Most importantly, the text is intentionally divided into two parts. The first part, entitled *ingyōkaku*, or “practice period,” describes Hakuin's religious concerns, arduous training, and endless efforts in his childhood and youth and concludes with his decisive enlightenment experience at the age of 42, which brought his religious quest to an end. The second part, entitled *kagyōkaku*, or “teaching period,” describes the remaining 42 years of Hakuin's career through a focus on his ardent and untiring teaching activities, which continued until his death in 1769. It is in this place that the generally accepted interpretations of Hakuin's life emphasizes his propagation activities carried out in simple language as well as in popular expressions for people of all classes.

While it is important to pin down the fact that the *Nempu* is the revised text that Taikan produced much later after Hakuin's death and also after Tōrei's death, it is

also important to underscore the intentionally divided structure of the text as an indicator of reshaping meaning. Taikan's purpose was to convey Hakuin's unending, untiring practice of seeking enlightenment and of saving all sentient beings as post-enlightenment practice. Having uncritically accepted this biography, the twentieth-century Zen scholarship and the elite Zen establishment have emphasized and positioned these two points as the essential climates of Japanese Rinzai Zen. It then is possible to argue that the cliché that Hakuin taught his Zen enthusiastically to people of all social classes is itself a product of the twentieth-century Japanese Rinzai apologists who have used the view to adjust to the tradition's need for more lay proselytization.

Here again, what I call "biographical" process bears important resemblances to hagiographical process. As I argue, both share the same obsession with ideally recounting and reconstituting the memory of a religious figure in a given tradition, whether in biographical or doctrinal contexts, partly by filling the chronological gaps and partly by borrowing from various sources in order to fit the tradition's needs, agendas, and interests, and both are, therefore, ideological products. By considering such a biographical process as a tactic that yields valuable and normative information concerning the subject of the tradition to which he belongs, the process completely ignores or deprives its own historical value, making a clear division between "historical" and "biographical" components. Instead it gives itself a textual genre, hiding its ideological motivations. Biography is textual but not of historical value. The *Nempu* thus should be considered not to be a historical paradigm, but to be a textual and religious paradigm in historical, cultural, social reconstructions. Yet this very same business operates on how biography works in the processes of tradition formation and transmission, the business simultaneously serving as a potentially leading indicator to generate and locate the authority, authenticity, legitimacy of the tradition on which it

relies. In order to investigate this theme of the biographical process and how it works in tradition, applying it to the *Nempu*, several working hypothesis given by scholars mentioned above yield much better results.

The Biographical Process in the Case of Hakuin

Historicity of the *Hakuin Nempu*

Now let's turn to a discussion of the historicity of the *Nempu*. The term "Shinki Dokumyō" in the official title of the *Nempu* is the Zen master title conferred on Hakuin by the Emperor Gosakuramachi in 1769; the title National Zen Master Shōshū, was later conferred on him by the Emperor Meiji in 1884. The *Nempu* was revised, edited, and compiled in 1820, fifty-two years after Hakuin died and almost thirty years after Tōrei's death, by Taikan, who depended on the original manuscript written by Tōrei. Besides this biography, Hakuin's autobiographies, such as *Isumadegusa*, *Yasenkanna*, *Oradegama* (Part 3), and *Yaemugura* (Part 3), and *Keisō-dokuzui*, or "Poison Flowers in a Thicket of Thorns," have been used as main historical sources when Hakuin's life is described.¹⁹⁵ Indeed there is no book about Hakuin's life written based on materials other than these sources mentioned above—and among these sources, the biography is the primary and most used. The *Nempu* states on its first page that Tōrei wrote and compiled the biography. Given the fact that although its original manuscript was certainly completed by Tōrei himself, it was not published until much later, thus the *Nempu* has a long complex history. It is important to consider how it was completed and published and how reliable the biography is. I begin by demonstrating the history and problems of the *Nempu*.

¹⁹⁵ The *Keisō-dokuzui* was completed in 1756 and published in 1758.



Figure 13: *Hakuin Nempu*¹⁹⁶

The *Nempu* was based on the manuscript named *Chokushi Shinki Dokumyō Zenji Hakuin Rō-Oshō Nempu*¹⁹⁷ (hereafter, Tōrei’s manuscript). Although the dates are unclear, the manuscript was written by Tōrei in *kambun* form, or classical Chinese. It first appeared in public in 1935, with only the opening page of Hakuin’s collected writings, *Hakuin oshō zenshū*, which read:¹⁹⁸

東嶺和尚自筆 大觀和尚所持 白隱和尚年譜草稿
 Manuscript of a chronological biography of Master Hakuin
 Autographed by Priest Tōrei. In the possession of Priest Taikan¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Author owns this manuscript.

¹⁹⁷ This term *Chokushi Shinki Dokumyō* means the conferred Zen master title by the Emperor. Also “*Rō-Oshō*” literally means “old monk” or “old master.”

¹⁹⁸ Already mentioned in the earlier chapters, again, the “*Hakuin oshō zenshū*” is the collection of Hakuin’s letters, writings, and sayings. This work consists of eight volumes. However, the contents of Tōrei’s manuscript were not published at this time, and they were not studied until much later when scholar Rikukawa’s “*Hakuin oshō shōden*” was published in 1963, with his full translation-transliteration.

¹⁹⁹ Taikan Bunshu practiced under Tōrei at Ryūtakuji. At the age of 28, he received his Dharma transmission from Tōrei. In his later life, he served at Nanzenji in Kyoto, and died at the age of seventy-seven. For more information, see Katō’s work *Hakuin oshō nempu* published in 1985, p. 297.

勅諭神機独妙禪師白隱老和尚年譜
A chronological biography of *Chokushi Shinki Dokumyō* old Zen
Master Hakuin

侍者何某等²⁰⁰ 撰集
Compiled by disciples²⁰¹

This manuscript was written by Tōrei, and further kept by his disciple, Taikan Bunshu (1766-1842). It is evident that the biography of Hakuin existed at that time, and we know that Hakuin knew about Tōrei's project of making a biography of him.

Again, the dates for this document are unclear. There are also questions about the origin of information contained within. Tōrei started to study under Hakuin in 1743, when Hakuin was fifty-nine and Tōrei was twenty-three. Hence, only twenty-five years of the biography would refer to what Tōrei really saw, heard, and experienced under Hakuin's instruction. However, what were the sources for the manuscript before this period? According to Katō's analysis, because Hakuin wrote his autobiographical statements three times throughout his life, it would be proper to presume that Tōrei would refer to those accounts.²⁰² On the other hand, Rikukawa, in his work, *Hakuin oshō shōden*, suggests that Hakuin actually wrote the first part and Tōrei wrote the second part—but we do not know his evidence for this suggestion. Now that those Zen figures are not alive to confirm the suppositions made by Katō and Rikukawa, the sources of the manuscript remain unclear, but it is still thought to be based on Hakuin's autobiographies.

²⁰⁰ This statement does not mention Tōrei's name. Rather, it implies one of Hakuin's disciples. This unique literary expression probably results from Tōrei's deeply modest, respectful attitude toward his master Hakuin. In fact, Hakuin also used this literary technique in his many writings, and even now when Zen priests compile their master's biographies, they often write their names in this way.

²⁰¹ Kōson Gotō, ed., *Hakuin oshō zenshū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ryūginsha, 1935).

²⁰² He is referring to Hakuin's autobiographies: *Sakushin osana monogatari*, included in *Yaemugra* and written at the age of seventy-seven; *Kyūyū no sō no hihan ni kotaeru*, or "Response to the Question of an Old Priest Friend," included in *Oradegama* and written at the age of sixty-three; and *Isumadegusa* written at the age of eighty-two. Personally I also include *Yasenkana* in the list of Hakuin's autobiographies.

There are some hints as to when Tōrei began to compile the manuscript, the hints found in Tōrei's letter written to Hakuin, contained in the *Hakuin oshō zenshū*.²⁰³ This letter was written in 1757, when Hakuin was seventy-three years old and Tōrei was thirty-seven. Therein, Tōrei reveals that he was already starting to compile the manuscript, which fact indicates that the manuscript was already in progress as of 1757, and that Hakuin also recognized the prospect of publishing a biography of his life. In this sense, Hakuin would have instructed Tōrei about how to compile the biography.

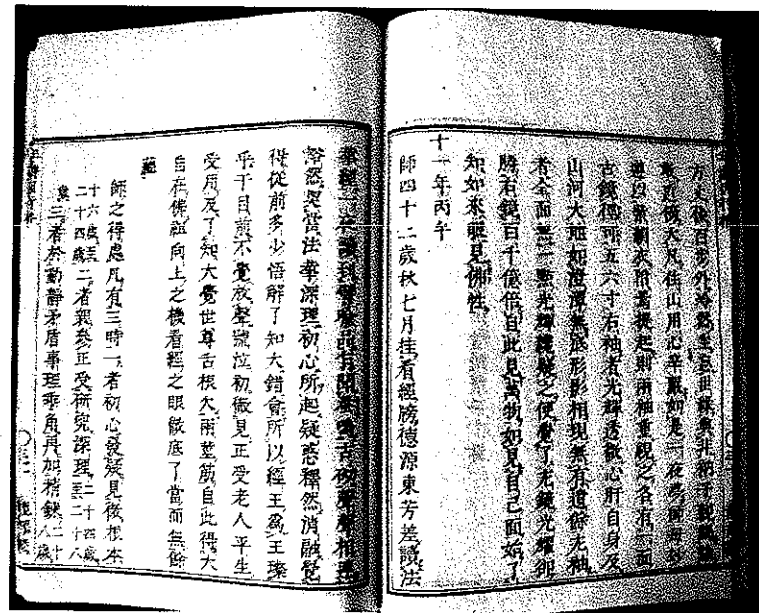


Figure 14: The Account of Hakuin at age of 42.

In contrast to this information about the manuscript, however, the published version, *Nempu* itself, provides a different title from the manuscript, and, further, it describes the detailed processes of its completion. In fact, the manuscript was not published until much later, although it was completed by Tōrei and during Tōrei's

²⁰³ The letter “*Hinasan Taikyoji Kokurin-Rōshi ni teisuru sho*” is included in the work titled *Taiyōzaddokai*, the collection of Tōrei's writings, sayings, and letters. The letter is included in *Hakuin oshō zenshū*, vol. 7. See Katō's *Hakuin oshō nempu*, p. 5-7.

lifetime. According to the *Nempu*, it was published by Ryūtakuji twenty-eight years after Tōrei's death, after being edited by his disciple, Taikan, who had never met Hakuin. Tōrei entrusted the publication of his own manuscript to Taikan, who had time to reconstitute the biography in his own unique way, should he have wanted to, after Tōrei passed away. In the opening page, the title reads:

龍澤開祖神機独妙禪師年譜因行格

A chronological biography of Zen Master *Shinki Dokumyō*, Founder of Ryūtakuji, the practice period

嗣法小師 円慈撰

Compiled by Enji [Tōrei], recipient of Hakuin's Dharma sanction²⁰⁴

The most noteworthy point is that Taikan keeps Tōrei's name as the compiler, even though it was Taikan who actually edited and rearranged Tōrei's manuscript. In the title, while Taikan insists that Hakuin is the founder of Ryūtakuji, he also recognizes his master, Tōrei, as the disciple who received Hakuin's direct Dharma transmission. The name of Tōrei, who also served as the first abbot at Ryūtakuji, is left as the compiler on the opening page of the *Nempu*. This style of description reflects Taikan's respect for Tōrei.

In the second part of the *Nempu*, the first page reads (this takes the same style as the first part):

龍澤開祖神機独妙禪師年譜果行格

A chronological biography of Zen Master *Shinki Dokumyō*, Founder of Ryūtakuji, the teaching others period

In the postscript, Taikan clearly explains his role in the publication of the *Nempu*, which reveals how the biography reached its completion.

²⁰⁴ Shōshūn Katō, *Hakuin oshō nempu* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku shuppan, 1985), p. 39.

One day, while I was serving under master Tōrei, he brought out a religious biography of master Hakuin to show me. He asked me to make arrangements to have it printed. Before I was able to discharge my duty, master Tōrei passed away. I let matters rest after that, doing nothing about it, until the fiftieth anniversary of Hakuin's death, which fell in the fourteenth year of the Bunka era [1817]. A commemorative assembly was held at the Ryūtaku-ji that year and I was asked to deliver lectures on master Hakuin's *Dharma Talks Introductory to Lectures on the Record of His-keng*. Priests and laity who attended the meeting requested earnestly that I proceed with the publishing of the biography. Recalling the instructions I had received many years before from my teacher, I began, in spite of my ignorance and unsuitability for the task, to go about preparing the work for the printer. After giving the text a thorough editing, I divided it into two parts. The first part covers the period of the master's practice leading up to his enlightenment, the second covers the period of his teaching career. I did this simply to show, as clearly and readily as possible, the circumstances of master Hakuin's progress to enlightenment. Because I lacked certain information and had no personal knowledge of the events, many omissions and other faults have no doubt crept into the work. I have nonetheless sent it off to have the blocks carved so that it can be shared with the world and I can at last fulfill my responsibility to my teacher.

Pressing my palms together in *gasshō*, and offering incense, I respectfully inscribe this on the day of the Buddha's entrance into enlightenment, in the third year of the Bunsei era [1820].

Taikan Bunshu, resident of the Daidai-ji in Tamba province.²⁰⁵

This is a powerful, impressive statement about the history of the *Nempu*. The revised text that Taikan produced was first published by Ryūtakuji in 1820, fifty-two years after Hakuin died. Taikan rearranged the original structure of the manuscript, dividing it into two parts with specific headings for each part, revising it with embellishment, beautification, omission, and simplification, ending up restructuring and controlling the image of Hakuin. The *Nempu* was a kind of a commemorative publication project for Hakuin's 50th memorial service. Therefore, the biography of Hakuin should be understood as a literary piece belonging to the genre of hagiography, not as a simple historical account of as he "really was." The image of Hakuin described in such a

²⁰⁵ Norman Waddell, "A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin (*Hakuin oshō nempu*)" in *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, Autumn 1994), p. 127.

literary piece is a textual paradigm. The meaning of such an image is not primarily in its historicity but in the significant modifications and constructions achieved to fit what the tradition demands as its needs and agendas.

Locating Biographical Creation of the *Hakuin Nempu*

Besides the structural analysis of biography, what other aspects of biographical process and roles of biography can we find? Here I propose three significant issues produced by the long, complex process in the completion of the *Nempu*: 1) the purpose of the text; 2) images of Hakuin; and 3) distortion of fact. I think that these three provide a basis to examine the *Nempu* as a textual and religious paradigm, or biographical imagination. In my emphasis on these three aspects of the *Nempu*, I do not mean to suggest that a simple comparative study of the similarities and differences found between the *Nempu* and its original manuscript does enough to prove the roles of biography—both are biographies, and biographies are always (re)produced in a particular historical context and have their purpose as a tool to attempt to preserve their traditions in their unique ways. Nor do I intend to suggest that such a simple study can provide valuable information about the evolution of the image of Hakuin. Rather what I do intend to suggest is that our understanding of the role of biography or biographical process in the Japanese Zen tradition will be incomplete unless we extend our understanding to the larger historical cultural milieu within which biography is written, and it is, therefore, a social, ideological product. How did the interval from the time the original manuscript was written to the moment the *Nempu* was published shape the biographical imagination of Hakuin? This interval sets that “historical cultural milieu” and produces “unique ways” of the *Nempu*. The *Nempu* is the revised text *Taikan* produced approximately fifty years after Hakuin’s death and almost thirty

years after Torei's death. With the focus on this interval and also the complex processes involved in the completion of the *Nempu*, I focus on three issues: the changed text value/purpose, the created images of Hakuin, and the distorted facts, all of which reveal the creative process of producing the biographical illusion of Hakuin, mirroring the important role in the tradition's formation and transmission. How, then, was the image of Hakuin crafted?

First, I examine the changed text value and purpose of the *Nempu* to establish the ideal religious status of a historical Hakuin to the tradition. By "the changed text value/purpose," I mean the focused religious ethos of Hakuin, not just what his historical sources say. In fact, while the *Nempu* divides its contents into two parts, namely, Hakuin's practice period and his teaching career period, Tōrei's original manuscript does not contain such a textual layout or even a manipulation to emphasize the grandeur of Hakuin for practitioners and followers. The first part focuses on his training experiences until he was forty-two years old, at which he attained his most crucial enlightenment experience. The second part focuses on the other forty-two years of his life, during which he devoted himself to his manifold teaching activities until his death at the age of eighty-four in 1769. Such an easy division between "practice" and "teaching" periods does violence to who Hakuin was and displays the politics of controlling the Hakuin remembrance. Here, in order to understand Taikan's intention in formulating the *Nempu*, I again use Taikan's statement presented in the postscript, which reads:

One day, while I was serving under master Tōrei, he brought out a religious biography of master Hakuin to show me. He asked me to make arrangements to have it printed.... After giving the text a thorough editing, I divided it into two parts. The first part covers the period of the master's practice leading up to his enlightenment, the second covers the period of his teaching career. I did this simply to show, as clearly and readily as possible, the circumstances of master Hakuin's progress to enlightenment.

Taikan regards the *Nempu* as the religious biography of Hakuin, and focuses on bequeathing his religious ethos to further generations, while he divided the contents into two parts. Concerning the first part, focused on Hakuin's serious devotion to practices which resulted in his decisive religious experience, Taikan mentions in the *Nempu*:

The master's religious attainment may be divided into three general periods. The first period... began when religious doubts first arose in his mind and continued until he penetrated the fundamental ground. The second period... began with his investigation of the profundities of the ultimate principle under Shōju Rōjin. In the third period... he continued to practice and refine his attainment as he experienced the contradictions between the aspects of activity and non-activity, phenomena and ultimate truth. I have thus called the first part of this biography the Practice Leading to Enlightenment.²⁰⁶

Furthermore, Taikan reflects on the life of Hakuin at the end of the second part. He writes:

My teacher Hakuin was an imposing man. He combined the gaze of a tiger with the walk and movements of an ox. The extreme sharpness of his Zen activity made it difficult to approach him. Virtually tireless, he brought the same degree of care and compassion to whatever he did. In settling troubles, in rectifying wrongs, he worked with silent persuasion, private discipline. His actions—whether moving, standing, sitting or lying—were not to be fathomed by demons or nonBuddhists. The manner in which his teaching activities prospered recalled the days of the great Chinese master Ma-tsu.²⁰⁷ The adversity under which he lived and taught was reminiscent of the hardships faced by master Ta-hui.²⁰⁸ I have recorded in this biography a great many of the talks and lectures he gave on Zen records, sutras, and other texts in answer to requests from temples throughout the country.... His final utterance—'Unnn'—was in every way comparable to the great death cry of old Zen master Yen-tou.²⁰⁹ Ordinary people, upon hearing that the master did

²⁰⁶ Waddell, "A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin (*Hakuin oshō nempu*)" in *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, Spring 1994), p. 155.

²⁰⁷ Ma-tsu Tao-i. In Japanese, Baso Dōitsu. 708-788. I referred to *The Japanese English Zen Buddhism Dictionary* written by Yūhō Yokoi, published by Sankibō in 1991.

²⁰⁸ Ta-hui Tsung-kaō. In Japanese, Daie Sōkō. 1089-1163. (*The Japanese English Zen Buddhism Dictionary*).

²⁰⁹ Gantō Zenkatsu, 827-887. According to *The Japanese English Zen Buddhism Dictionary*, Gantō was killed by a burglar. His posthumous title is the Great Teacher Ching-yen.

not compose a death verse, might get the wrong idea and think, “master Hakuin has lost a fine opportunity to make a final Zen utterance.” Wrong! Wrong! That “Unnn” was just the right utterance. It penetrated straight through the Heavens above. It pierced through the Yellow Springs below. Compared with the final instructions and death verses Zen monks usually leave behind them, I say that the master’s was superior to them all by ten-fold. Ahh! When he declared that he was the kind of man who appears only once in five hundred years, it certainly was no exaggeration.²¹⁰

These are powerful, laudatory statements about what a great Zen master Hakuin really did in his life. He devoted himself to Zen training with the piercing look of a “tiger” and had the steadiness of an “ox.” Also he invested all his energy to propagating Zen teachings to practitioners as well as the masses in many places. The most remarkable point here is that the compiler regards Hakuin as a “man who appears only once in five hundred years.” This idea no longer categorizes the *Nempu* as Hakuin’s historical record, but as Hakuin’s religious biography focusing on his religious ethos.

A scholar, Akiyama Kanji, mentions in his book, *Shamon Hakuin*:

When a disciple compiles his master’s biography, it becomes not only one of the master’s historical sources, but it also becomes the master’s memorial records to record his virtue as his religious biography. Moreover, at the same time, demonstrating the tenets and propagating the teachings of the religious tradition become important for making the biography. Hence, when seen as a historical source, the biography contains many faults and omissions. Tōrei’s manuscript is no exception.²¹¹

Originally the *Nempu* itself was written over many years during which embellishments and redactions were made. In the long, complex history of the *Nempu*, while the compiler focused on preserving Hakuin’s virtue, and also handing down the importance of his practices and propagation activities as the two pillars of Rinzai Zen tradition, the purpose of the text as a historical source was gradually lost in the long

²¹⁰ Waddell, *A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin*, no. 2, pp. 125-126.

²¹¹ Kanji Akiyama, *Shamon Hakuin* (Shizuoka: privately printed, 1983), p. 19. This is my translation.

process of the compilation. Thus, the *Nempu* was focused on Hakuin's religious ethos as a religious biography, not just as a historical record. These manipulations or cultural reconstructions are only natural for those who belong to the same religious tradition.

Secondly, I discuss the constructed Hakuin figures found in the *Nempu*. How uniquely is the image of Hakuin crafted as a religious authority? As I stated above, Akiyama mentions that when a disciple compiles his master's biography, the biography becomes a memorial to the master's virtue as a religious biography. With the focus on this idea, Tōrei's manuscript as well as Taikan's revised version of it contain the same problem concerning the constructed memories of Hakuin.

In the statement about Hakuin's birth, the *Nempu* says:

One night his mother dreamed she saw a figure fly toward the house from the direction of southern Ise. It alighted on the roof and was bearing a divine amulet from the great shrine at Ise held out on a silken cloth. She trembled at the awesome solemnity of its appearance. When she woke, she had conceived a child. Because of this the Ise Shrine always held a special place in her heart. On the night of the master's birth the dream recurred. When it was over she was filled with an overwhelming joy and was thereupon delivered of a male child. The birth took place in the Hour of the Ox.²¹²

It is a powerful birth tale about being a religious man. This story can be seen also in Tōrei's manuscript, but not in Hakuin's autobiographies, for example,

Itsumadegusa.²¹³ Moreover, it strikes me as quite curious when this tale is compared to a legend concerning Buddha's birth. The legend is as follows:

²¹² Waddell, *A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin*, no. 1, p. 99. "The Hour of the Ox" is an old time expression. It designates around 2 o'clock in the morning, or between 1 o'clock and 4 o'clock in the morning.

²¹³ In *Itsumadegusa*, Hakuin's mother told Iwajiro (Iwajiro is Hakuin's childhood name) only about the connection between the date of his birth and Tenjin-deity. Hakuin's mother said, "You must always venerate the deity of the Kitano Shrine. You were born on the twenty-fifth of the twelfth month in the second year of Jōkyō, at the first crow of the cock—two in the morning. The year, the month, the day, and the hour all fall under the sign of the ox. The twenty-fifth, as everyone knows, is the special day set aside to worship the Ox deity." See p. 9. Moreover, Waddell adds, "Since the ox is the messenger of Tenjin, Tenjin became known, especially in eastern Japan, as 'Ushi Tenjin,' the Ox deity." For more information, see p. 128.

That night his mother, Mahāmāyā, dreamt that a white elephant carrying a white lotus in its trunk came and entered her womb. The second and third acts, descent from Tushita and entering his mother's womb, had been accomplished. Māyā carried the Bodhisattva in her womb for precisely ten lunar months.²¹⁴

These two stories are very similar to each other regarding their consecrated view of a religious person. While a white elephant carrying a white lotus brings Buddha's birth, a divine figure from Ise Shrine brings Hakuin's birth.²¹⁵ It is interesting to point out that while Hakuin is a Buddhist Zen figure, the religious symbol of Japanese Shinto, Ise Shrine, is used for his birth tale as sealing the authority of his religious status. It seems to be evident that by borrowing from Buddha's tale, Hakuin's birth statement becomes the first effective step for the consecration of Zen master Hakuin. This kind of image of Hakuin can be seen in the statement about Hakuin's age of eighty-four when he passed away. It states:

At daybreak on the eleventh, the master was sleeping very peacefully, lying on his right side. He made a single loud groan, 'Umm!' and passed away. The funeral was held on the fifteenth. A violent storm of wind and rain made it impossible to carry the master's body to the funeral pyre, so the cremation was postponed until the following day. Afterwards, a great many relics were found among the ashes, most of them were discovered where oil had been poured on the fire. They resembled particles of sand or tiny pebbles and were the color of precious blue gems. They were the true fruits of the master's meditation and wisdom. People flocked to the cremation site, more than a few of them behaving like the demons who thronged to the Buddha's cremation hoping to acquire precious relics from his remains. Because of this, the relics were divided into three lots and enshrined in stupas at the master's three temples: Shōin-ji, Muryō-ji, and Ryūtaku-ji.²¹⁶

There are two remarkable points concerning the memories of Hakuin in this situation.

First, why did the *Nempu* use unique expressions and metaphors to describe Hakuin's

²¹⁴ Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 19.

²¹⁵ Rikukawa, in his work *Hakuin Oshō Shōden*, provides a study of Shintō as it relates to Hakuin. He mentions the Shintō thought of both Hakuin and Tōrei, and further explores the relationship between Tōrei and Yoshida Shintō. According to him, Tōrei belonged to Yoshida Shintō.

²¹⁶ Waddell, *A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin*, no. 2, pp. 124-125.

funeral? Why does it indicate that a “violent storm of wind and rain” or “precious blue gems” are present? Second, why did the *Nempu* compare the circumstances of Hakuin’s funeral to those of the Śākyamuni Buddha’s? Here I am concerned not with what these two points really mean historically, but, perhaps more importantly, I am concerned with how the compiler of the *Nempu* conceived Hakuin as a religious authority, and how images of Hakuin were creatively programmed and controlled in the interval from the time Hakuin died to the moment the biography was written.

On one hand, the phrases “violent storm of wind and rain” and “precious blue gems” found in the funeral descriptions cause the deepest religious reflections for those belonging to the tradition. For example, the former symbolizes Hakuin’s characteristics often described as powerful, severe, tireless, and energetic. The former symbolizes Hakuin’s virtue as the crucial legacy to Buddhism. Moreover, using these alleged facts is the best way to bolster and “prove” Hakuin’s religious authority.

On the other hand, comparing Hakuin’s death story to the Buddha’s is also a powerful, effective, and very persuasive way to illustrate Hakuin’s religious authority. By this, more or less, the historical value of Hakuin’s existence is symbolically identified with the Buddha’s. For example, while a white elephant carrying a white lotus brings Buddha’s birth, a divine figure from Ise Shrine brings Hakuin’s birth; Hakuin’s relics are described as precious blue gems as the evidence of wisdom and compassion; and “People flocked to the cremation site, more than a few of them behaving like the demons who thronged to the Buddha’s cremation hoping to acquire precious relics from his remains.”²¹⁷ For the elite Zen establishment who faithfully believes the *Nempu*, comparing Hakuin’s death story to the Buddha’s is the best and most powerful way to “prove” Hakuin’s religious authority. Although the *Nempu* lost its historical value and holds only textual and religious value, controlling how Hakuin

²¹⁷ Waddell, *A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin*, no. 2, pp. 124-125.

is remembered became a major agenda in the Rinzai tradition.

Hence, the *Nempu* constructs its own unique memories of Hakuin in the long process from the time Hakuin died to the moment the biography was written. This work can no longer be regarded as merely historical truths about Hakuin, but as a religious text whose primary purpose is also to elevate or idealize his religious status and foster the teachings of the tradition. Because of this, it is only natural that the *Nempu* needed to create its own unique representations of Hakuin. Again, the *Nempu* has literary but not historical value; Hakuin should be interpreted as a textual and religious paradigm and not be reconstructed as a historical figure. Hakuin is a textual construction made by his descendants to uplift their master's position both in and outside the tradition, probably vis-à-vis the Sōtō sect. Their purpose is largely ideological. In a sense, the later creation of his idealized status as the tradition's *de facto* founder, which I have argued consistently, might be a mere imitation of this identity production mechanism of the tradition after the Meiji era.

Last, I mention a distortion of historical fact caused by the interval of time between Tōrei's manuscript and the *Nempu*. This interval has caused a major current controversy concerning the year of Hakuin's encounter with a hermit, Hakuyūshi (1645-1709).²¹⁸ The problem is that the year assigned to this event was changed from 1715 in Tōrei's manuscript to 1710 in the *Nempu*. The attempt to insert the Hakuyūshi episode into the *Nempu*, let alone into Tōrei's version, is basically awkward, because the whole problem is the historical fact that Hakuyūshi had already been dead for a year. Despite this historical fact, the *Nempu* tells us that Hakuin, having developed Zen sickness (*Zenbyō*), visited Hakuyūshi at the age of twenty-six, in 1710, and learned two meditation techniques from him. According to Katō, Hakuyūshi, since the

²¹⁸ Besides this, a more recent emerging interest among intellectuals can be found in the question of whether Hakuin really succeeded Shōju's Dharma.

age of sixteen, lived in a cave as a hermit in the depths of the mountains of Kita-Shirakawa village in Kyoto for forty-eight years. In 1709, he fell into a valley and died. His death is recorded in the family register (*kakochō*, lit. the “register of the past”) in Jōganin, a temple belonging to a Pure Land Buddhism sect, and his tomb is located in Kyoto. I am not really concerned with these historical issues presented here, since nobody really knows exactly what happened—did Hakuin really meet Hakuyūshi? Is that event really a fiction? Yes, probably, it is a narrative creation. But we do not know exactly. Rather, more interestingly, I am concerned with this issue as a historical manipulation made in the process of completing the biography by filling in the chronological gaps, and the biography, therefore, is an ideological product.

In its statements about Hakuin’s activity at the age of twenty-six, the *Nempu* reads:

He set out from Shōin-ji traveling in a westerly direction. When he reached Reishō-in in Mino province, someone he met told him about a man named Hakuyūshi who lived in a cave in the hills of Shirakawa in the eastern part of Kyoto.... The master was greatly encouraged by this information. He left Reishō-in at once for Shirakawa. Upon entering Kyoto, he continued on, asking directions along the way. After trekking several leagues up into the mountains at the eastern edge of the city, he came upon a cave hidden among the cliffs.²¹⁹

Moreover, Hakuin, in his autobiographical work, *Itsumadegusa*, published at the age of eighty-two, in 1766, writes:

In the middle of the first month in the seventh year of the Hōei era [1710], I shouldered my travel pack, slipped quietly out of the temple in eastern Mino where I was staying, and headed for Kyoto. On reaching the capital, I bent my steps northward, crossing over the hills at Black Valley [Kurodani] and making my way to the small hamlet at White River [Shirakawa]. I dropped my pack off at a teahouse and went to make inquiries about Master Hakuyū’s cave. One of the villagers pointed his finger toward a thin thread of rushing

²¹⁹ Waddell, *A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin*, no. 1, p. 133.

water high above in the hills.²²⁰

Furthermore, *Yasenkana* also includes a description that Hakuin visited Hakuyūshi at the age of twenty-six in 1710. However, in Tōrei's manuscript, this event is included in Hakuin's thirty-first year in 1715. This distortion of fact occurred in the interval from the time Tōrei's manuscript was written to the moment the *Nempu* was written. However, even if the year is changed as a result, it is important to note that Tōrei wrote his manuscript in particular historical contexts—Tōrei had a reason to do this. After a long time, Taikan also edited Tōrei's manuscript within particular historical contexts. During the interval, Hakuin's two works, *Yasenkana* and *Itsumadegusa*, were published, and they were already in circulation and were read by many people who believed the event as a "fact": Hakuin visited Hakuyūshi at the age of twenty-six in 1710. Thus, it would be very difficult for Taikan to return to Tōrei's assigned year, which does not recover the gap with the year of Hakuyūshi's death anyway. Taikan had to keep the 1710 as the year of the event. We easily find this inconsistency between Tōrei's manuscript and the *Nempu*, the inconsistency that clearly displays the ideological, constructed nature of the *Nempu*.

I have considered the biography of Hakuin with a focus on its history and problems in an attempt to understand the roles of the biography, or biographical process, in tradition formation and transmission. The *Nempu* had a long, complex history until its publication. During the interval between Tōrei's manuscript and the *Nempu*, there appeared some biographical issues between the two texts. The issues are: 1) the changing value and purpose of the text, 2) the constructed images of Hakuin, and 3) the distortion of historical facts. These three elements clearly expose the biographical process through which the image and memory of Hakuin is heavily crafted in a very creative way to authorize his legitimacy for the tradition in which it

²²⁰ Waddell, *Wild Ivy*, p. 90.

was written. The interval creates the particular historical contexts through which the contents of the *Nempu* were changed. In short, the particular historical contexts produced these three problems, and the biography, therefore, can be a potential indicator of historical cultural reconstructions.

Hakuin is a significant figure in Japanese Rinzai Zen. Although studies of Hakuin's art and Zen meditation practice have developed their popularity among various intellectuals in the last decades, it is still safe to say that the "biographic," or, more specifically, "hagiographic," study of Hakuin, in the sense that Reynolds and Capps use this category, has occupied the entire field of study since the beginning of the twentieth century. By conducting a critical approach to the view of the biography as a historical paradigm, it helps us understand that "Hakuin" has been invented again and again since the time of his death in 1769 and reveals how he has been constructed and used in the creation of contemporary conservative, elite Zen culture. To extend my argument, the Hakuin of the Rinzai Zen, the Hakuin who has held up as a reviver of the tradition, is a fairly recent innovation in the history of Hakuin remembrances. In remembering Hakuin, then, it is now the time to make him appropriate for the twenty-first century.

I have considered the constructive process and unique role of biography. Knowing that a biography is a creative collection of memories of the past, my general conclusion is that the biography is a social production or creation heavily crafted around a net of the complex factors and milieu of the tradition in which it is produced. The biography produced in this way not only elevates the image, memory, and understanding of the past subject and establishes the religious ideal of it in the tradition, precisely because of that, but also participates in the very process of (re)constituting a new religious vision of the same past subject in the dynamics of the tradition formation and transmission mechanisms. I would add that the biography

serves in an active role establishing the tradition's social, cultural, and institutional identities and also securing its social collectivity. The biography is, therefore, a social construct.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE RANGE OF THE STUDY OF HAKUIN

Major Shifts in the Study of Hakuin

In this chapter, I discuss dominant trends in the scholarship on Hakuin. By analyzing the scholarship in terms of types and time periods, we can see the different paradigms prevalent in Hakuin studies and how those paradigms have shifted over time as interpretations of Hakuin have changed throughout the last century up to today. As I think that the identification of paradigm shifts is one of the most valuable benefits of conducting a review of literature, I would like to point out here three major shifts in the study of Hakuin.

Typological Modality of Major Scholarship on Hakuin

In this section, I focus on classifying the major scholarship on Hakuin in the twentieth century into six categories, and then identify each with a particular purpose and methodology. The six categories are hagiographies, chronological biographies (*Hakuin Nempu*), translations, art, literature, and “elite Zen establishment” work.²²¹

1. Hagiographical Studies of Hakuin

The purpose of the hagiographical studies on Hakuin is to closely read his chronological biography, the *Hakuin Nempu* (hereafter, *Nempu*), to reassess the events

²²¹ These typological classifications intentionally do not contain the independent category “biographical study of Hakuin” because it is undoubtedly the absolute foundation of all of the other studies presented here. Moreover, Hakuin has been studied through biographical approaches by scholars and priests for a century. Therefore, in this section I limit the biographical category to its relevance within the “hagiographical study of Hakuin.” Also, it is important to note that none of the seven fields of study has been completely independent and that Hakuin has usually been studied in some combination of those seven fields. Here I limit myself to briefly pointing out the unique characteristics of each area of study.

and experiences of his career, and to establish his historical, religious, and institutional status as the reviver of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition. Moreover, this study stresses not only religious faith and activity in what Hakuin represents in the *Nempu*, but also their meaning within the ongoing religious tradition up to the present day. In general, the *Nempu* is held by some to be accurate, without any errors, guesses, or exaggerations about Hakuin's career. Rather, these scholars have created their own unique and ideal images of Hakuin through conjectures and embellishments, making the hagiography overlap with the guideline of the Rinzai climate.

2. The Study of the *Hakuin Nempu*

Only a few scholars in the entire history of Hakuin studies have examined the *Nempu* critically to understand a more accurate historicity of Hakuin's life. These scholars have understood that biographies are historical creations. While the *Nempu* is generally considered an authoritative historical account of Hakuin's career inside the Rinzai tradition, it is important to note that the *Nempu* was actually published fifty-two years after Hakuin's death, written and compiled by his disciples. This means that the *Nempu* naturally contains some distortions and idealizations in its representation of Hakuin. Hence, scholars have primarily focused on three problems relating to the historicity of the *Nempu*: the changed text value and purpose, the constructed images of Hakuin, and the distorted historical facts, the detailed analyses of which are shown in Chapter Five.

In recent years, however, some scholars have aspired to create a new version of the *Nempu* by modifying the previously inadequate and insufficient descriptions and by replacing them with newer and more reliable information they have been able to gather. Recently scholars such as Yoshizawa Katsuhiro, a leading expert on the studies of Hakuin, have examined not only the *Nempu* itself but also other historical materials,

such as Hakuin's writings, ink drawings, paintings, calligraphy, and, most remarkably, letters to reassess Hakuin's belief, activity, and experience described in the *Nempu*. In particular, Hakuin's letters, both private and official, have provided new information, which has given us a more detailed and accurate understanding of the historical Hakuin, and, most interestingly, a more humane, personal figure of Hakuin.

3. The Study and Translation of Hakuin's Writings

Translations of Hakuin's writings have been published both inside and outside of Japan, but they are few in number compared to other Buddhist figures like Dōgen (1200-1253) and Nichiren (1222-1282). Some Japanese scholars, like Kamata Shigeo and Yoshizawa, have translated Hakuin's writings into modern Japanese with full annotations, thus taking a crucial step in disseminating Hakuin's teachings among lay people.²²² In particular, Yoshizawa examines, in the process of his translation, Hakuin's historicity and religiosity in more appropriate and concrete contexts of his thought and life by correcting errors, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations which were found in previous publications, for example, transcriptions, of Hakuin's works and which remained untouched for decades. He writes:

Two editions of Hakuin's works were published in 1899 and 1904, respectively, and in 1934-35 his writings were compiled for the *Hakuin oshō zenshū* (*Complete works of Master Hakuin*). These publications, groundbreaking and important though they were, contain numerous errors, some of which actually reverse Hakuin's intended meaning. Worse yet, these errors have remained uncorrected over the decades in subsequent reprints, and have consequently found their way into the various Western-language translations of Hakuin's works. Japanese scholars have no one but themselves to blame.²²³

²²² See Kamata's work, *Hakuin*, vol.11 *Zennyūmon* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1994) and Yoshizawa's work, *Hakuin zenji hōgo zenshū*, 14 vols (Kyoto: Zenbunka kenkyūjo, 1999-2000).

²²³ Katsuhiko Yoshizawa, "Views of Hakuin, Meiji Period to 1968" in *Toward a Hakuin Studies*;

In fact, Yoshizawa has made a great contribution to the scholarly study of Hakuin. Other scholars, like Philip B. Yampolsky and Norman Waddell, have introduced Hakuin as a scholarly topic for further research in the West. In particular, their English translations have opened up a wider range of research projects for Westerners. English versions of Hakuin's writings—*Hebiichigo*, *Oradegama*, *Yabukōji*, *Yasenkanna*, and *Itsumadegusa*—are now readily available to scholars outside of Japan.²²⁴

4. The Study of Hakuin's Art

One of the two dominant movements in this field of study in recent years is a slightly emerging interest in the reassessment of Hakuin's art, such as his ink drawings, paintings, and calligraphy, which focuses on analyzing the hidden religious meanings and messages that Hakuin left. In contrast to this, the other dominant movement involves uncritical attitudes of those hidden religious meanings, which are dominant among scholars and intellectual artists who study Hakuin's art as visual images of his religious experience. In fact, the traditional interpretations of Zen art—in both Hakuin studies as well as Buddhist studies—assume that Zen aesthetic experience can be equated with Zen religious experience, as we have seen above in Hisamatsu's argument. However, some scholars have insisted on the necessity of considering the

available from http://iriz.hanazono.ac.jp/frame/k_room_fla.en.html; Internet; accessed 27 July 2004 and 13 October 2008. This website is provided by the International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism at Hanazono University (IRIZ, *Hanazono daigaku kokusai zengaku kenkyūjo*) established in 1986. The IRIZ has been a leading international Zen institution in Japan. It provides basic research on a wide range of Zen Buddhist topics, promotes interdisciplinary research projects in the related fields, trains Japanese as well as Western scholars in Zen studies, and issues publications on Zen. Their website maintains the most updated scholarship on Hakuin.

²²⁴ See Yampolsky's work, *The Zen Master Hakuin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), and Waddell's works, *The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin* (Boston: Shambhala, 1994) and *Wild Ivy* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999). Also Waddell has translated Hakuin's famous writing, *Yasenkanna*. For the translation, see his article "Hakuin's Yasenkanna" in *The Eastern Buddhist* 34, no.1 (2002), pp. 79-119. Moreover, it should be noted that the oldest English translations of *Oradegama* and *Yasenkanna*, which I have been able to find thus far is R. D. M. Shaw's *The Embossed Tea Kettle*, published by George Allen and Unwin, London, 1963.

religious meanings embedded in Hakuin's art as specific visualizations of his *kōans*, or important religious quests. Yoshizawa maintains this opinion, and advocates that no piece of Hakuin's artwork can be fully understood without taking into account his actual writings, in both of the domains of doctrine and of practice. Today, the study field of Hakuin's art is split between those who view Zen art as the product of religious experience and those who see in aesthetic experience the particular concrete thought of a religious man. However, both of these approaches have basically the same tendency, in that they reduce Hakuin's art almost exclusively to his religiosity.

5. The Literary Studies of Hakuin

In general, the literary studies of Hakuin have been quite hagiographical in nature. The previously dominant tendency within studies of Hakuin's writings was to emphasize the symbolic value of Hakuin as the leading figure of Japanese Rinzai Zen. Scholars have focused on Hakuin's religious enthusiasm for training, his created *kōan* system, and his condemnation of other Zen teachings like "Silent illumination-Zen," "Unborn-Zen," and "*Nembutsu-Zen*," which were popular in his own time and which Hakuin regarded as false teachings in terms of their lack of *kōan* study.

However, the most noteworthy aspect of this field, which has undoubtedly represented one of the three major themes in twentieth-century Hakuin studies, can be found in intellectuals' broader concerns with the relationship between Hakuin's Zen ideas and the health methods that he proposed through *zazen* meditation. In particular, intellectuals (and scholars) have focused on Hakuin's specific works like *Yasenkanna* and *Oradegama* as health manuals, which impressively display his important meditation techniques, "Introspective Meditation" (*naikan no hō*) and "Soft-Butter Method" (*nanso no hō*). Because intellectuals have been captivated by how Hakuin used specific meditation techniques to combat his so-called *Zenbyō* (Zen sickness),

which he suffered from during his long training days in youth, they have examined Hakuin's idea of meditation as his own unique health method. Further, scholars as well as intellectuals in various fields like psychology, medicine, and others have applied the efficacy of Hakuin's meditation techniques as a means to improve the health of modern people.²²⁵ In this regard, while they assert that *zazen* is a health hygiene, what is important is the popularization of Hakuin's Zen concepts, which are of interest to everyone concerned with physical health. In a critical sense, it is possible to argue that Hakuin's meditation techniques as health hygiene are employed for lay cultivation by the religious authorities who recognize them as the most effective way of introducing and advertising Hakuin's Zen ideas to the masses.

In understanding Hakuin's concerns with the relationship between body/mind problems and practical health methods, it goes without saying that many scholars and intellectuals have also regarded meditation techniques as important ways of nourishing one's vital energy to achieve *kenshō* experience, Hakuin's decisive religious quest.²²⁶ Though this cannot be denied, an increasing interest in Hakuin's meditation methods as health hygiene among western and Chinese medical doctors cannot be ignored.

6. The Elite Zen Establishment's Influence on the Study of Hakuin

Members of the Zen elite have sought a way to firmly establish Hakuin's religious thought and attitude in the spiritual environment in which he lived and worked, with particular emphasis on his historical and religious status and authority in religious communities. This study, hagiographical in nature, advocates the eliteness

²²⁵ For example, see the following works: *Hakuin to Yasenkanna* written by Zuijō Nomura (1939), *Yasenkanna* written by Shun Takayama (1994), *Hakuin no yomikata* written by Isamu Kurita (1995), *Hakuin zenji* written by Kimihiko Naoki (1997), *Isō Hakuin no kokyūhō* written by Hiromasa Muraki (1999).

²²⁶ For example, see the work, *Hakuin to Orategama* written by Nomura (1931).

and authenticity of Hakuin's religious heritage as both having continued unbroken since the Sung-Zen lineage in China and having monopolized today's Japanese Rinzai Zen society, that is to say, the monopolization meaning Hakuin's heritage as the only single lineage surviving today.

While this area of study has undoubtedly been a central and foundational movement in Hakuin studies, many scholars have focused on not only the institutional role and functional status, but also the absolute ideal images of Hakuin as the most towering figure in Japanese Rinzai Zen, as its reviver. In the process, these scholars have traditionally, institutionally, and intentionally constructed and elevated the ideal images of Hakuin in their creation of elite Zen culture. By this, while scholars' research concerns are focused on the contributions of Hakuin to his sect and tradition, it is essential that controlling how Hakuin is created and propagated is a major agenda in the elite Zen establishment. Thus, while it is crucial to call for some reassessment of the products of this elite Zen establishment, it is also important to point out that understanding this unique scholarly movement becomes important for understanding how Hakuin has been crafted and used in the creation of the contemporary conservative, closed, and elite Zen culture, which elevated Hakuin to his present position of prominence. The advocates in the elite Zen establishment are of course the priest scholars within the tradition or the intellectuals who are at least closely related to religious centers. In a sense, "Hakuin" as a scholarly subject has been meticulously protected within the intellectual framework controlled by ecclesiastical authorities who have much power in determining who Hakuin is, what he most definitely is not, and how he must be remembered.

A Review of the Major Literature and Scholarship on Hakuin

My discussion turns to a review of the major scholarship on Hakuin in the twentieth century, in chronological order. Who are the scholars? What are the objectives of their works? What have the scholars conceived Hakuin to be? The questions reveal the scholars' own unique intellectual peculiarities and standpoints in Hakuin studies, and provide hints for an open question, "Who is their Hakuin?" Also, these questions expose a peculiar intellectual trajectory of elite Zen shaped by scholars. In an attempt to consider these concerns, therefore, I look at the formation, development, and continuity of the elite Zen establishment found in Hakuin studies, and also look at the steady improvement of Hakuin studies in history. The conceptual premise of this project is that chronological research into the history of Hakuin studies is the most effective way to identify the cultural and historical developments of the interpretations or memories of Hakuin that have determined the direction of the elite Zen establishment, and also to find the hitherto neglected aspects of Hakuin that have been repressed in the traditionally designated maintenance and transmission in the elite Zen culture.

I present ten major scholars who have made significant contributions to twentieth-century Hakuin studies; Ōsaki Ryōen, Fukuba Hoshū, Rikukawa Taiun, Philp B. Yampolsky, Furuta Shōkin, Yanagida Seizan, Kamata Shigeo, Katō Shōshun, Norman Waddell, and Yoshizawa Katsuhiko. The reason why I start with Ōsaki is that his work, *Hakuin zenji den*, is the oldest scholarly material on Hakuin, which I have been able to gather.

1. Ōsaki Ryōen

Born in 1880, Ōsaki Ryōen, a previous master of the well-known temple, Ryōanji, in Kyoto,²²⁷ published his biographical commentary on Hakuin titled *Hakuin zenji den* in 1904. While this work was proofread by Shaku Sōen, who was a prestigious Rinzai Zen master, Ōsaki's intention was to preserve and pass down Hakuin's history and his religious legacy from generation to generation to propagate the ecclesiastical religious tradition.²²⁸ Little information is available about Ōsaki's training and priest work.²²⁹ He passed away in 1953.

In *Hakuin zenji den*, Ōsaki focuses on three points; first, the authenticity of Hakuin's Dharma lineage; second, his uncompromising Zen practice; and third, his ardent propagation activities for both practitioners and the masses. In his biographical sketch, Ōsaki particularly emphasizes the spiritual development of Hakuin's religious thought and attitude throughout his life, with special attention to his decisive religious experience at the age of forty-two that eventually led to his constant teaching activities in various ways until his death. In this regard, Ōsaki is concerned not with what kinds of training and teaching activities Hakuin conducted, but, more essentially, with how Hakuin became a great religious man in the tradition through those activities. Hence, he focuses on elevating the institutional role and functional status of Hakuin as the emblematic icon of Rinzai communities. In this respect, Ōsaki's understanding of

²²⁷ Belonging to the Myōshiji sect, Ryōanji was built in 1450 with the support of a general named Hosokawa Katsumoto (1430-1473). The master Giten Genshō (1393-1462) was summoned by Hosokawa to become the founder of the temple, but Giten worshiped his master, Nippō Sōshun (1368-1448), as the founder. Assigned as one of the World Heritage buildings, this temple is one of the most renowned Zen temples in Japan. For more information, see *Bukkyō daijiten* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1988) and *Zengaku daijiten* (Tokyo: Taishūkanshoten, 2000).

²²⁸ According to the current master, Nonomura of the Heirinji monastery in Saitama Prefecture, Ōsaki wrote about Hakuin for his undergraduate thesis. I think that the work, *Hakuin zenji den*, was probably based on the thesis because when his work was published, he was still twenty-four years old.

²²⁹ While I asked Ryōanji about Ōsaki's historical records, I also asked Yoshizawa. I got the information of the dates of Ōsaki's birth and death from Yoshizawa.

Hakuin's career clearly mirrors Ōsaki's beliefs or ideals, with his conservative and devoted attitudes, to the tenets of Rinzai Zen, an attitude that firmly defines the starting as well as ending points of Hakuin studies. In a sense, this aspect is a natural and understandable consequence in re-evaluating an important figure of the religious tradition precisely for those who stand in the tradition and devote themselves to the tradition's doctrine and practice.

It is noteworthy that Ōsaki insists on Hakuin's elite lineage (and its legitimacy) as the only extant religious heritage traditionally traced back to the Sung period-Zen in China, to Bodhidharma, and to the historical Buddha. In particular, he stresses Hakuin as the successor in the Dharma lineage of the masters Nampō Jōmyō, Shūhō Myōchō, and Kanzan Egen by whom the religious, spiritual legacies of the Sung-Zen had been preserved and activated in Japan.²³⁰

Ōsaki also examines Hakuin's critique of other Zen teachings, "Unborn-Zen," "Silent illumination-Zen," and "*Nembutsu-Zen*," which were popular during Hakuin's lifetime. However, while Ōsaki asserts the authenticity of Hakuin's spiritual, religious, and historical values, it must be noted that while in Japan today all priests in the Myōshinji denomination in Rinzai Zen, to which Ōsaki belonged are thought to trace their religious heritage to Hakuin, this assertion in turn designates the creation of his own authenticity and privilege within the religious tradition.

In *Hakuin zenji den*, by defining the location of the eliteness and authenticity of Hakuin in Japanese Rinzai history, Ōsaki makes a great contribution to the foundation of the elite Zen establishment in the early twentieth century, from his ecclesiastical standpoint. Because he himself is a priest standing in the same tradition

²³⁰ Again, Nampo Jōmyō (Daiō Kokushi or National Master Daiō, 1235-1309). Shūhō Myōchō (Daitō Kokushi or National Master Daitō, 1282-1338). Kanzan Egen (Musō Daishi or Master Musō, 1277-1361). The lineage of these three masters is now called the "Ō-Tō-Kan school."

as Hakuin, his major concern is how to idealize and propagate Hakuin in the tradition. Ōsaki's image of "Hakuin," even though it is regarded as an intellectual subject, is always the absolute religious symbol of the tradition as well as within himself.

Ōsaki's biographical work repeats many familiar briefs about Hakuin's life and thought. The work tries to convey Hakuin's incomparable greatness to the common people as a very extraordinary religious man to which the tradition has given birth. Such an understanding of the work's tendency to describe Hakuin's life in a propagated tone is not entirely mistaken, yet the intended audience should be understood first and foremost as the priests and practitioners belonging to the religious tradition. While Ōsaki's work focuses on who Hakuin was, it actually becomes a commentary on the doctrines of the religious centers with Hakuin's teaching and practice.

2. Fukuba Hoshū

Born in 1896, Fukuba was a Zen priest scholar at Rinzai University in Kyoto (now Hanazono University, closely associated with the Myōshinji denomination). He also had a scholarship at Tendai University in Tokyo in 1923, and two years later at Koyasan University in Wakayama Prefecture.²³¹ His work, *Hakuin*, was published in 1941, two years before his death.

Starting with simple but powerful phrases, i.e., "Master Hakuin is great. What is so great? His every aspect is great," in *Hakuin*, Fukuba describes Hakuin's religious attitudes in a biographical way. Fukuba focuses on Hakuin's Dharma lineage, hard training, earnest propagation activities, and his achievement of enlightenment with the use of *kōans*. These points clearly overlap with Ōsaki's main discussions in his work,

²³¹ I got this information from Yoshizawa. During that time, what Fukuba was teaching is unclear.

Hakuin zenji den. However, Fukuba's remarkable consideration of Hakuin's religious attitude can be found in the discussion of Hakuin's critique against some popular Zen movements. While Fukuba examines Hakuin's condemnation of "Silent illumination-Zen" and "Nembutsu-Zen" versus "Kōan-Zen," he focuses on Hakuin's central teaching that "Practice concentrated in activity is a hundred, a thousand, even a million times superior to practice done in a state of inactivity." He also examines Hakuin's religious but defiant attitude that shows his serious condemnation of those popular Zen beliefs, by quoting his verse:

In the realm of the thousand buddhas
He is hated by the thousand buddhas;
Among the crowd of demons
He is detested by the crowd of demons.
He crushes the silent-illumination heretics of today,
And massacres the heterodox blind monks of this generation.
This filthy blind old shavepate
Adds more foulness still to foulness.²³²

With this critical attitude of popular Zen and his emphasis on hard training, Hakuin insists on the importance of "Kōan-Zen," which advocates that the *kōan* is the only means to achieve the decisive religious experience, *kenshō*. Fukuba realizes the historical significance of Hakuin's *Kōan-Zen* as the main training mechanism of the religious tradition, which continues in today's monastic life.

One of the interesting observations in Fukuba's analysis can be found in his unique location in the work, one primarily reflecting his identity as both a Zen priest at a famous temple and a scholar at a university affiliated with a major Zen center.²³³ As a scholar priest, on the one hand, he maintains his loyalty to the principles of the

²³² Isshū Miura and Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *The Zen Koan: Its History and Use in Rinzai Zen* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1965), p. 124.

²³³ Tafukuin, one of the subsidiary temples of Myōshinji, Kyoto.

religious tradition by insisting on the importance of *kōan* study. On the other hand, he examines Hakuin's *kōan* study by contrasting it with popular Zen movements, and argues for its significant legacy inherited by modern monasteries in Japanese Rinzai Zen society. These hagiographical analyses of Hakuin's religious attitudes firmly support the "eliteness" and "greatness" of Hakuin-Zen. And it goes without saying that scholarship such as Fukuba's supports the elevation and establishment of the elite Zen cultural realm by asserting the "authenticity" of Hakuin's *kōan* Zen in the intellectual Zen world.

3. Rikukawa Taiun

Born in 1886, the late Rikukawa Taiun was no doubt one of the most important Hakuin scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century. He published his outstanding work, *Hakuin oshō shōden*, in 1963. He was also known as a scholar of the Chinese Zen text, *Rinzairoku*, or "The Collected Sayings of *Lin-chi*." He started to study Zen with master Shaku Sōen at the age of twenty-six in 1912 (and later he was purported to have had a *kenshō* experience). He further continued his training with another master, Hōgoku, for almost ten years and received his Dharma transmission in 1940.²³⁴ Although a devout Rinzai Zen scholar as well as a lay practitioner, who devoted himself to research on Hakuin throughout his life, his work, *Hakuin oshō shōden*, was actually a revolutionary work at the time because it included the first critical analysis of Hakuin's chronological biography (*Nempu*). This work marked a tremendous advancement toward the Hakuin studies of today.²³⁵

In *Hakuin oshō shōden*, Rikukawa's most significant contribution is the

²³⁴ I referred to the chronological table presented in his work, *Hyōshaku Yasenkanna* (Tokyo: Sankibō, 1974).

²³⁵ Rikukawa left many important works such as *Mujimyokyō* (1937), *Rinzai oyobi Rinzairoku no kenkyū* (1948), *Rinzairoku shōkai* (1959), and *Hyōshaku Yasenkanna* (1961).

comparative study between the *Nempu* and its original manuscript, which had never been examined by any scholar before.²³⁶ In this text, Rikukawa examines the similarities and differences found in both texts, by putting them side by side in parallel columns. As a consequence, he finds in the *Nempu* many inconsistencies and contradictions in terms of Hakuin's historicity and religiosity, and he reaches the conclusion that the original manuscript gave "more reliable, authentic, and legitimate" descriptions than the *Nempu*. Thus, he asserts that the hitherto dominant interpretations of Hakuin based on the *Nempu* were completely valueless. Rikukawa's analysis indicates that Hakuin studies hitherto had absolutely lacked critical approaches to the *Nempu*. He insists that Hakuin studies need to apply the appropriate critical tools in order to examine Hakuin's historicity and religiosity with a focus on how his texts and writings were written and in what contexts.

Rikukawa reexamines older documents and writings, and every little piece of information about Hakuin in a critical way. During this process, he finds discrepancies and disparities in the historical facts of Hakuin, and thus discloses the constructed ideas of Hakuin. In fact, he stresses that the previously dominant images of Hakuin were freely created by scholars' mere interest. For example, Hakuin had been regarded as a virtuoso of Zen art or a good writer without taking into account his historicity and religiosity. For Rikukawa, such interpretations are nothing but a dubious tendency just to promote Hakuin's religious status to a higher position in a broader range of the intelligentsia. Rikukawa undoubtedly made a great contribution to the reassessment of the dominant understanding of Hakuin. At the same time, his legacy has opened up many topics that are still applicable to various research fields and projects today. I myself agree with his critical approach of who Hakuin is.

²³⁶ I have not gained access to this original manuscript. Actually even he himself could not gain access to it; for some reason he had a copy of it, and he mentioned it in the work.

4. Philip B. Yampolsky

The scholar Philip B. Yampolsky helped popularize Hakuin's writings in the West. Published in 1971, Yampolsky's significant work, *The Zen Master Hakuin*, contains the English translations of Hakuin's three writings, *Oradegama*, *Yabukōji*, and *Hebiichigo*. This work is the first collection of English translations of some of Hakuin's writings, based on reliable scholarly resources such as Rikukawa's *Hakuin oshō shōden*. While this work, at least regarding his translation of *Hebiichigo*, is mildly problematic, because he based his translation on Tokiwa Daijō's misconstrued transcription, it is noteworthy that he choose the *Hebiichigo* as part of his project.

Remarkably, Yampolsky reflects on the scholarship of Hakuin in Japan, saying "Hakuin has up to now been studied neither by Buddhist specialists nor by students of the language and literature of his period, so that my translations suffer from the absence of scholarly works to which I might have turned for assistance."²³⁷ This view clearly supports the problem mentioned above, which he had to have in the end. In particular, the work, *Hebiichigo*, which contains Hakuin's critique against political authority, has not been studied very carefully, or even given attention, among scholars and priests, especially in terms of translation.²³⁸ In fact, while no one has worked on the English translation of *Hebiichigo* since Yampolsky, the work has been translated into modern Japanese with full annotations by Yoshizawa in recent years, in response to pressure from outside Japan. Amidst the insufficient and unsatisfactory conditions of Hakuin studies in the 1960s and 1970s, Yampolsky's work made a great contribution that led to a greater appreciation for Hakuin's writings in both the East and West.

²³⁷ Philip Yampolsky, trans., *The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. xi.

²³⁸ Because Hakuin's work, *Hebiichigo*, contains his criticism of the *sankin kōtai*, one of the political systems of the Tokugawa government, the publication was forbidden.

5. Furuta Shōkin

Born in 1911, Furuta was a noted Japanese Buddhist scholar predominantly focusing on Indian Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, and the history of Zen Buddhist thought.²³⁹ He had a scholarship at Hokkaidō University, Nihon University, and others throughout his life until his death in 2001. Moreover, he served as the director of the Matsugaoka Library, founded by D.T. Suzuki. His major works include *Furuta Shōkin chosakushū*, consisting of 14 volumes, *Nihon bukkyo shisōshi no shomondai* (1964), *Zen no bunka* (1967), *Eisai* (1977), and *Hakuin wo yomu* (1991).

In his work, *Hakuin wo yomu*, Furuta focuses on some of Hakuin's works such as *Itsumadegusa*, *Oradegama*, *Yasenkanna*, *Kaiankokugo*, and *Kanzan shisen daikimon*, with particular emphasis on Hakuin's thought and action in a biographical sketch. He also focuses on the relationship between the concepts of Hakuin's Zen and his art. Furuta asserts that Hakuin's artwork represents the clear manifestations of his enlightenment experience, which he had a long, difficult time in attaining, thus making him feel something "heavy" and "stuffy," but very "powerful" and even "terrifying." This scholarly attitude means understanding Hakuin's art in the conventional view of Zen art (i.e., that aesthetic cultivation can be identified with religious cultivation). Further, the well-known historian Yanagida Seizan mentions in his work, *Rinzai no kafū* (1967), that Hakuin's art was filled with individualistic characters who are frightening and that the aesthetic attraction of his art is partly due to Hakuin's childhood experience of "hell and its terrors" and partly comes from his religious experience itself. Furuta maintains the same view of Hakuin's art as Yanagida.

Activated by these ideas, in fact, Hakuin's ink drawings, paintings, and calligraphy have been seen thus far just as art, which makes people feel Hakuin's

²³⁹ He was affiliated with Giunji temple in Gifu Prefecture.

religiosity as well as his “greatness.” There lies no consideration on Hakuin’s art as having special religious meanings and messages, let alone his social and political critiques. And this aspect brings about Yoshizawa’s contention that certainly Hakuin’s art can be felt as powerful and religious, but more importantly, it must be understood as the visualization of his *kōan*. In short, Furuta argues that Hakuin’s art has special meaning. For Furuta, this special meaning lies in the position that aesthetic experience is only the product of religious experience. This aspect has created the uniquely intellectual and artistic world of Hakuin.

6. Yanagida Seizan

Born the son of a Zen priest in Shiga Prefecture in 1922 and died in 2006, the noted historian Yanagida Seizan has been a towering figure in the studies of Chinese Buddhism and Zen history. He studied Zen under a Japanese Zen philosopher, Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, and later joined Hisamatsu’s religious association called FAS. Yanagida became a professor of the Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University in 1976. He was an emeritus professor of the International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism at Hanazono University (IRIZ) as well as of Kyoto University.

In his works, *Rinzai no kafū* and *Zen no jidai*, respectively written in 1967 and 1987, Yanagida focuses particularly on the historical significance of the establishment of Hakuin’s *kōan* system in Japanese Zen history. For example, while he concentrates on Hakuin’s own unique *kōan* called *Sekishu*, more strictly, *Sekishu no onjō*, or “the sound of one hand clapping,” he examines its meanings and three of its roles: first, its crucial role for the masses in terms of Japanese writing; second, its historical legacy continuous from the Sung-Zen in China; and third, its important method for preserving *Kōan-Zen* and as a critique against popular Zen movements in Hakuin’s time.

Moreover, according to Yanagida, the important contribution of Hakuin's establishment of the *kōan* system can be found in his unification of previous Japanese Buddhist traditions. More specifically, Hakuin unified the traditional Buddhist ideas from the Nara and Heian periods into his *Kōan-Zen*.²⁴⁰ Yanagida mentions,

Furthermore, Hakuin methodologically unified into *kōan-Zen* the doctrines and practices exercised in diverse Buddhist sects in Japan since the Nara and Heian periods. For Hakuin, doctrines and practices such as *Shikan* [*zhiguan* in Chinese; stilling of thought and development of concentration] of Tendai Buddhism, *Ajikan* [finding in the Sanskrit letter 'a' the source of all phenomena in the universe] of Shingon, *Daimoku* [adoration to the Lotus Sutra] of Nichiren, *Nembutsu* [chanting of the name of Amitabha Buddha] of Hōnen, and *Taza* [meditation] of Dōgen were merely other names for his *Mu-kōan*, or contemplation on *mu* through *kōan* exercises. The Law of Buddhism had but one single truth. Hakuin was convinced that the unification of sects was possible not through principles but through a concrete practical method.²⁴¹

In short, Yanagida argues that Hakuin attempted to re-start "Japanese Buddhism" with his *Kōan-Zen*. Here lies one of the reasons why Yanagida regards Hakuin as one of the most important Zen figures in Japanese Buddhist history.

In the course of the formative development of the intellectual Zen tradition, these views of Hakuin have given rise to a constructed understanding of Hakuin's *kōan* system. Also those interpretations of Hakuin have actively shaped the intellectual creation of the elite Zen culture that firmly regards Hakuin as the reviver and symbol of contemporary Rinzai Zen. First of all, as I have already pointed out in the previous chapters, there is some shadow of doubt that Hakuin was the creator of the present

²⁴⁰ The Nara period covers from 710 to 784. The Heian period covers the next almost four hundred years until the establishment of the Kamakura regime in 1192.

²⁴¹ Seizan Yanagida, *Zen no jidai* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1987), pp. 259-260. A similar description can be also found in his work, *Rinzai no kafū*, published 1967. This is my translation with Dr. Kyoko Selden's revision. To understand some specific terms, I referred to *Iwanami Bukkyō jiten* (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1989) and *The Japanese-English Zen Buddhist Dictionary* (Tokyo: Sankibō Buddhist Book-store, 1991).

kōan system. Since I am more concerned with the issue of how Hakuin has been remembered in the tradition, there is no need to go into this historical question here at this point.

7. Kamata Shigeo

Born in 1927, the well-known Japanese Buddhist scholar, Kamata Shigeo, focused on the study of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Buddhist history. He had a scholarship at Tokyo University, (where he later became an Emeritus professor), and also at Aichi Gakuin University.²⁴² Moreover, Kamata was affiliated with Hakuun-an, a subsidiary temple of Engakuji in Kamakura. And later he became a chief priest (*jūshoku*) of Taikeiji located near Kamakura. He passed away in 2001.

In 1977, Kamata published his work, *Hakuin*, which includes modern-Japanese translations of Hakuin's four major works, *Yasenkanna*, *Oradegama*, *Yabukōji*, and *Keisō dokuzui*. It is interesting to point out that while the first printed version of this work describes Hakuin's life and thought in a chronological way in the preface, Kamata's attention later turns to a discussion of the relationship between Hakuin's Zen concepts and his health techniques in the second printed version revised in 1994.

In his biographical reflection, Kamata primarily highlights Hakuin as the reviver of Japanese Rinzai Zen. He also highlights Hakuin as the successor of the "traditional" form of Zen in the Sung period in China. With these observations, Kamata asserts that Hakuin applied the "traditional Zen" to the cultural reality and its need in his own time, thus making it "japanized," and that Hakuin established his own unique *Kōan-Zen* system. These points clearly echo other scholars, such as Furuta and Yanagida. For Kamata, the goal of Hakuin-Zen is to achieve an enlightenment

²⁴² This information is taken from his work, *Hakuin*, published by Kōdansha in 1994. Incidentally, he was a friend of my grandfather on my mother's side.

experience with the use of *kōan*. This view underlines the essentialization of the relationship between Hakuin-Zen and its central idea of the *kōan*-system, which has been the absolute foundational mechanism of monastic training until today.

Moreover, Kamata discusses Zen meditation, with particular emphasis on Hakuin's two major works, *Yasenkanna* and *Oradegama*. According to Kamata's understanding of these two works, the former regards *zazen* as a concrete method for curing sickness (and Zen sickness called *Zenbyō*, to use Hakuin's specific term), while the latter expounds the importance of *kōan* practice in meditation as the only mental and spiritual means to achieve the *kenshō* experience. The common point in both writings can be found in Hakuin's idea of Zen meditation as nourishing the vital energy to continue *kōan* study, thus making enlightenment possible.

It is clear that while Kamata made a contribution to the re-appreciation of Hakuin's *kōan* system in the long history of Japanese Rinzai Zen, he attempted to formulate the link between Hakuin-Zen, the *kōan* system, and meditation in the creation of intellectual Zen.

8. Katō Shōshun

Born in 1929, Katō Shōshun is a Zen priest historian who has contributed to the development of the study of the *Hakuin Nempu* in recent decades. While he has interest in a wider range of Zen studies, his major publications include *Zenga no sekai* (1978), *Hyakumin no zensō* (1979), *Eisai zenji to Rinzaishū* (1985), and *Kinse zenrin bokuseki* (1989). Moreover, his work *Hakuin*, published in 1979, actually a joint project with Yanagida, focuses on Hakuin's artwork, with particular emphasis on their hidden religious significance. This book was epoch-making for the study of Hakuin's art because many previously dominant scholars and intellectuals first and foremost sought only the value of the unique "religious beauty" in Hakuin's art.

Katō's extraordinary position as a scholar in Hakuin studies was firmly established by his work, *Hakuin oshō nempu*, published in 1985. This work is his transcription of the *Nempu* with full annotations. However, this work is revolutionary, because it also attempts to reexamine Hakuin's *Nempu*, while referring to Rikukawa's *Hakuin oshō shōden*, which had been the only reliable resource since the 1960s.²⁴³ While Rikukawa's work focuses on the comparison between the *Nempu* and its original manuscript, Katō's work is supported by his full annotations supplemented with a more appropriate biographical account in terms of Hakuin's historicity by concentrating on unifying the two texts. In this process, Katō modifies the *Nempu* by adding newer information he had been able to collect after Rikukawa's publication. It should be noted that all who have studied Hakuin since 1985 have undoubtedly depended on Katō's work.²⁴⁴

A weak point of his work, as Katō acknowledges, is that he could not conduct fuller research because of health problems. According to Katō, he gathered the information partly by letters and phone, from many scholars and intellectuals in various fields. He depended especially upon scholar Akiyama Kanji,²⁴⁵ who devoted himself to his work for Hakuin studies and found many significant historical resources of Hakuin. However, no one doubts that Katō's work marks an important step in reevaluating Hakuin's history. Of course, at the same time, there still remain further

²⁴³ This means that the study of Hakuin's biography had made no progress since Rikukawa's work. After its publication, Rikukawa's work had remained untouched and unrevised for over two decades until the completion of Katō's work.

²⁴⁴ Otherwise, one cannot understand Hakuin's life history. Only three scholars have engaged in the study of the *Nempu*—Rikukawa, Akiyama Kanji, and Katō. Since Katō's publication, almost twenty years have passed. I aspire to create a new version of the *Nempu*.

²⁴⁵ Akiyama, who died in 1982, was one of the important scholars who made great contributions to today's Hakuin studies. In his significant work, *Shamon Hakuin*, published privately in 1983, he thoroughly develops his considerations on Hakuin's life, thought, and activity with reliable details. He starts with his reevaluation on the *Hakuin Nempu* and explores Hakuin's family situation, his practice days, and his priest days in terms of his historicity. On this point, Akiyama is concerned with Hakuin's historical relationships to the related people, temples, training places, and so forth. Akiyama's work made invaluable historical examinations of Hakuin's life and thought.

topics that must be studied in a variety of fields of Hakuin studies.

9. Norman Waddell

Born in 1940, scholar Norman Waddell came to Japan in around 1965. In the 1970s, he began translating *Dokugo shingyō*, Hakuin's commentary on the Heart Sūtra, one of his profound works. Further, Waddell worked on the translations of Bankei's biography and part of Dōgen's *Shōbogenzō*.²⁴⁶ In the 1990s, however, his attention turned to the study of Hakuin again. He has translated some of Hakuin's writings like *Isumadegusa*, *Yaemugura*, *Sokkōroku Kaienfusetsu*, and *Yasenkanna*, including the *Hakuin Nempu*. Waddell is currently an emeritus professor of international studies at Ōtani University in Kyoto. Also, he was a member of the *Hakuin kenkyūkai* organized by Yoshizawa.

Waddell has no doubt made a great contribution to Hakuin studies in terms of English translation. In fact, with his English version of the *Hakuin Nempu* published in 1994, he has opened up a wider range of research projects for Westerners. Moreover, his translation of *Isumadegusa*, titled *Wild Ivy*, published in 1999, has received special attention from scholars and intellectuals because it is the first Western-language publication of Hakuin's important autobiography in both Japan and America. In *Wild Ivy*, Waddell focuses on understanding, and then translating, exactly what Hakuin wrote in *Isumadegusa*. Later, the original manuscript of *Isumadegusa* was translated into modern Japanese with full annotations by Yoshizawa. This research at the end of the twentieth century, in addition to Waddell's English translation, has made Hakuin studies an exciting and developing area of research.

²⁴⁶ Bankei Yōtaku (1622-1693) was a Rinzaï Zen monk in the Edo period.

10. Yoshizawa Katsuhiko

Born in 1945, Yoshizawa, along with Yanagida, Katō, and Waddell, is the leading Hakuin expert in Japan today. In 1981 he became the head of the translation bureau at the Institute for Zen Studies, or *Zen bunka kenkyūjo*, in Kyoto. In 1999 he started the *Hakuin kenkyūkai* with some scholars like Katō and Waddell. Yoshizawa has issued numerous publications on Hakuin as well as Zen cultures in various fields. He has translated most of Hakuin's important writings into modern Japanese with full annotations. The outstanding collection of his translations has been published, titled *Hakuin zenji hōgo zenshū*, as a set of Hakuin's works in fourteen volumes. Currently he serves as the sub-director of the International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism at Hanazono University (IRIZ). His most recent publications include *Hakuin: Zenga no sekai* (2005); *Hakuin zenga bokuseki*, 3 vols. (2009), containing a total of 1050 works of Hakuin's art, the largest collection in the field; and *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin* (2009), the English translation of the first book, *Hakuin*, translated by Waddell.²⁴⁷

In his eminent collection, *Hakuin zenji hōgo zenshū*, Yoshizawa starts with a summary of Hakuin's writings in each volume. Each volume consists of his translation and its original manuscript. While there are a lot of difficult-to-understand idiosyncrasies in Hakuin's writings, Yoshizawa provides simple and lucid explanations and gives concrete examples with full annotations, which are remarkable. In the annotations, Yoshizawa refers to a broader range of topics in Edo culture, such as *yōkyoku* (nō song), *kyōgen* (nō farce), *kabuki*, *bunraku*, *jōruri*, and even popular entertainments and folkways, in order to understand the cultural and social

²⁴⁷ His edition, a selection of 1050 of Hakuin's artistic works, was published in March, 2009 (¥57,750 for the regular version; ¥105,000 for the opulent special edition). To celebrate this, a special event, called the "Hakuin Forum," was held in New York City on March 13, 2009. For more information about this event, see Chapter 1.

circumstances in Hakuin's time. Katō asserts that no average Buddhist scholars can approach Yoshizawa in his deep cultural considerations on Hakuin's writings. Moreover, at the end of each volume, he puts the actual picture of the manuscript. This editorial method is quite impressive for the readers.

In *Hakuin zenji hōgo zenshū*, Yoshizawa adds new information that he could not gather inside religious centers. More specifically, while he analyzes Hakuin's writings in the traditional context of the religious tradition, he also develops his cultural, historical, literary analyses outside the religious tradition by conducting his unique research projects. While he visited many local libraries, he also contacted many scholars, intellectuals, and others who are familiar with Japanese linguistics, literature, and folklore, and the regional history and political history of particular areas. He also visited temples and specific places many times where Hakuin actually stayed and practiced. As a result, he was able to gather Hakuin's actual letters (both private and official) from his various acquaintances, and attain rare and precious information about Hakuin's historicity, still extant outside the religious tradition.

Yoshizawa's work marks an important moment in reevaluating Hakuin's history and his writings (and actually his art as well). He is considered to be the person who knows Hakuin, so I keenly realize that he is the criteria of determining who Hakuin was and is. This is very problematic.

In the last two sections, I have categorized the previously dominant types of Hakuin studies and indicated key works of scholarship in the twentieth century. It is clear that there are two remarkable tendencies in their research projects. One can be found in scholars' concerns mirroring the religious tradition's unique ethos. In this case, scholars have neglected to use critical analysis on Hakuin's historicity as well as his religiosity. They habitually emphasize Hakuin's religious attitudes with particular emphasis on his training and propagation activities, and also irksomely emphasize his

historical significance in the contemporary Japanese Rinzai tradition as its reviver in showing the establishment of his created *kōan* system.²⁴⁸ Moreover, some scholars in this movement focus on Hakuin's art as the concrete manifestation of his religious experience, without taking into account the embedded religious meaning. It goes without saying that those scholars, in the end, have discussed the institutional and spiritual roles of Hakuin in religious communities, while the intellectual movement has clearly reflected the religious centers' intentions. In my view, under these limited circumstances, the engaged intellectuals have created their own intellectual images of a historical Hakuin in their interest.

The other tendency can be found in the "lineage" of Rikukawa, Katō, and Yoshizawa, who all have reexamined Hakuin's historicity with their unique critical analyses. These scholars have attempted to modify not only the errors found in Hakuin's *Nempu* but also the misinterpretations found in the dominant understanding of Hakuin's writings. Moreover, Yoshizawa has devoted himself to disclosing the intended meaning of Hakuin's artwork. It must be underlined that these scholars have made a significant contribution to the reevaluation of Hakuin's historicity and religiosity.

From these perspectives, in the next section, I will superimpose the typological analysis upon the chronological analysis of twentieth-century Hakuin studies in order

²⁴⁸ This is very controversial to me. In general the term "*kōan* system" means the systematization of a series of *kōans* as a spiritual but practical mechanism to achieve *kenshō* experience. It is true that Hakuin repeatedly stressed the importance of *kenshō* experience with the use of *kōan* for practitioners as well as the masses. However, at the same time, Hakuin clearly described in his actual writings that there is a real, final goal after achieving *kenshō*, a goal that can be identified with "post-*kenshō* practice," or *gogo no shugyō*—the practice of the Four Vows, or in other words, "to seek after *kenshō* and to save all sentient beings." Therefore, the goal of *kōan* study for Hakuin must be this endless, in a sense "circular," practice in human life, not just the achievement of enlightenment. In this sense, the idea "*kōan* system" seems to imply a very limited, straightforward structure of Zen training in which practitioners and others seek only their goal, enlightenment, although there is no doubt that Hakuin created his own unique *kōans*.

to understand the historical trace of the intellectual paradigms and their shift, the shift exposing how Hakuin has been remembered in the tradition's development over time.

*Superimposing Chronological Studies on Typological Studies of Hakuin:
The Trends of Remembering Hakuin*²⁴⁹

The popular but clichéd interpretations of Hakuin should be understood as the exclusive evaluation framed by the tradition's sectarian climate. Such interpretations are not entirely mistaken, yet the tendency to describe "Hakuin" with such fragments does not necessarily represent who Hakuin was. Consequently, all of those dominant interpretations have developed according to the scholars' interests and concerns of what aspects, images, and memories of Hakuin bring together two "essential" points: 1) Hakuin is the reviver of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen; and 2) all the Rinzai priests today trace their Dharma lineages to Hakuin. This reveals the distinction between what should be remembered and what should be forgotten of who Hakuin was, thus making this distinction a cultural convention as well as a control.

In this section, I focus on how the hitherto dominant studies of Hakuin have framed the creation of the images of Hakuin over time. Here my purpose is to reveal the historical development of the intellectual paradigms in twentieth-century Hakuin studies and to identify some paradigm shifts that represent the maintenance as well as the change of how Hakuin is remembered. It must be noted that the proponents of the heretofore dominant interpretations of Hakuin were the intellectuals who were closely related to the Rinzai orthodoxy.

In 1905, the work *Hakuin zenji den*, was written by Ōsaki. This work examines

²⁴⁹ Note that the contents of this section partly overlap the previous sections in terms of scholars' arguments because the purpose of this section is to superimpose chronological studies upon typological studies of Hakuin.

Hakuin's life from his childhood with its fear of hell to his propagation days. This work also examines, with its hagiographical approach, Hakuin's Dharma lineage from the Sung period, his religious attitudes for hard practice and ardent propagation, and his critique of other Buddhist teachings. Moreover, focusing on how Hakuin could be a great religious man, Ōsaki overlaps his interpretations of Hakuin with the religious tradition's ethos—automatically equaling Hakuin with Rinzai teaching. In this respect, while Zen master Sōen supervises Ōsaki's work under its publication, this circumstance shows the closed, conservative field of the study of Hakuin in those days. This means that the Rinzai institutions intervened in refashioning the ideal images of Hakuin and manipulating them to fit sectarian propagation agendas and purposes. Therefore, while Ōsaki emphasizes Hakuin as the greatest hero of the tradition in his hagiographical voice, at the same time he promotes the traditional Rinzai Zen cause.

Even in the 1940s, the intellectual circumstances describing Hakuin's life and thought supported this hagiographical tendency as presented in Fukuba's work, *Hakuin*. Fukuba examines a fuller view of Hakuin-Zen with special attention to Hakuin's religious thought and attitude. In particular, Fukuba examines the significance of *kōan* study as the central idea of Hakuin's Zen, and he firmly regards Hakuin as the reviver of Japanese Rinzai Zen because of his establishment of the *kōan* system as it has been maintained in the present monastic life. In later generations, many scholars such as Furuta, Kamata, and Yanagida, also focused on Hakuin through the same hagiographical points of view as Ōsaki or Fukuba did.

This hagiographical tendency also influenced the aesthetic evaluation of Hakuin's art regarded as the symbolic visual icon of the absolute of religious experience. For example, Fukuba believed that the major concern for Zen aesthetics, such as paintings and calligraphy, is to reveal the "religious" which each of the Zen works of art vividly manifests. Thus, for Fukuba, Hakuin's arts are nothing but the

symbolic visualization of his decisive enlightenment experience. This idea of Zen aesthetics is undoubtedly shared with Hisamatsu's insistence that religious experience cultivates aesthetic experience, found in his work, *Zen to Bijutsu*, published in 1958.²⁵⁰ In order to understand this intellectual tendency to view Zen art as the visualization of religious experience, Yoshizawa notes Hisamatsu's evaluation of Hakuin's art compared to that of a Rinzai monk named Sengai Gibon (1750-1837). Hisamatsu writes:

Comparing their respective paintings, the differences in the two artists' styles are evident I think. One senses a great strength permeating Hakuin's works, and they have an immovable solidity about them, like that of a huge rock. In his depictions of Bodhidharma, for example, the First Patriarch has a sense of size, weight and penetrating vigor that is truly remarkable. Hakuin's paintings are profound, penetrating, and large in scale, in addition to which they have a settled, seasoned quality. Sengai's work is light and carefree, open and unrestrained, but it lacks penetration, scale, and the other qualities of Hakuin's art.²⁵¹

Moreover, Yoshizawa states the noted Japanese novelist and poet Okamoto Kanoko's (1888-1939) comments on Hakuin's art:²⁵²

Viewing Hakuin's work, the first thing one senses is the overwhelming power, the vigorous energy that imbues it. Next is the almost living passion with which the master's will is expressed. The tone is one utterly different from the detached, unrestrained quality that typifies most *zenga*. Hakuin's style is an expression of his powerful physique and personality, but it also reflects Hakuin's deep religious view that true life is to be found only in everyday reality and human nature. It is an expression, too, of the ultimate principles of Mahayana Buddhism.... The very force and rawness of Hakuin's work causes some people to regard it as coarse and lacking in tranquility, but that is a matter of personal taste. In my opinion, Hakuin's sketches are among the few Japanese works of recent centuries that match Western drawings in the sense of strength they convey. They remind me of the drawings of Michelangelo, or

²⁵⁰ This work, *Zen to Bijutsu*, was published in 1971 in English with the title, *Zen and The Fine Arts*.

²⁵¹ Yoshizawa, "The Interest in Hakuin's Art" in *Toward a Hakuin Studies*; available from http://iriz.hanazono.ac.jp/frame/k_room_f1a.en.html; Internet; accessed 28 July 2004 and 29 October 2008.

²⁵² Okamoto Kanoko is the mother of a famous Japanese artist, Okamoto Tarō (1911-1996).

(though the use of line is different) of Albrecht Durer or William Blake.²⁵³

This is an impressive statement about the comparison between the art of Hakuin and those of the greatest Western artists, Michelangelo, Durer (1471-1528), and Blake (1757-1827). In fact, Hakuin's art came to be very popular among Westerners, especially during the 1950s. For example, German intellectual Kurt Brasch (1907-1974) published his work titled *Hakuin to zenga* in both German and Japanese in 1957.²⁵⁴ In it, he introduced Hakuin's art to Western art collectors, (and thus, in a sense, introducing Hakuin's Zen to the West). The international interest in Hakuin's art might have resulted from the increasing interest in Zen in the West, the so-called "Zen-boom," in the generations after the Second World War.

It is safe to say that around that time, Hakuin's "name" became known in the West as a result of interest in his art. And it is true that anyone who sees Hakuin's art will get similar impressions as Hisamatsu or Okamoto did. However, while the idea that Hakuin's art represents his religious experience is the dominant understanding in a wider range of intellectual fields, it is important to underscore that Hakuin was an extraordinary artist creating his artwork, which channels his writings—he was first and foremost not an artist, but a religious man as well as a social, political protester.

In the 1960s, Hakuin studies had its major turning point with the development of the critical study of the *Hakuin Nempu*. In Rikukawa's work, *Hakuin oshō shōden*, the most significant contribution can be found in the comparison between the *Nempu* and its original manuscript and also the critical analysis of the *Nempu* regarding its historical reliability and thus Hakuin's historicity. With this reassessment of the

²⁵³ Yoshizawa, "The Interest in Hakuin's Art"; available from http://iriz.hanazono.ac.jp/frame/k_room/fla.en.html; Internet; accessed 28 July 2004 and 30 October 2008. Also this statement can be found in *Hakuin no Zenga: Taishū Zen no bi* (Tokyo: Nichibō shuppansha, 1985), pp. 11-12.

²⁵⁴ This work is published with the German and Japanese together on facing pages. The German version's title is *Hakuin und Die Zen-Malerei* (Tokyo: Japanisch-Deutsche Gesellschaft, 1957).

Nempu, Rikukawa points out some important points that had been overlooked by all previous scholars; the value and purpose that led to the changes in the text, the created images of Hakuin, and the distorted historical facts in Hakuin's historicity. From these perspectives, Rikukawa criticizes the previous interpretations of Hakuin, which had been based solely on the *Nempu*, and he attempts to demonstrate a more appropriate and accurate understanding of Hakuin. Consequently, Rikukawa established the importance of critical analysis of the historical resources on Hakuin.

Rikukawa notes that his work was nothing but the product of his devout attitude to Hakuin as well as to the Rinzai Zen tradition. With this religious pride, Rikukawa, therefore, condemns scholars who regard Hakuin as just an artist or a writer without taking seriously into account Hakuin's historicity and religiosity. In particular, Rikukawa tries to defend the "Hakuin tradition" from the onslaught of the "Zen boom" that spread during the 1950s.²⁵⁵ In later generations, Rikukawa's study of the *Nempu* was advanced by Akiyama and Katō. In the entire history of Hakuin studies, no one has examined the *Nempu*, except for these three scholars.

In the 1980s, Katō published his work, *Hakuin oshō nempu*, a more accurate transcription of the *Nempu* along with his reexamination of it, almost twenty years after Rikukawa's work. Since Rikukawa and Akiyama's studies, Katō attempted to form a more completed version of the *Nempu* by adding new information and modifying inappropriate descriptions. In this study field, it is remarkable that only a few scholars have engaged in reevaluating the *Nempu* (and Hakuin's historicity), even though scholars have been able to gain more and more new information on Hakuin over time. It must be remembered that Katō's work is the newest and most complete version of the *Nempu* today (in fact, as of 2008, there is no superior biography of

²⁵⁵ See *Hakuin oshō shōden*, p. 14.

Hakuin to Katō's work published in 1985). The study of the *Nempu*, therefore, has not developed at all since 1985. For the last three decades, most scholars have been fascinated by Hakuin's art, while some scholars in both the East and West have engaged in translating his writings. While other fields of Hakuin studies have been studied by scholars and intellectuals, the importance and necessity of the study of the *Nempu* has been strikingly overlooked.

From another point of view, the last thirty years is the notable time period in which some scholars began to not only consider Hakuin's art to be the product of his religious experience, but also began to search for the religious meanings and messages hidden in his artwork. In particular, scholars like Yanagida, Katō, and Yoshizawa have examined the religious significance of Hakuin's ink drawings, paintings, and calligraphy, parallel with the considerations of his historical documents, actual writings, and other materials.

Yoshizawa in particular has developed a noteworthy idea that Hakuin's artwork can actually be identified with his *kōans*. That is to say, he applies to Hakuin's art the symbolic value of a visualization of the *kōan*. In a sense, Hakuin's art is a Zen teaching text. Also, it substitutes for the ritual form and performance of practice with "magical" power to bring about a *kenshō* experience or at least to understand Zen doctrine. In short, Hakuin's art has a variety of meanings and roles. Yoshizawa insists that Hakuin's art is nothing but a form of propagation that expresses the essence of Zen. In the study of Hakuin's art since the 1970s, scholars' concerns have been focused on the reevaluation of Hakuin's religiosity through his art.

Parallel with the development of the study of Hakuin's art, many scholars have also been interested in considering Hakuin's writings, (even in the 1960s). Scholars have examined Hakuin's historical and religious accomplishments for the Rinzai tradition (and sect) with a focus on why Hakuin is called the reviver. In this case, these

scholars have considered Hakuin's religious attitudes in regard to his practice and teaching activities, his *kōan* system, and his critique against other popular Buddhist teachings during his lifetime. They have also considered his historicity with a focus on his Dharma lineage in order to discuss its authenticity as a succession from the Sung-period Zen in China. In the processes of these studies, scholars have applied biographical and hagiographical approaches and thus focused on Hakuin's institutional role and functional status in the Rinzai tradition. Hence, with their arguments on the cultural eliteness, religious greatness, and historical significance of Hakuin, scholars have given rise to an "elite Zen establishment."

This cultural/intellectual movement, "elite Zen establishment," applying its own unique biographical, hagiographical analysis, has aimed to establish the historical and religious status and authority of Hakuin within the religious communities as well as the intellectual Zen world. This intellectual movement also advocates the eliteness and authenticity of Hakuin's religious heritage (and line) in the contemporary Rinzai Zen society. The most noteworthy feature of this elite Zen establishment can be found in its absolute exclusiveness and thus the highly constructed images of Hakuin in an intellectual as well as a religious authority-based way. In fact, it seems true that it is only in recent years that doors have opened for reconsidering and criticizing the previous images and interpretations of Hakuin because his status had hitherto been firmly established as the "founder" of the Rinzai tradition, although he has been approached only in the three narrowly constrained visions.

Regarding the insistence on the eliteness, authenticity, and authority of Hakuin, the scholars in the elite Zen establishment have applied their historical analysis to their intellectual construction and reconstruction of the ideas of Hakuin in order to determine his historical and religious status as the reviver of the tradition with an emphasis on experience. Today the dominant tendency of Hakuin studies clearly

shows this intention of the elite Zen establishment.

It must be emphasized, however, that Hakuin was a religious man who made keen observations and criticisms about social injustice and inequality under the influence of the political power/authority of the Tokugawa government. It is imperative to consider how timeless the humane and social issues Hakuin dealt with are. The issues are unchangeable and everlasting in human history, and thus demand new responses for each generation when reading Hakuin. It is crucial to find new interpretations of Hakuin that are appropriate and applicable to our own time.

In this section, I have examined the historical development and shift of intellectual paradigms in Hakuin studies since the beginning of the twentieth century by superimposing chronological approaches onto typological approaches. Let me underline this: the shift of the intellectual paradigms, which plays an important role in the tradition's formation, development, and transmission, can be identified with the shift of people's interest and concerns about how Hakuin should be remembered. Thus, understanding how the purposes of the research projects on Hakuin have changed helps us understand how the tradition has formed, developed, created, and maintained the images of Hakuin over time. Twentieth-century studies of Hakuin started with biographical and hagiographical approaches to the historical Hakuin, and since then the studies have been maintained by a unique intellectual movement: the elite Zen establishment. Hakuin has been examined and reexamined by many scholars and intellectuals through their own unique approaches, but at the same time Hakuin has been used in the creation of the closed, conservative, and elite Rinzai Zen culture. In a sense, the history of the study of Hakuin is a history consisting of the continuity and discontinuity, the remembering and forgetting, and the invention and reinvention, of intellectual paradigms made of and by people's concerns about and interests in constructing a historical Hakuin. It is interesting to explore the new direction of

Hakuin studies, wide open for the twenty-first century.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Incidentally, I have been able to gather only two dissertations on Hakuin, which were written in the U.S. (There are only two in the U.S. at this moment.): Mike Kazuto Sayama's "Mushin, the Highest State of Consciousness in Zen Buddhism (China, Japan)," The University of Michigan, 1982, and Audrey Yoshiko Seo's "Painting-Calligraphy Interactions in the Zen Art of Hakuin Ekaku (1685-1768) (Japan, Edo Period, Buddhism, Poetry)," University of Kansas, 1997.

CHAPTER SIX

HAKUIN AS A SOCIAL CRITIC AND REFORMER: HIS POLITICAL CRITIQUE OF THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE'S ABUSE OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

In this chapter, I explore neglected segments of the writings of Hakuin with a focus on his significant works, *Oniazami*, *Hebiichigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa* (in chronological order). Before I begin this chapter, I want to pin down two points regarding *Hebiichigo*, the work which I have positioned as Hakuin's most political treatise among others and which is the main literary source for my arguments of this Zen figure as a social critic.

First, it is an historical fact that *Hebiichigo* was proscribed from being published and thus even read by the general public after it first appeared in print in 1754. This does not mean that the work has not been conveyed and circulated within the tradition at the level of ecclesiastical authorities within Rinzai Zen. In fact, as is often the case, precisely because a book is banned, its status and cache within the tradition is heightened. The reality we have today is quite opposite to this naïve assumption that a banned book from the Tokugawa period would have disappeared into obscurity. As I have mentioned in earlier chapters, and underscore again here, Hakuin himself created at least three autographed versions (all extant) of this writing, one published version, and one copied version subsequently published. This work *Hebiichigo*, whether it is a handwritten version copied by Hakuin (for safekeeping? posterity? wider dissemination?) or a copy of an autographed copy made by others within the tradition, has been included in a series of collected works of his writings since the end of the nineteenth century. The contemporary Rinzai community knows the continued existence of this work. One might query whether “a tradition can

forget what it never knew.”²⁵⁷ This is not the case with Hakuin’s *Hebiichigo*. The text was extant and its contents and existence were known. In fact, it has been suggested to me that other copies of the text perhaps exist elsewhere in Japan in Shikoku and Gifu prefectures. It is highly likely that these copies of a banned book were highly prized objects within the tradition.

Second, to a politically and historically provincial person living in contemporary democratic societies, Hakuin’s political critiques of the Tokugawa shogunate could appear careful, safe and even by today’s standards conservative in their appeal to the leader to consider his own legacy and the stability of the country in his excesses. In fact, given the dire fate of many who even so much as thought to criticize the shogunate, it is remarkable that Hakuin took the stands he did and apparently worked to see that copies of his “open letter” were preserved within the tradition. If it were so safe to write as he did, why then did Hakuin publish *Hebiichigo* as an anonymous letter? If he were indeed politically conservative, even politically supportive of the state, he would not have needed to hide his name. Last, I should note that it is tempting to regard letters as private communications. Hakuin meant his *Hebiichigo* to be a letter addressed to leaders, but intended for a much wider audience.²⁵⁸

In these writings above mentioned, Hakuin displays a marked critique of authority and its tendency to abuse power and act in a corrupt manner. I demonstrate how a number of scholars have missed this aspect of Hakuin’s work and life because of their traditional interpretations and selective readings of Hakuin. These scholars

²⁵⁷ I am most grateful to Professor Daniel Boucher for raising the specter of this potential misunderstanding of the status of *Hebiichigo* in the Rinzai tradition and helping me to clarify the strong presence of this banned text within the tradition itself.

²⁵⁸ I am most grateful to Professors Kim Haines-Eitzen and Jane Marie Law for their insistence on not regarding letters as solely intended for their addressees and for helping me to see the power of a banned book within a textual community. I look forward to pursuing this topic in my future research on the Genroku era and the explosion of print culture in Japan.

created a religious status and role for Hakuin inside the Zen tradition, especially when Zen started to be revitalized during the latter half of the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). Therefore, I am interested in exploring how Hakuin has been constructed and used in the creation of contemporary conservative, elite Zen culture. Furthermore, I am interested in revealing Hakuin's critique of (as well as moral attitude and social engagement against) political authority, which should be seen as an historically significant issue of the mid-Tokugawa period with ramifications both inside and outside Zen centers. It is wrong to suggest that scholars simply did not know about Hakuin's critiques. His letters to the shogunate were well known, and certainly available to the general reading public even outside ecclesiastical circles after 1898.

I proceed as follows: First, I briefly discuss the dominant interpretations of Hakuin by Zen priest scholars and intellectuals. Second, I discuss the texts used here: *Oniazami*, *Hebiichigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa*. Third, I examine Hakuin's critique of political authority (and his deeply moral attitude and social engagement against political power) found in those writings, and explore why the elite Zen establishment has neglected this political critique in their construction of the almost-iconic Hakuin. I thus provide a reevaluation of the dominant understanding of Hakuin through a critical analysis of the layers of interpretation and reinterpretation through which the image of Hakuin has been modified in the course of the tradition's formative development. In this chapter, by looking at *Hebiichigo* and other works, I hope to open a new reading of this fascinating person, free of the power objectives of those who have been inventing him again and again since the time of his death in 1769.

The Previously Dominant Understandings of Hakuin

The study of Hakuin since the beginning of the twentieth century has been almost exclusively the domain of scholars who have focused on Hakuin as the reviver of the contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition. They have applied their historical analysis within the confines of religious authority to determine the cultural, religious, historical, and literary influences that eventually gave rise to the elite Zen establishment. In order to supplement their historical studies of Hakuin, these scholars of religion, predominantly Buddhist priest scholars and historians, have emphasized the need for more inquiry into the institutional roles and functional status of Hakuin as a symbol of the Rinzai Zen tradition in the ongoing life of religious communities. Although not all were lacking the tools to conduct a critical analysis of the historical Hakuin, they have meticulously preserved the religious status of Hakuin and passed it down from generation to generation through Zen religious centers, with particular emphasis on the religious attitudes Hakuin had towards his practice and the propagation of his teachings. This movement has significantly enhanced the sacred status and authority of Hakuin within Zen communities, and eventually gave rise to the modern elite Zen establishment.

One example in particular illustrates this essentializing of Hakuin's religious status as a way of making him off limits for any critical inquiry. Ōsaki Ryōen (1880-1953), in his work, *Hakuin zenji den* (1905), gives only the particulars of Hakuin's hard practice for himself, strict instruction for students, and impassioned activities to spread teachings to the lay people. Ōsaki writes:

What I had attempted to do was to measure a great man of the religious world through the suspicious lenses of the so-called philosophy or ethics. How dangerous that was. Because a religious man's sayings and actions are entirely based on his faith, he may often go against the criteria and rules of the world, or at times be criticized by scholars. However, we must know that it is imprudent to merely rely on the evaluation of scholars in trying to

determine the true value of the man of virtue of the past.²⁵⁹

Furthermore, he warns, “Anyone who wishes to portray Hakuin must, at least also be a prominent man who can come up to the tip of his nose. A dullard, how would I dare undertake this task?”²⁶⁰ These statements imply the conservative, closed field of the study of Hakuin in the early twentieth century, and it is sure that this position has been framing the foundational ground of the studies of Hakuin even today. Ōsaki and others like him, by taking Hakuin’s religiosity as both a starting and ending point, have denied his historicity. In understanding Hakuin with a focus on his religious attitudes, he demands that people who describe Hakuin should stand at the same level as Hakuin. This, otherwise, indicates that there is no right to give descriptions of this great Zen master Hakuin to which the Japanese Rinzai Zen has given birth. Given that Hakuin is rightly regarded as one of the most brilliant and unusual talents of Japanese Buddhist history, few would venture to step up to the plate. There is no denying that such a conservative tendency has long brought the fact that Hakuin has largely remained untouched. In fact, such a conservative and close understanding of Hakuin has naturally forgotten other sides of Hakuin. The elite Zen establishment has overlooked or even repressed Hakuin’s political critique and plea for social justice in the face of the power and authority of the Tokugawa shogunate.

Fukuba Hoshū (1896-1943), in his work, *Hakuin* (1941), also provides the religious attitudes of Hakuin in his biographical sketch, particularly with a focus on his hard training, earnest propagation activities, and the importance of achieving enlightenment (*kenshō* or *satori*) with *kōan*.²⁶¹ Interestingly, both Ōsaki and Fukuba

²⁵⁹ Ryōen Ōsaki, *Hakuin zenji den* (Tokyo: Bunmeidō, 1905), p. 1. This statement is included in the preface of the work. The translation is mine.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2. This statement is also included in Ōsaki’s preface. The translation is mine.

²⁶¹ *Kōan* are the stories that help Zen practitioners focus on their own practice and help bring about insight and enlightenment.

emphasize Hakuin's Dharma lineage as directly traceable back to the Zen religious tradition of the Sung period in China, to Bodhidharma, and to the Buddha, Śakyamuni. Also, they underline the fact that all priests in Rinzai Zen today are direct disciples of Hakuin and belong to the same Dharma lineage. They insist that Hakuin is the only authentic element in the Rinzai Zen tradition. Furthermore, they consider Rinzai Zen to be superior to other sects of Buddhism.

Any cursory look at the Hakuin lineage, however, shows considerable revisions and creative inventions. One must ask what Ōsaki and Fukuba were trying to accomplish with Hakuin by grounding their studies in the claim to an unbroken lineage. This parallels a similar mechanism of tradition legitimation seen in Japanese claims about the unbroken imperial line and also in what John McRae calls the "string of pearls fallacy" published as "the history of early Ch'an." The twentieth century has more than enough evidence about the directions such claims can go.

Kamata Shigeo (1927-2001), in his work, *Hakuin* (1977), translated Hakuin's three major works, *Yasenkanna*, *Oradegama*, and *Yabukōji*, into modern Japanese with full annotation. In his biographical reflection, while he focuses on Hakuin as the reviver of Rinzai Zen, he highlights Hakuin's accomplishments of succeeding the "traditional" form of Zen in the Sung period in China, adjusting it to the cultural reality of Japan in those days, and establishing his unique Zen system. In particular, Kamata emphasizes the *kōan* system which Hakuin created, based on his most famous *kōan* called *Sekishu no onjō*, or "the sound of one hand clapping."²⁶² For Kamata, these are nothing but Hakuin's contribution to contemporary Japanese Zen, which is "Zen's japanization."

²⁶² It should be noted here that there are some grounds for doubting that Hakuin was the creator of the present *kōan* system. It is more appropriate to say that this system was later organized by Inzan Ien (1751-1814) and Takujū Kosen (1760-1833), who were the direct disciples of Gasan Jitō (1727-1797), who himself was a direct disciple of Hakuin. However, it is a fact that Hakuin created his *kōan* "sekishu." This issue of the *kōan* system is discussed in Chapter 1.

Yanagida Seizan (1922-2006), in his works, *Rinzai no kafū* and *Zen no jidai*, written in 1967 and 1987 respectively, focuses on the significance of the establishment of Hakuin's *kōan* system in Japanese Zen history. Yanagida gives us three reasons as to why the created *kōan* system is important. First, the *kōan* "Sekishu" was the easier way to achieve Enlightenment for Japanese because it was written in the Japanese *kana* script. It was hard to understand *kōan* written in Chinese. Second, it enabled the *kōan*-Zen tradition from the Sung period in China to be continued in Tokugawa Japan. Third, it criticized the Zen movements popular in those days, which insisted on "Do-nothing Zen" and "Silent-illumination Zen,"²⁶³ and which denied the importance of the *kōan* study. Hence, Hakuin's *kōan* system was the result of his critique against the stagnation and decline of the Zen tradition inside and outside Japan in his own time. For Yanagida, this is why Hakuin is called in Japanese "*gohyaku nenkan shutsu*," which means "a person who appears only once in five hundred years."²⁶⁴ Observing the art of such a great Japanese Zen master, he analyzes it as something to make anyone shudder at the terrible feeling of hell.

In contrast to these examples mentioned above, some scholars have criticized traditional interpretations of Hakuin. In particular, two scholars, Rikukawa Taiun and Akiyama Kanji, especially in the 1960s and 1980s respectively, examined the traditionally constructed images of Hakuin. Although they did not come to change the interpretations of Hakuin in the elite Zen establishment, they did open the way for critical studies of Hakuin.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ I refer to Norman Waddell's translation found in his work, *Wild Ivy* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999).

²⁶⁴ In foreign countries as well, two major scholars have made great contributions to today's Hakuin studies. One is Philip B. Yampolsky who translated Hakuin's three works, *Oradegama*, *Yabukōji*, and *Hebiichigo*, into English. The other is Waddell, who has published *Wild Ivy* and *Yasenkanna*. Both of these scholars paid attention to what Hakuin wrote.

²⁶⁵ For more information of these two scholars, see Chapter 4.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the elite Zen establishment has focused on Hakuin's hard practice, strict instruction, enthusiastic propagation activities, and *kōan* system, with particular emphasis on his institutional roles and functional status in Zen religious communities. Additionally, the elite Zen establishment has insisted that Hakuin's idea of "Hell and its terrors" developed in his childhood and is the reason he became a Zen priest. While arguably religious people at Zen institutions might want to focus on the religious life of Hakuin, this approach also strongly suggests that criticizing Hakuin is paramount to criticizing the tenets of the Rinzai Zen tradition itself, and the work of these scholars had everything to do with protecting that elite cultural world. Hence, Zen authorities inside the tradition have not accepted other images of Hakuin as "authentic." In this sense, vis-à-vis its institutional rivals in Buddhist circles and its business target of the lay, the elite Zen establishment has aggrandized Hakuin to bolster its own authority, authenticity, and legitimacy out of which the tradition's self-definition is generated.

While the elite Zen establishment has become a pervasive and enduring movement for producing images and understandings of Hakuin in the contemporary Rinzai Zen tradition, I have become keenly aware of the tremendous retention of seemingly outdated interpretations inside the tradition versus the more progressive, creative, meaningful interpretations of Hakuin outside the tradition at present. In constructing the images of Hakuin, the elite Zen establishment has lacked thus far a significant interpretation of Hakuin that is relevant for today. This observation has been made all the more apparent to me in the past few years when, as a person within the Zen tradition, I think about the meanings of the outbreak of the Iraq War and its endless collateral conflicts as well as its undetermined consequences, and other incidents of violence such as the endless suicide-bombs and the extreme

poverty around the world. As of July 2008, later U.S. President-elect Barack Obama proposed his future vision to withdraw most U.S. combat troops from Iraq by 2010 and to commit more troops to Afghanistan. As the everyday news related to conflict, war, and poverty seems to be the fashion today, I ask, “What would Hakuin do?” In fact, recent days are full of the news about Israeli’s air strikes on Gaza. To begin such a discussion, we can look at Hakuin’s critique of political authority as well as his subservient moral attitude and social engagement in his works, *Oniazami*, *Hebiichigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa*.

Hakuin’s Political Writings: Oniazami, Hebiichigo, Kabezoshō, and Sashimogusa.

1. *Oniazami* (“Horse Thistles,” 1751)

There are two versions of *Oniazami*: a) an autographed manuscript, or “*jihitsu shin’pon*,” currently preserved in the Eisei-bunko Museum in Tokyo²⁶⁶ and b) a published version of an autographed manuscript, or “*jihitsu kokuhon*,” currently preserved in the Matsugaoka Bunko in Kamakura. The former version is a one-volume text, while the latter consists of two volumes (Part 1 and Part 2), the contents of which are completely unrelated to each other and independent—regarding this version, Part 1 is only the one I refer to in this section.²⁶⁷ Besides these two manuscripts, there is a reprinted version of a published version of a manuscript, which I had identified as the “Hanazono” version. This version was re-

²⁶⁶ During the period of my archival research from February to March 2008 in Japan, I was able to gain access to the Eisei-bunko-versions of Hakuin’s original writings, *Oniazami* (“Horse Thistles,” 1751) and *Hebiichigo* (“Snake Strawberries,” 1754). Because photographing all of the pages of each of these manuscripts was prohibited in the museum, they allowed me to have copies or printed out versions of every single page of each text and to take pictures of important parts which clearly show Hakuin’s political criticism in question and which I find fascinating when they are compared to other different versions of the texts.

²⁶⁷ Regarding this Part 2, Yoshizawa has noted that the whereabouts of the published version of an autographed manuscript is unclear (see his “*Oniazami*” in vol.2 *Hakuin zenji hōgo zenshū*, 1999, p. 341), but I have found it at the Matsugaoka Bunko.

woodblocked and reproduced through a project called “*Hakuin zenji jihitsu kokuhon shūsei*,” or “*A Collection of Woodblock-Printed Reproductions of Zen Master Hakuin’s Facsimile Holograph Editions*,” conducted by the Zenbunka Kenkyūjo in Kyoto between 1995-2002. I have found out that this version is the exactly same as the Matsugaoka version, and therefore, through this dissertation, I limit myself to only introducing this Hanazono version, and I will be otherwise referring to the Matsugaoka version. This condition is applied to other texts such as *Hebiichigo* and *Sashimogusa*. In short, regarding *Oniazami*, I refer to the Eisei-bunko museum version and the Matsugaoka Bunko version.²⁶⁸

On one hand, regarding the Eisei-bunko museum version (one volume), there are lines at the beginning and the end of the work as follows, respectively:

鬼薊 於仁安佐美
 沙羅樹下 白隱老衲慧鶴稽首作礼上書於
 宝鏡光照兩宮簾下近侍蒲右草稿

惟時 寬延第四辛未曆仲秋三五ノ佳辰
 沙羅樹下白隱老衲慧鶴稽首作礼上書於
 淨藏淨眼二大士兩宮簾下近侍左右草稿

²⁶⁸ Yoshizawa has not made it clear about the original text to which the Hanazono version of *Oniazami* refers in its reproduction project, and this has been the same in the case of *Hebiichigo*. Most interestingly, what I had identified as the “Hanazono versions” of *Oniazami* and *Hebiichigo* are the exactly same as the one preserved at the Matsugaoka. Therefore, I will be referring to the Matsugaoka versions for those texts throughout this dissertation. In the same reason, I will also use the Matsugaoka version of *Sashimogusa*.

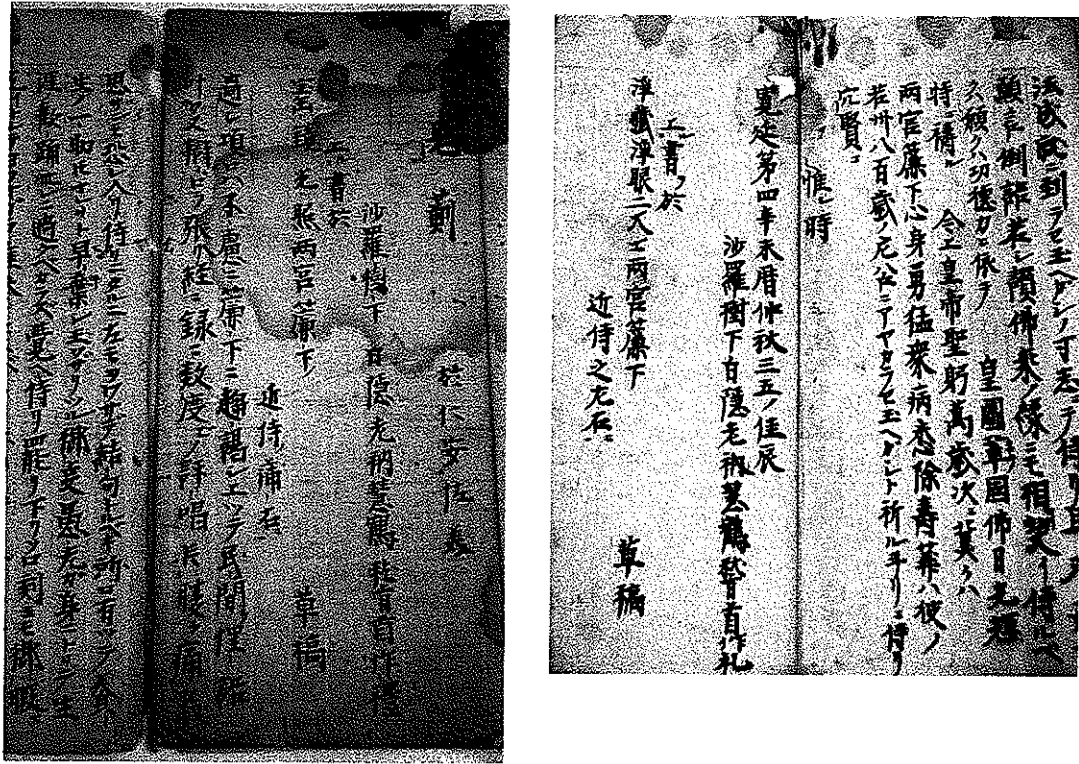


Figure 15: An Autographed Version of *Oniazami*²⁶⁹

Regarding the Matsugaoka Bunko version, on the other hand, there are lines at the beginning and the end of the work as follows, respectively:

於仁安佐美 卷之上
 沙羅樹下白隱老衲稽首禮上書淨藏淨眼二大士兩宮簾下近侍左右 草稿

惟時 寛延第四辛未之曆 仲秋三五之佳辰
 沙羅樹下晚進參徒禪守謹寫 不二野老焉
 於仁安佐美終

²⁶⁹ This text is preserved in the Eisei-bunko Museum; photographed on March 4, 2008.

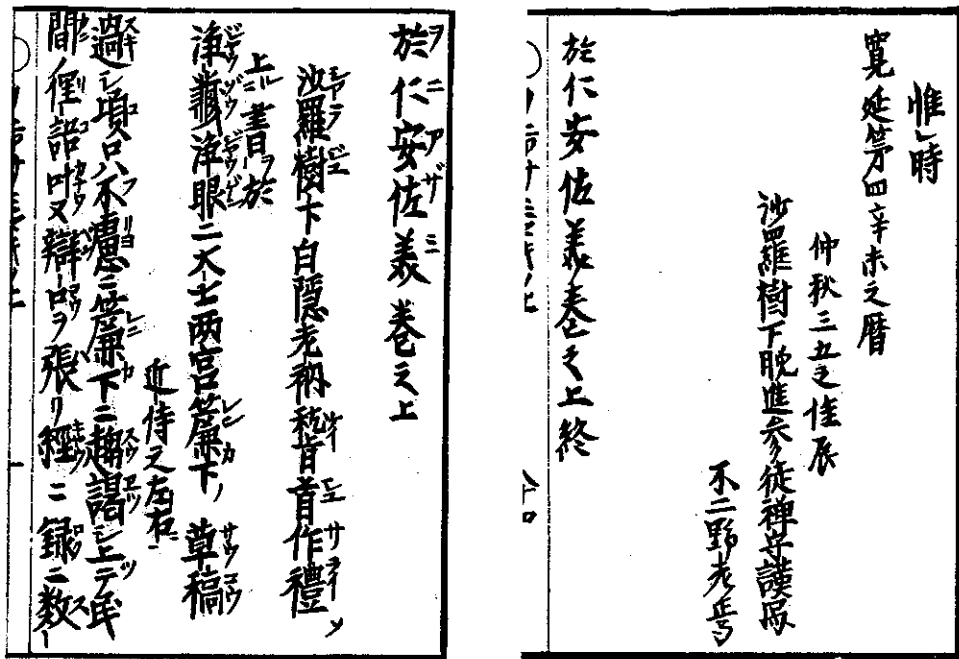


Figure 16: A Published Version of *Oniazami*²⁷⁰

Through these lines mentioned above, there is some important information to be pointed out. First, Hakuin wrote *Oniazami* on August 15, 1751, at the age of sixty-seven. In the Matsugaoka version, it says that a person called Zenshu, identified as a Hakuin's disciple, copied this work. However, it is the case that the name Zenshu is just an assumed name and Hakuin just pretends to be the man because it is clear that the original letters are in Hakuin's handwriting. On the other hand, the Eisei-bunko version shows that Hakuin wrote *Oniazami*.

Second, Hakuin wrote *Oniazami* specifically to two highly-ranked persons: Jōshōmyōin no miya (1725-1764) of the Hōkyōji monzeki Imperial Buddhist Convent and Jōmyōshin no miya (1730-1789) of the Kōshōin monzeki Imperial Buddhist Convent, both daughters of Emperor Nakamikado (1701-1737). When

²⁷⁰ This text is preserved in Ryūunji, Tokyo.

Hakuin wrote *Oniazami*, these two imperial princesses, Jōshōmyōin no miya and Jōmyōshin no miya, are respectively twenty-seven and thirty-two years old.²⁷¹

Hakuin maintained a good relationship with these two imperial princesses even after sending to them *Oniazami* with his frank advice about their everyday lifestyle. In *Oniazami*, Hakuin primarily condemns the luxurious lifestyle of political elites like daimyō, for example, carry on with extravagant parties with many mistresses, on one hand, and who exact annual tributes from farmers, on the other hand. Besides such a keen observation of reality, it is remarkable that he extends his social and moral criticism to the lifestyle of the imperial household, which will be shown in detail in relation to other texts in the next section.

2. *Hebiichigo* (“Snake Strawberries,” 1754)

There are four extant version of *Hebiichigo* at this moment. The four extant versions are three autographed manuscripts (the version of the Eisei-bunko Museum, Shōinji, and Kiichiji)²⁷² and one published version of an autographed manuscript (the Matsugaoka version). Here again, what I had identified as the “Hanazono” version is the exactly same as the Matsugaoka, and therefore, I use the latter version through my dissertation. While the Eisei-bunko and Kiichiji versions are each one volume, the Matsugaoka version consists of two volumes. The Shōinji version was originally two volumes, but only the first volume is preserved in the temple.²⁷³

²⁷¹ *Tankai* (“A Sea of Stories”), the collection of essays compiled by Tsumura Sōan (1736-1806) at the end of the eighteenth century, includes an account of Hakuin’s meeting with these princesses. For more information, see *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Sanichi shobō, 1969), pp. 183-84. Also the collection of Hakuin’s works called *Hakuin oshō zenshu* published in 1935, includes a letter entitled *Ginshuzo ni atau*, or “a letter given to Gin practitioner,” which contains the lines showing Hakuin’s later relation to those imperial princesses.

²⁷² It is interesting to point out here that there are three different autographed versions of *Hebiichigo*. I have been able to access to all the versions of it. Both Shōinji and Kiichiji are located in Shizuoka Prefecture.

²⁷³ Philip Yampolsky used the Shōinji version to produce his English translation (1971), based on the transcription made by Tokiwa Daijō (1938). They used both of the two volumes of the Shōinji version of *Hebiichigo*. Today the whereabouts of the second volume is unclear.

It is very interesting to note that the published version is much rarer than the other three simple autographed manuscripts, given the fact that *Hebiichigo* was banned from being published by political authorities soon after its publication. There is also a copied version of *Hebiichigo*, published in 1862, but not copied by Hakuin, the version having been labeled as the Kōunji version, consisting of two volumes.²⁷⁴

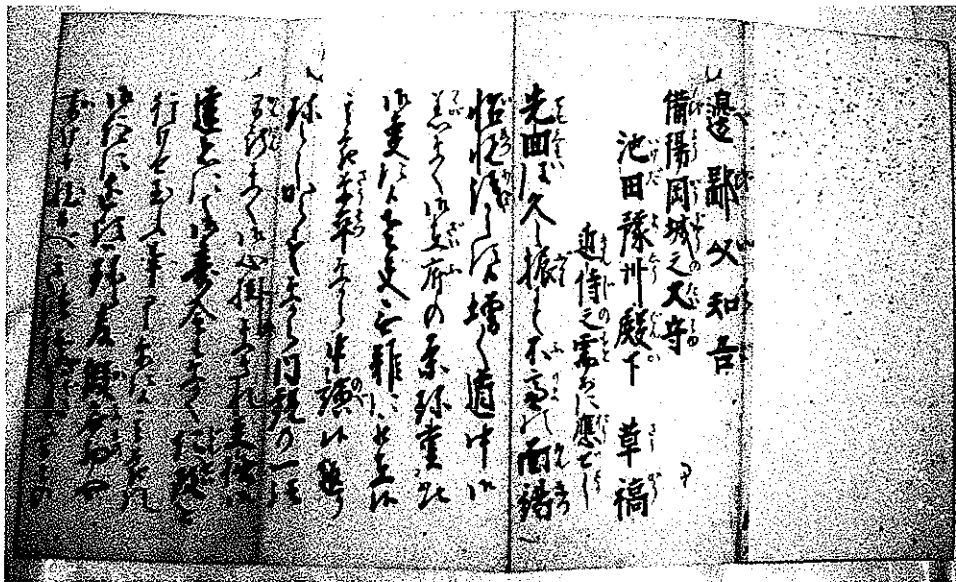


Figure 17: *Hebiichigo* (Autographed Version)²⁷⁵

The Figure 17 above is the Eisei-bunko version of *Hebiichigo*. This text says at its beginning and end as follows, respectively:

邊鄙以知吾
備陽岡城之大守 池田豫州殿下 近侍之需めに應ぜし草稿

惟時 寶曆第四甲戌歳抄夏二十五日 沙羅樹下白隱老衲

²⁷⁴ This version was copied by a person named Mitani Shigeo, with the preface by a Confucian Tatsuoka Chinto and the postscript by a person named Shaku Nina.

²⁷⁵ This text is preserved in the Eisei-bunko Museum; photographed on March 4, 2008.

The Kiichiji version says in its beginning and end as follows, respectively:

邊鄙以知吾

何某國何某城之大守 何某氏何某侯之殿下 近侍の需に應ぜし草稿

惟時 寶曆第四甲戌歲抄夏佳辰



Figure 18: *Hebiichigo* (Autographed Version)²⁷⁶

The Shōinji version says at its beginning and end as follows, respectively:

邊鄙以知吾 卷之上

備之前州岡山城之大守 池田伊豫守殿閣下 近侍の需めに應ぜし草稿

邊鄙以知吾卷之上終

²⁷⁶ This text is preserved in Kiichiji, Shizuoka; photographed at the Undaiban, the Japanese book, scroll, and antiquarian book-restoring company, in Kyoto on February 27, 2008.

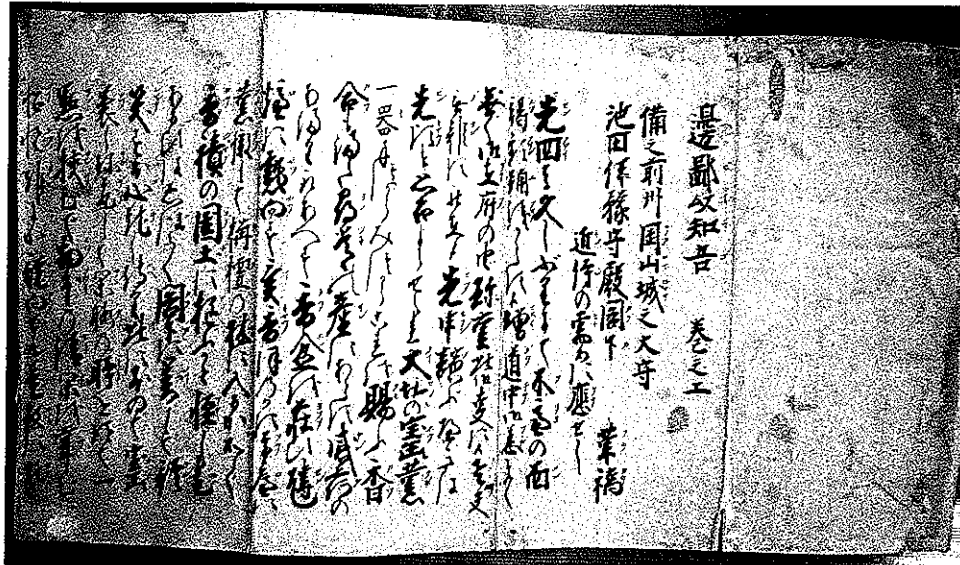


Figure 19: *Hebiichigo* (Autographed Version)²⁷⁷

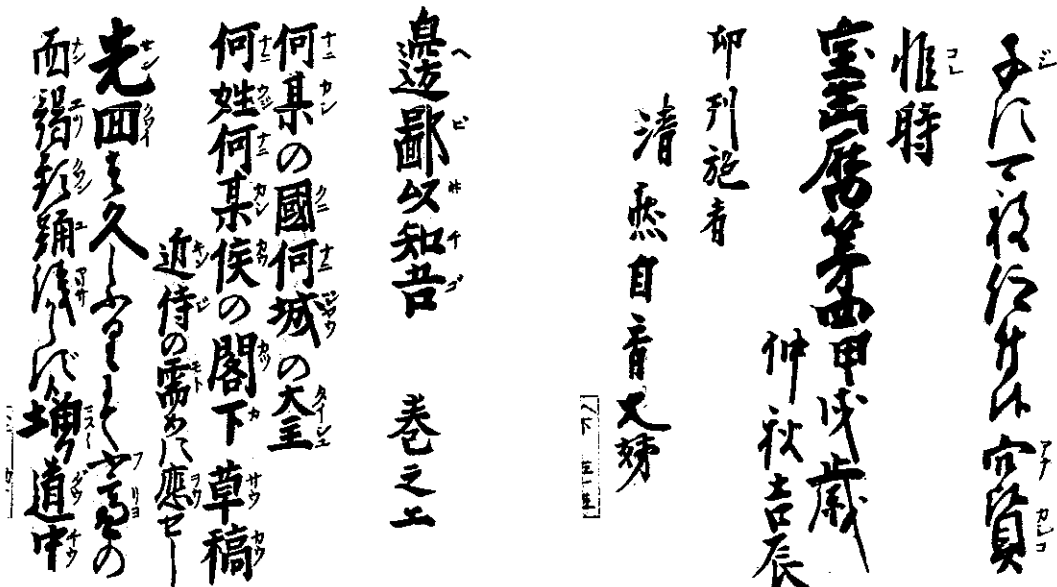


Figure 20: *Hebiichigo* (Published Version)²⁷⁸

The Matsugaoka version above (shown in Figure 20) says at its beginning and end as follows, respectively:

²⁷⁷ This text is preserved in Shōinji, Shizuoka; photographed on March 3, 2008.

²⁷⁸ This text is preserved in Ryūunji.

邊鄙以知吾 卷之上
何某の國何城の大主 何姓何某侯の閣下 近侍の需めに應ぜし草稿

惟時 寶曆第四甲戌歲仲秋吉辰

印刊施者 清然自香大姉

From the information above, there are several important points to be noted. First, Hakuin wrote *Hebiichigo* in 1754 at the age of seventy. Presumably, he wrote it at Shōinji, his main temple. Second, Hakuin primarily wrote *Hebiichigo* and send it to Ikeda Tsugumasa (1702-1776), the fifth lord of the Okayama Clan.²⁷⁹ Although this fact is primarily supported by the lines described in the Eisei-bunko and Shōinji versions, the lines described in the Kiichiji and Matsugaoka versions do not demonstrate this information, i.e., “at the request of a retainer close to His Honor Daimyo So-and-So, of Such-and-Such Castle in Such-and-Such Domain.” Regarding this point, Yoshizawa used the former versions to determine the specific intended audience of *Hebiichigo* that Hakuin indicated, at the risk of completely ignoring the role of the writing as “blind mail.” I argue that this “blind mail” serves as an indicator of a wider range of general audience that Hakuin is actually looking for. The intended audience should not be limited only to the Lord Ikeda or the Ikeda family, but to other political elites and governmental officials as well.

²⁷⁹ The essay, *Tankai*, or “A Sea of Stories,” contains an account of Hakuin’s meetings with the Lord Ikeda Tsugumasa. It tells us that the Lord Ikeda always visited Hakuin on the way of his *sankin kōtai* to and from Edo. For more information, see *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei*, vol. 8, p. 184. Yampolsky positions Hakuin’s intended audience of *Hebiichigo* as the Lord Ikeda Munemasa, who is the son of Tsugumasa. This view should be re-evaluated. In *Hebiichigo*, there is a line saying that Hakuin met the Lord Ikeda Tsugumasa at Kokuseiji in Okayama in 1751, which fact is supported by the entry of the *Nempu* at the age of 67 in 1751, which notes that Hakuin made a visit to Okayama this year. Further, the first line of *Hebiichigo* includes a description of Hakuin’s last meeting with Tsugumasa, which was an “unexpected meeting” after a long time. This description clearly indicates Hakuin’s meeting with Tsugumasa after their meeting in Okayama. Precisely because it is in 1752 that Tsugumasa retired, this clarifies the fact that *Hebiichigo* was written not to Munemasa, but Tsugumasa.

Third, because *Hebiichigo* was banned from being published by government authorities, the published version is very rare. Regarding this point, the question of who published it (one of the published versions which is still extant and which I have labeled the Matsugaoka version) is very interesting. The manuscript contains as its publisher the woman's posthumous name, *Seizen jikō daishi*. However, at this moment it is unclear about who she was.

Last, then, some information concerning the ban on the publication of *Hebiichigo* must be noted. There are three possible reasons for the prohibition: 1) it refers to the Divine Ruler's *Legacy*, that is to say, the Tokugawa shogunate founder Ieyasu's *Tōshōgū goikun* (lit. the "Legacy of Tōshōgū"), 2) it criticizes the daimyō's lifestyle, and 3) it criticizes the *sankin kōtai* system. At least, *Hebiichigo* was recorded in the June, 1755 section of the *Kyoto shorin gyōjikamigumi shoshōmon hyōmoku* (lit., the "Catalogue of Various Top Documents of Kamigumi Events in Kyoto Bookstore") in the archive entitled *Kyoto shorin nakama kiroku* (lit., the "Record in Kyoto Bookstore Companies"), as follows:

辺鄙以知吾に付、吉田三郎左衛門殿より取之一通、
Regarding *Hebiichigo*, withdraw one copy of this from Yoshida Saburōzaemon,

同、田原重左衛門殿より取之一通、
Ditto, withdraw one copy of this from Tahara Shigezaemon,

同、吉田三郎左衛門殿より取之一通、
Ditto, withdraw one copy of this from Yoshida Saburōzaemon.

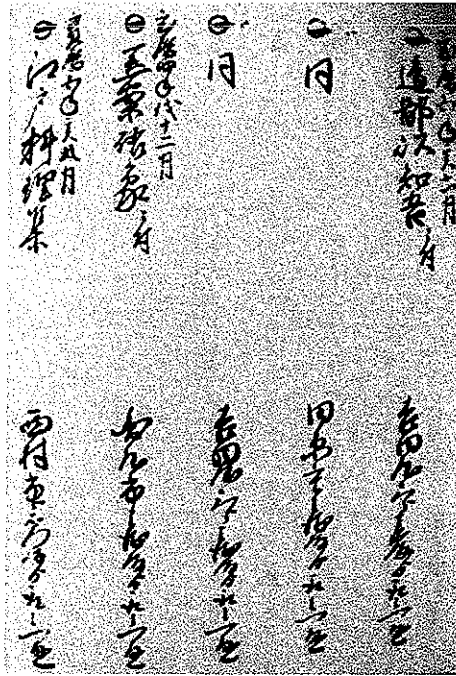


Figure 21: Possible Records of *Hebiichigo*'s Withdrawal²⁸⁰

Because the archive does not give a clear explanation of what the section, which includes the name of *Hebiichigo*, is, therefore, the information mentioned above is basically unclear as to what it is indicating. It might be information concerning the withdrawal of *Hebiichigo* from these three people. While this is the record as of June, 1755, and *Hebiichigo* was written in the summer or fall of 1754, the withdrawal was a quick process. In 1771, two years after Hakuin's death and seventeen years after the first publication of *Hebiichigo*, the book titled *Kinsho mokuroku* (lit., the "Catalogue of Prohibited Writings") includes the section of the *Zenppan no bu* (lit., the "Section of Out of Print") which contains the name of *Hebiichigo*.

²⁸⁰ Munemasa, Gojuo and Naohiko Asakura, eds, "Kyoto shorin nakama kiroku" vol. 4, *Shoshi shomoku series 5* (Tokyo: Yumani shobo, 1977), p. 32.

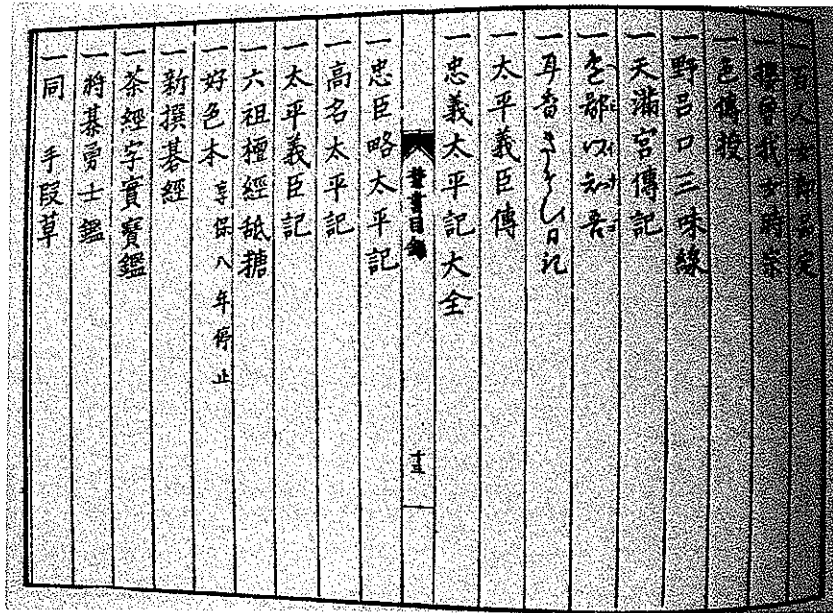


Figure 22: *Hebiichigo* listed in the “Out of Print Section”²⁸¹

About hundred years after the first publication of *Hebiichigo*, in 1862, a copied version of *Hebiichigo* was published. This reveals a possibility of the covert transmission of Hakuin’s political treatise, *Hebiichigo*, knowing the very fact that we have now an extant published version of it. It is interesting to see a very unusual and insincere event, which this rich text in history has caused today, that people reprinted, re-woodblocked, reproduced, and kept it as a tradition’s treasure which transmits the teaching legacy of Hakuin.

3. *Kabezoshō* (“Mutterings to the Wall,” 1759)

According to explanations noted in the collection, *Hakuin oshō zenshū*, the text, *Kabezoshō*, used there was the copied version (by hand) made by Furukawa

²⁸¹ Nagasawa, Kikuya and Ryuichi Abe, eds., *Nihon shomoku taisei*, vol.4, (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1975), p. 215.

Gyōdō, a previous Zen master of Engakuji in Kamakura, who depended on the autographed manuscript preserved in Kankōji in Niigata.²⁸² Regarding this point, on one hand, Rikukawa Taiun, in his work *Hakuin oshō shōden*, mentions that the original manuscript of *Kabezoshō* is housed in the temple. Yoshizawa, on the other hand, notes that the whereabouts of this text is completely unclear. In contrast to the obscure status of this information, however, the temple has clearly announced to me that neither Furukawa's copy nor the original hand-written manuscript of *Kabezoshō* exists in the temple.

Hakuin wrote *Kabezoshō* around the days of the New Year of 1759, at the age of seventy-five. Although the text does not give any specific information of the date when it was written, it does refer to the then bailiff of Mishima, Ina Hanzaemon Tadaoki (1729-1772), whose righteous politics Hakuin admired and to whom Hakuin gave his New Year's greeting in the text. The term of office of this bailiff was from September, 1758 to May, 1759, and therefore, these data clearly lead to the answer of when *Kabezoshō* was written. In previous studies of Hakuin, while Rikukwa positioned without any reason or evidence that the work was written in 1748 at the age of sixty-four, Tokiwa Gishin considered that it was written on the New Year's Day of 1759. Yoshizawa has agreed with Tokiwa's position.

Kabezoshō explains that the essential cause of riots by farmers does not lie with the farmers at all, but with the luxurious lifestyles of political elites and their devilish treatment of the farmers and their levy of annual tributes, which, even in the time of famine, are not rare at all, as *Hebiichigo* also points out as a main argument. In the related context, the text also condemns the Buddhist priests who deceive farmers into refraining from their riots, and who actually conspire together with

²⁸² I contacted the temple last summer and asked whether they have this autographed version of the text or Furukawa's hand-written copy of the text. However, they do not have either one. As Yoshizawa also points out, the whereabouts of this text is unclear.

village officials to find the ringleaders of the riots. Needless to say, those ringleaders are executed. This shows the highest peak of Hakuin’s strong anti-elite social and moral criticisms.

4. *Sashimogusa* (“Artemisia,” or “Moxa,” 1760)

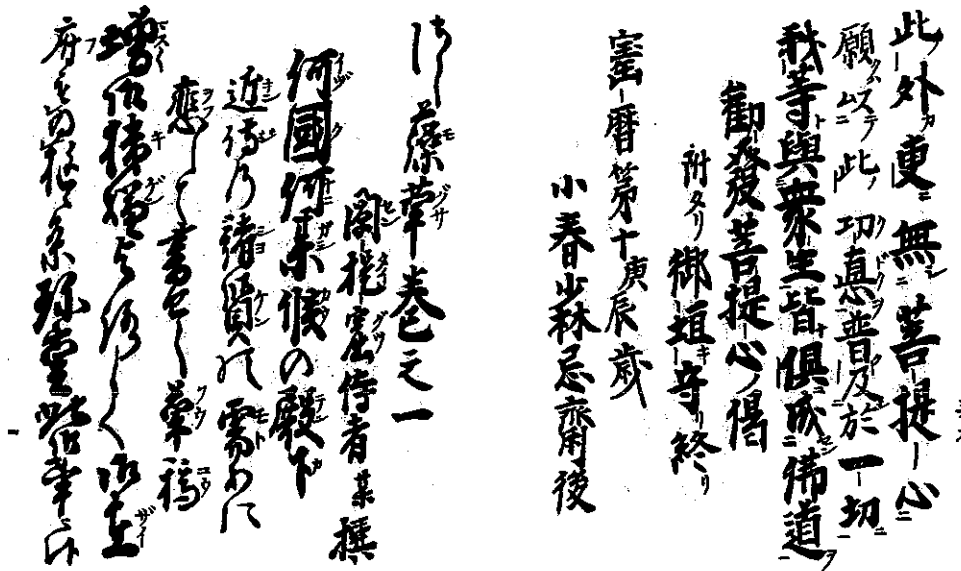


Figure 23: *Sashimogusa*²⁸³

The work, *Sashimogusa*, consists of three parts: *Sashimogusa Part One*, *Sashimogusa Part Two*, and *Kanhotsubo bodaishin no ge: tsuketari Mikakimori* (hereafter, *Mikakimori*) between the two. The published version of a manuscript, preserved in the Matsugaoka, does not include the publication date; however, the *Mikakimori* includes at its end the following information: “寶曆第十庚辰歲 小春 小林忌齋後.” That is to say, this work was written at least in the spring of 1760. It takes the form of a letter addressed to a certain daimyō. Although we do not know exactly who this daimyō is, a variant of the letter, the *Seikidō* manuscript, records

²⁸³ This text is preserved in Ryūunji.

the recipient as “His Highness Daimyō So-and-So in Kyushu” as shown in the figure 26.²⁸⁴

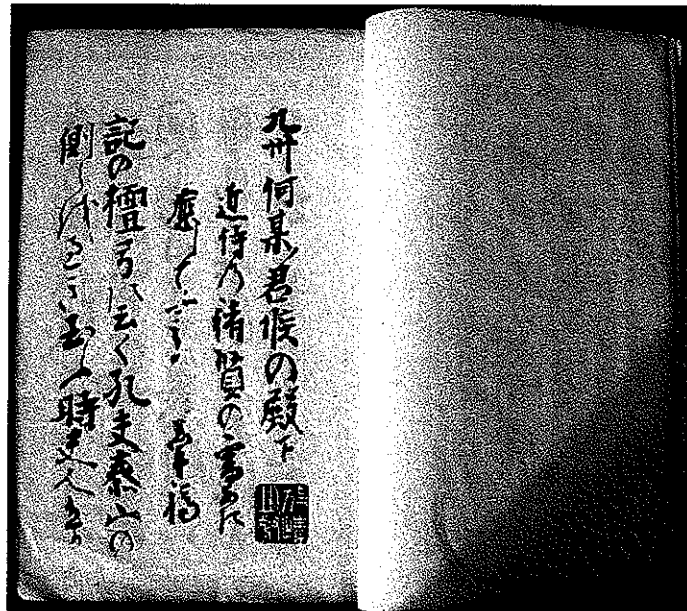


Figure 24: Seikido Version of *Sashimogusa*²⁸⁵

The Kyushu daimyō with whom Hakuin had close relations was Nabeshima Naotsune (1702-1749), the fourth daimyō of the Hizen Hasunoike clan and the recipient of Hakuin’s *Oradegama Part One*, who died at the age of forty-nine in Edo.²⁸⁶ Regarding this point, although it is still conjecture, it may be said that *Sashimogusa* was written and sent to the Lord Nabeshima.²⁸⁷ Here again, however, we should not limit the intended audience of this work exclusively, given the fact

²⁸⁴ The text starts with the description: “a manuscript composed at the request of some sages close to His Highness Daimyō So-and-So in Kyushu.” The translation is mine.

²⁸⁵ Author owns this manuscript.

²⁸⁶ Hakuin’s work, *Keisōdo kuzui* includes his poem in honor of the late Nabeshima, in the opportunity when the Nabeshima’s remains were moved back to his domain, passing through Hara where Hakuin lived.

²⁸⁷ If I follow this position, I then have to see a contradictory circumstance—Nabeshima’s death in 1749; *Sashimogusa*’s publication in 1760, if the all of the three components of the text were published at the same time.

that the manuscript takes the form of an unknown recipient, as we have also seen in some versions of *Hebiichigo*, which possibly reflects Hakuin's intention of a wider range of recipients: "a manuscript composed at the request of some sages close to His Highness Daimyō So-and-So in Such-and-Such Province." *Sashimogusa*, especially *Part One*, is in places virtually identical with *Hebiichigo*. This means Hakuin's continuing or extending effort to convey his social, political criticism of power and authority is addressed in the *Hebiichigo*. As I have shown, the criticism in question here is not at all an isolated work in his literature.

Hakuin as a Social Critic and Reformer: Hebiichigo

Hakuin wrote *Hebiichigo* in 1754 at the age of seventy.²⁸⁸ The work is actually a letter Hakuin wrote to the daimyō, Ikeda Tsugumasa (1702-1776) of Okayama castle, urging him to implement just policies for farmers, based on his keen observations of social as well as political conditions in those days. Moreover, he criticized as meaningless the Tokugawa government's policy of *sankin-kōtai*, which forced rulers to visit the capital of Edo once every two years and leave family members there permanently. In this letter, while Hakuin urges the daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) to restrain his luxurious lifestyle and to conduct righteous politics, he condemns political authority. He writes:

You, my lord, in your ruling of your land and protection of your domains—be it for a hundred years, be it for fifty years—must be very circumspect and recognize that the essence of virtuous action is to forbid luxury, regulate extravagant expenditures, and, when you have a surplus, to use it for the benefit of the farmers. When you read the ancient honored texts and

²⁸⁸ There are in total four extant versions of *Hebiichigo* today: the Shōinji, the Eisei-bunko Museum, the Kiichiji, and the Matsugaoka versions. Here I refer to the Shōinji version, which has been translated by Philip Yampolsky, who based his translation on the annotated transcription by Tokiwa Daijō in 1938. There is considerable variation among the four texts. In my future work, I will plan to conduct a comparative study of these four versions in which I examine the similarities and differences in order to shed light on the development of *Hebiichigo*.

writings, all speak of the Kingly Way as being of first importance. If it does not discuss the Kingly Way it is not an honored text. If you inquire into what the principal message of this Kingly Way is, it is nothing more than to give priority to dispensing benevolence, to rescue the common people with compassion, and thus to govern your domain. In the world of today dispensing benevolence and succoring the common people require no methods other than to forbid luxury, regulate excessive expenditures and, to touch upon a rather difficult subject these days, to reduce the number of women in the inner chambers, and to simplify all matters in general.²⁸⁹

Moreover, he states:

I hear from time to time of various easygoing lords who pay out sums of from three hundred to five hundred pieces of gold to buy singing and dancing girls or other so-called women of pleasure from the Kyoto area. They amuse themselves with them for two or three years and then exchange them for other girls, much as they would fans or pipes. There are reports that in some households one third of the total expenses go for the needs of the women's quarters. This does not matter so much for a house blessed with a splendid fortune, and possessing an overflow of wealth, but very frequently people not so well provided for will pile up two thousand *ryō* of debts on an income of a thousand *koku*, twenty thousand *ryō* of debts on an income of ten thousand *koku*. Then they will ignore, impoverish, and bring suffering to their hereditary retainers, whose duty it is, when an emergency arises, to ward off the flying arrows and sacrifice their very bones and flesh for their lord. In a time of need these lords will expend their money on people who are unfit even to carry a raincoat box. In the end isn't it the people as a whole within the domains who suffer? What state of mind is it that allows for the concentration of luxury in one person, while causing many to suffer? What will happen in the next world? A frightening prospect indeed!²⁹⁰

These are powerful, clear statements about the daimyo's luxurious lifestyle. The daimyo have many women, and after they enjoy themselves for a few years, they exchange them for other women, as if they were exchanging fans and pipes. The most noteworthy point here is that he condemns the daimyo's extravagant lifestyle

²⁸⁹ Yampolsky, trans., *The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 216.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.

as the main reason why farmers suffer from starvation and why farmers riot. After all, the most wretched and pitiable people are farmers. Therefore, while he describes the farmers' riots that occurred in many parts of the country in those days, he develops his critique of political authority. He states:

The common people day by day grow feebler, month by month become more stunted. It becomes impossible to support a wife and family. Each house moans under the suffering, each family falls into decline, until misery and starvation are everywhere. There is grain in the fields in abundance; thus hatred wells up within. At last there comes a time when life is no longer of any consequence. When things reach this point twenty or thirty thousand men gather together like swarms of ants and bees. Screaming their hatred, they first surround the village head's house, smash open the doors, and scatter his possessions. If they catch him they will be sure to tear him to pieces. Thoroughly aroused, they end up by storming the city, entering its gates, and creating a riot. Then the temples within the domains are called upon, and with deception and persuasion they bring things under control. Once peace is restored a spy is sent around in secret to search out and seize the conspirators. Then twenty or thirty men are crucified or executed, and their rotting bones litter the fields. But it must be known that the conspirators are not among the people. They are the official and the village head.... If the official imitates an earlier benevolent official and takes into account the quality of the crops each year, investigates what is good and what is bad for the people, sees to it that the high and the low gain profit equally, and shares in the misfortunes and joys of the noble and the base, who will take an evil attitude toward the ruler of the province? Don't they say that a desperate rat will bite a cat? No, the conspirator is not among the people. How can you say that he is not the official and the village head?²⁹¹

²⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 196-97.

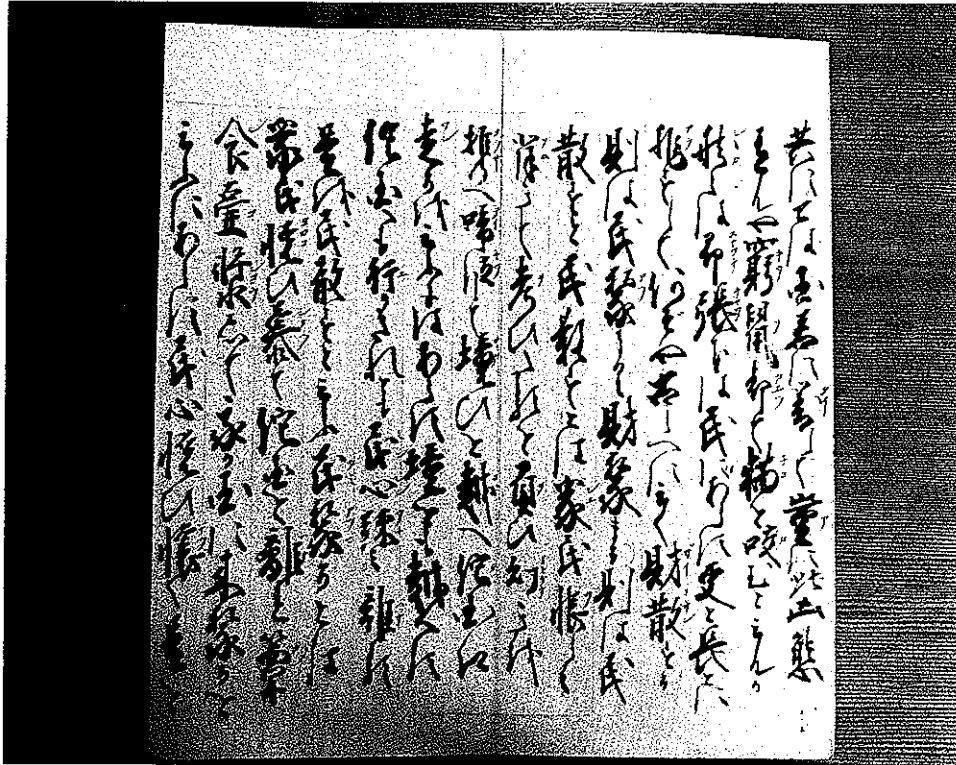


Figure 25: The line of “A Desperate Rat Bites a Cat”²⁹²

This is his very powerful criticism of the social as well as political conditions of his time. In pointing out that the daimyo’s luxurious and lavish lifestyle was supported through the labors of commoners, Hakuin shows his awareness of social inequality. Hakuin also shows sympathy for the farmers’ plight and thus their riots, even going so far as to say that “a desperate rat bites a cat.” With this intense tone, he condemns the daimyo’s unmoral behavior as inexcusable. The ideal behavior of the daimyo, Hakuin emphasizes, is to eliminate extravagance, to trim expenses, and devote themselves to the welfare of the people. He is concerned first and foremost with protecting people from political oppression. Similar social and political criticisms by Hakuin are also seen in his activities for social justice and in several of his other works, *Oniazami*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa*.

²⁹² This photo was taken at Shōinji on March 3, 2008.

Oniazami (the Matsugaoka version), written in 1751 at the age of sixty-seven, is a letter that includes his teachings to both Hōkyōji Monzeki and Kōshōin Monzeki (Imperial Buddhist Convents), to both daughters of Emperor Nakamikado (1701-1737).²⁹³ This letter includes Hakuin's criticism of the luxurious lifestyles of the two imperial daughters in their temples. In particular, Hakuin criticizes their sumptuous and showy clothes (and robes), and also reproaches them for being too lazy to clean their temples in which their servants do all the sweeping, despite the fact that cleaning is an important element in Zen practice. It is remarkable that Hakuin gives members of the imperial household such frank advice.

Other examples can be found in Hakuin's work, *Yasenkana: Part Two*, which was written when Hakuin was seventy-one years old. This text is completely unrelated to a well-known text by the same title of *Yasenkana*, in which Hakuin describes his recovery from his Zen sickness, or *Zenbyō*. This work includes Hakuin's advice and teachings on righteous politics for Matsudaira Shigenobu (1728-1771), the Lord of the Kojima domain in Suruga, the region where Hakuin lived. Because Matsudaira's domain was small and did not give him enough wealth even to build a castle, it was financially difficult for him to comply with the policy of *sankin kōtai*, which the shogunate required. To help this domain with its struggle against poverty, Hakuin suggests several strategies to Matsudaira: first, stop having expensive parties; second, reduce the number of concubines; third, eliminate extravagant expenditures; fourth, quit falconry (which not only hurts the farmers' crops but also is regarded as the killing of life in Buddhist doctrine); fifth, dismiss unreliable sycophants; and last, appoint wise and righteous vassals to government positions. In these strategies, Hakuin gives fundamental moral principles on

²⁹³ There are in total three extant versions of *Oniazami*: the Matsugaoka, the Eisei-bunko Museum, and the Hanazono versions. Here I refer to the Matsugaoka version of the text.

governing the domain with particular emphasis on the virtues of good officials.

These points can also be found in his works, *Hebiichigo*, *Oniazami*, and *Sashimogusa*.²⁹⁴

Moreover, in his work, *Kabezoshō*, written in 1759 at the age of seventy-five, Hakuin severely criticizes the immoral activities of government officials and others in political authority. He refers to the peasants' rebellions that were occurring in many parts of the country at the time, thus revealing his deeply moral attitude and social engagement against the abuse of power. Sympathizing with these oppressed farmers, Hakuin stresses that the real ringleaders of the riots are not the farmers, but the political officials such as village officials. He develops his intense criticism against the abuse of power and authority. And this was the time when famine was not rare, as the text clearly mentions. In his writings, Hakuin says that iniquitous and haughty government officials pride themselves upon their prosperity, amuse themselves with many women, and live in luxury. When their funds to continue such a lifestyle meet difficulties, Hakuin claims that those officials in turn oppress the farmers and extort money and possessions from them. The squeezed farmers suffer and starve, and thus rise in revolt against the rule of their domain and surround his castle at the risk of their lives. The best example is the riot called *Uchinoko sōdō*,²⁹⁵ an enormous riot that occurred in Ehime Prefecture in 1749. This riot lasted for over ten days, which was relatively long. About eighteen thousands peasants fought in the rebellion and demanded the reduction of *nengu*, or periodic tribute, the dismissal of iniquitous village officers, and the restriction on the excessive profits of wealthy merchants.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ The exact date of the *Sashimogusa*'s publication is unclear because there is no description of it. However, Waddell puts the date as 1761, while Yampolsky sets it as 1760.

²⁹⁵ The *Uchinoko sōdō* presented here was the exceptional case in which the farmers' requests were accepted by the domain's village officers.

²⁹⁶ Yoshizawa, "Hebiichigo and Kabezoshō" in *Hakuin hōgo zenshū*, vol.1 (Kyoto: Zenbunka

In his descriptions of the peasants' riots, however, it is noteworthy that Hakuin condemns the immoral priests who supported the village and government officials in suppressing the farmers' riots.²⁹⁷ The priests were employed by the officials to persuade the farmers through deception and to suppress the disturbances. While the farmers, who trusted the temples, were open about their intentions, spies were later sent by the officials in secret to search for the conspirators of the riots, who were all executed in the end. It is shameful that the priests used their positions of power to collaborate in the oppression of the farmers. Hakuin's work, *Kabezoshō*, is a short writing, but an important one which expresses his rage over the actual immoral alliance between priests and the government. In a sense, it raises a question of the complexity of the relationship between religion and politics in a wider range of Japanese history. As it were, the relationship reveals a given religious system which simultaneously served as a political ideology.

Hakuin made keen observations on the social and political crisis based on the power structure of his time, which showed that his moral views were influenced by the common people. While he understood the clear social hierarchy, which was divided into four classes by the Tokugawa shogunate, he also understood the social injustice and inequality that resulted from the hierarchy of social status. Thus, Hakuin's deeply moral attitude and social engagement against political power are critical attempts to address social injustice and inequality, and express his concern for a social change in morality, in protecting the farmers' status and identity from political, economical, and ethnic oppressions in the feudal system in the mid-Tokugawa period.

In *Hebiichigo*, Hakuin's most striking critique of Tokugawa's political

kenkyūjo, 1999), pp. 240-42.

²⁹⁷ This can be seen in *Hebiichigo* as well.

authority refers to daimyo processions called the *sankin kōtai*. The *sankin kōtai* is the system established in the Tokugawa period by which certain feudal lords were required to travel to Edo and spend half the year there, leaving their families behind as hostages when they returned to their own domains.²⁹⁸ He fearlessly condemns the *sankin kōtai* as a wasteful as well as extravagant political system. Hakuin states:

When one watches the *sankin kotai* processions of the lords of the various provinces, a huge number of persons surround them to front and rear, bearing countless spears, spikes, weapons of war, horse trappings, flags, and curtain poles. Recently, even for trivial river crossings, depending on the status of the family, a thousand to two thousand *ryō* are used without even thinking about it. In the Tenshō and Bunroku eras when the country was not yet at peace this was an established precautionary procedure. But the Divine Ruler [Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of Tokugawa shogunate] brought order to the world, and now as the various lords go back and forth, there is no one even to shoot a rusted arrow at them. If under the motto 'a humane man has no enemies' you take the true precautions of being extremely benevolent, worrying about the people, and governing your domains well, then ten good hereditary retainers to front and rear will do. It will be far more profitable than employing a horde of several thousand insincere flatters. But if you are wealthy and powerful and do not bring pain and suffering on the people, how many thousands of people you employ should be at your own discretion. Yet from what one hears from all the provinces everywhere, the sadness of life lodges itself among the common people.²⁹⁹

This is a direct statement about the *sankin kōtai*, which intentionally served to weaken the daimyo by having them spend much money for financing their trips to Edo and residences there. According to the encyclopedia, *Hanshi daijiten*, and as Katsuhiko Yoshizawa has also pointed out, in the case of Okayama castle, in 1698, people who joined the *sankin kōtai* numbered approximately sixteen hundred, and also people who were left in Edo numbered about fourteen hundred. The sum of

²⁹⁸ For more information of the *sankin kōtai*, see James Murdoch's work, *A History of Japan: The Tokugawa Epoch 1652-1868*, vol.3 (New York: Greenberg Publisher, 1926). Also see Hirofumi Yamamoto's *sankin kōtai* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1998). Yamamoto argues that a typical model of the Tokugawa *sankin kōtai* goes back to the Kamakura period.

²⁹⁹ Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 218-19.

both the numbers, in 1707, occupied about thirty percent of the total population working in connection with Okayama castle. Moreover, on average for twenty-eight years from 1798 to 1826, the round-trip cost between Okayama and Edo was approximately three thousand *ryō*, which would be about one million and four hundred thousand dollars today.³⁰⁰ We can easily surmise how the cost of maintaining two residences affected the economy and politics of the domain. Consider also that this was during a political era when famines that wiped out entire villages were not uncommon.

Furthermore, according to Yoshizawa, over sixty percent of all the daimyo processions passed along the Tōkaidō road.³⁰¹ Born in an inn on the Tōkaidō, Hakuin would closely observe the daimyo processions during his childhood.³⁰² Also, when he became abbot of Shōinji in his later life, many daimyo processions would pass back and forth in front of his temple, on their way to and from Edo. Most likely, Hakuin watched them bitterly, while he thought about the harsh existence of the farmers, in contrast to the luxuriousness of the daimyo processions.

Since *Hebiichigo* contained a political critique, it was forbidden to be published by the Tokugawa government, as one would expect.³⁰³ The *sankin kōtai* was one of the fundamental political systems of Tokugawa shogunate, and it reduced the finances of each domain. This political situation is the reason why farmers suffered from poverty. Hakuin criticizes it severely with an intense tone. I argue that Hakuin's concern with the *sankin kōtai* system reflects a solid critique of misused resources and of people who ignore human suffering to advance their own power

³⁰⁰ For more information, see the *Hanshi daijiten*, vol.6 (Tokyo: Yuzankaku shuppan, 1990), pp. 175-94. Also see Yoshizawa, *Hebiichigo and Kabezoshō*, pp. 221-23.

³⁰¹ Tōkaidō is one of the five roads (*kaidō*) that connected Edo and Kyoto, and along it grew many commercial centers.

³⁰² Hakuin was born to the Nagasawa family of Hara in Suruga province. The family operated a post station, a "toiya," or "post house," named Omodakaya which directly fronted onto the Tokaidō and supplied travelers with porters and changes of horses.

³⁰³ This issue of *Hebiichigo* is discussed in detail in the previous section and Chapter 2.

agendas. To extend my question “What would Hakuin do?” I think he would have had strong words for both Saddam Hussein in his autocracy as well as George W. Bush in his power under the outbreak of the ever-lasting Iraq War, which has brought about undetermined costs and undetermined consequences. More relevant to this chapter, however, I have been disquieted to observe the extent to which this very important side of Hakuin has been “missing in action” in the elite Zen tradition’s retrieval of him as their icon.

Why has the elite Zen establishment missed this significant element in the history of Hakuin? I suggest that, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the authorities who have been closely associated with religious centers have paid attention to only the institutional roles and functional status of Hakuin in creating, propagating, and maintaining Hakuin and the tradition. This is a normative view inside the Zen tradition that tends to establish Hakuin’s religious authority in the tradition’s formative, creative, and constructive development. Although Hakuin is long dead, through his writings, we can still have a conversation with him. I sense a hermeneutical urgency to converse with Hakuin in a new way by examining his neglected aspects through a reading of his texts from a perspective that is different from the elite Zen establishment. Hakuin’s social and political criticism against power and authority lies outside our received image of Hakuin. Criticizing the idealized image of Hakuin dictates that we must become aware of how previous historical interpretations of Hakuin have served the claims of religious, more specifically, the elite Zen establishment ideology.

In understanding the question of why the elite Zen establishment has undervalued his political critique in its construction of Hakuin’s image, I raise two possible reasons. One reason is that the elite Zen establishment has focused on only Hakuin’s religious attitudes to intentionally maintain Hakuin’s status as a reviver of

Rinzai Zen and to establish the traditionally “authentic” inside the tradition. The other reason is that for the elite Zen establishment, the idea of a “critique of political authority” cannot be the significant concern inside the tradition’s formative process. In the former case, it is obvious that the images of Hakuin have been almost exclusively the domain of scholars who have focused on his hard practice, strict instruction, enthusiastic propagation activities, and *kōan*. These concerns of scholars are closely associated with the concerns of Zen institutions on how Hakuin should be created, propagated, and maintained as a symbol of the tradition. It is to construct the images of Hakuin appropriate to the tenets of the Rinzai Zen tradition and vice versa, with a focus on his historical religious attitudes as allegedly unchanging teachings. In the latter case, I pay attention to an historical fact, namely that *Hebiichigo* was forbidden to be published by the Tokugawa shogunate. As for the reasons for the censorship, there are three possibilities, which I have discussed in Chapter 2 and in the earlier section of this chapter: first, the work mentions the politics of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate; second, the work criticizes the lifestyle of the daimyō; and third, the work condemns *sankin kōtai*, a fundamental political policy of the Tokugawa shogunate.³⁰⁴ For the Zen authorities, the contents of *Hebiichigo* do not closely fit into the significant category of the “authentic” in the creation of the elite Zen establishment. Even though he has been re-evaluated as the reviver of the contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition, his critique of political authority has been repressed or even buried in complete

³⁰⁴ Hakuin also condemns the prohibition of the publication of *Hebiichigo*. He writes, “In years to come treacherous retainers and thieving samurai, detesting the thought that the Legacy will come into use, will be sure to say: ‘How can the testament of clear virtue and the highest good of our Divine Ruler be imprudently distributed throughout the country and be touched by the hands of base and common people! It must be wrapped up ten times in cloth, be stored away in the recesses of libraries, and never recklessly be shown to others.’” Moreover he writes, “...if you make this Legacy secret and hide it and vainly consign it to the bellies of silver fish, will this not be violating the will of the Divine Ruler? There is no greater disloyalty for a samurai of today than to violate the will of the Divine Ruler.” See Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin*, p. 208.

oblivion. It is in regard to his political critique that he does not reflect a religious status that is attractive to the Zen establishment. Thus, Hakuin's political critique has been neglected thus far, while the image of Hakuin has been crafted by Zen authorities to maintain a conservative, elite Zen system whose first concern is to establish the institutional roles and functional status of Hakuin as the "authentic" inside the religious tradition. But why should the elite in the Zen tradition continue to ignore his *Hebiichigo*?

Through this study of Hakuin, I realized the tremendous retention of intentionally constructed images of Hakuin inside the Zen tradition versus the more progressive, creative interpretations that are only possible outside the tradition. Also, I realized the dynamic process of "tradition" in the formative, but very creative and constructive development in which the images of Hakuin have been sculpted by the elite Zen establishment. That is, the images of the historical Hakuin have been made of tradition and by tradition. Moreover, the allegedly unchanging tradition of Hakuin has been actively crafted by the "selective reading" of the elite Zen establishment to suit its own religious needs, agendas, and desire for authenticity. In order to maintain the "authentic" of the religious tradition, the tradition itself has been creating itself in a chain of history.

I would not claim that all dominant interpretations of Hakuin have misunderstood Hakuin's historicity and religiosity. I would claim, however, that those interpretations are the result of the appropriate images of Hakuin that were deemed necessary or desired for understanding and propagating an image of Hakuin that was regarded as ideal. The elite Zen establishment has maintained the "authenticity" of Hakuin in the tradition's development. We should remember that remembrance is not value-neutral—it cannot be a product of pure and objective observation, interpretation, and understanding. We should remind ourselves that the

Hakuin we remember is a constructed image by the elite Zen establishment. We also should remember that the Hakuin who has been held up as an almost icon of the contemporary Japanese Rinzai tradition is a fairly recent innovation in the history of Hakuin remembrance. I suggest that now is the time to seek a new interpretation of Hakuin aligned with the concerns of the present age. Hakuin's critique of political authority is the best theme to find a new reading of Hakuin and to locate the new locus of authenticity for the hitherto dominant understanding of Hakuin since the beginning of the twentieth century.

I have explored thus far the neglected segments of Hakuin's writings which contain his critique of political authority, with a focus on his works, *Oniazami*, *Hebiichigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa*. In order to have a better understanding of these writings, first I discussed the dominant interpretations of Hakuin since the beginning of the twentieth century. Here, I showed that a number of scholars have consistently created an increasingly dominant religious status and role for Hakuin inside the religious tradition. Hakuin has been used and created in the construction of the elite Zen establishment. Second, I present brief discussions of the texts I used, again, i.e., *Oniazami*, *Hebiichigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa*. Third, I examined his critique of political authority as well as his subsidiary, but very important, moral attitude and social engagement in the course of the critiques found in those works. I also examined why the elite Zen establishment has ignored his political criticism in its construction of images of Hakuin. Here, I highlighted that while the Zen authorities crafted the images of Hakuin with particular emphasis on the religious attitudes of Hakuin to establish his institutional roles and functional status inside the tradition, his critique of political authority has been neglected.

The very process of "remembrance," ignoring and even oppressing his strong anti-elite social critiques, locates a new locus of authenticity to suit its own needs in

the continuity of the tradition. I suggest that this is part of the dynamic process of invention or reinvention of tradition leading to the maintenance of the tradition and also creative social change. The elite Zen establishment has been involved in this historical movement, and the Hakuin we remember today is nothing but the product of this movement. This implies that the elite Zen establishment is oriented toward a future direction. In this chapter, I have thus provided a re-evaluation of Hakuin through a critical analysis of the layers of interpretation and reinterpretation through which the image of Hakuin was modified in the course of the tradition's formative period. I hope this chapter will contribute to a new prolegomenon to a new reading of Hakuin.

If Hakuin were alive now, what would he be doing? What kinds of unique literary and artistic expressions would he use to describe the present intolerable political situation? I realize, by looking at his political critique in *Hebiichigo*, that a new perspective on Hakuin should be added to the dominant discourse surrounding him. Everything is at stake in finding voices of dissent in our traditions. Everything.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OSTENTACIOUS PROCESSIONS AND LUXURIOUS HEMORRHOIDS: THE IGNORED MORAL PROJECT OF HAKUIN'S ART

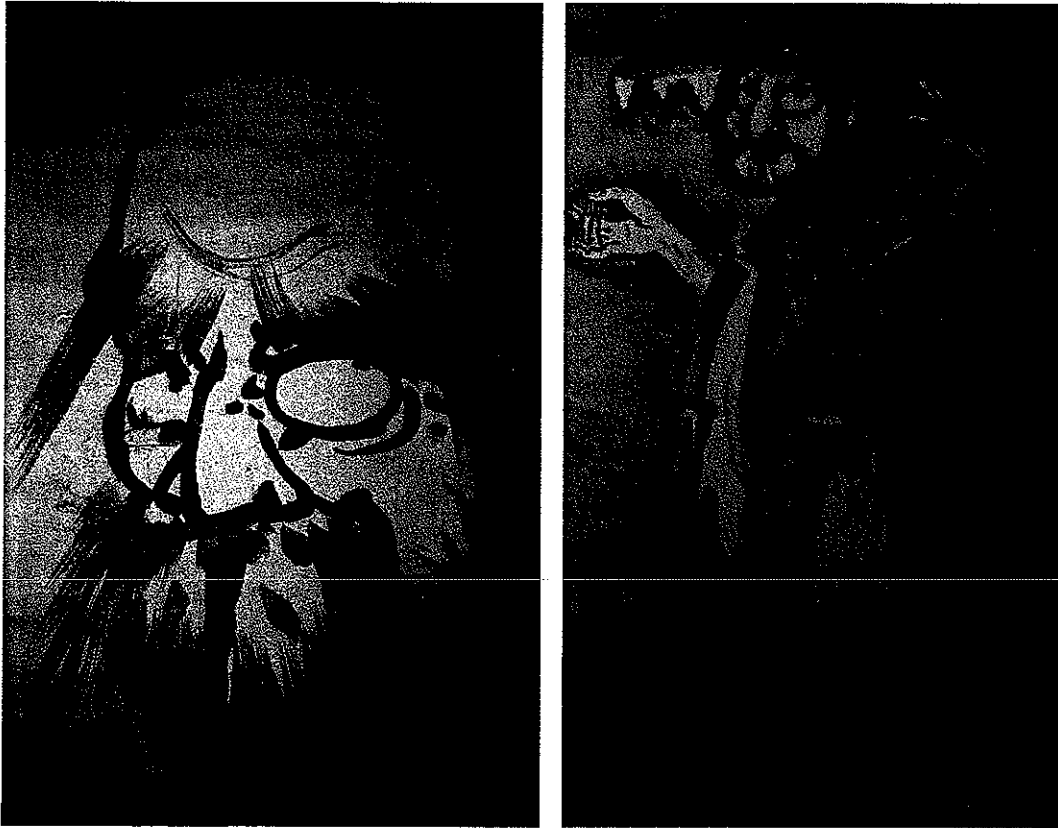


Figure 26: Bodhidharma (left) and National Master Daitō (right)³⁰⁵

Hakuin's art has been touted as the visual symbolization and product of religious experience (*kenshō* or *satori*) which rejects interpretation, explanation, or any verbal expression in favor of immediacy, spontaneity, purity, and freedom. Under the banner of Rinzai Zen, this religious experience has been accordingly construed as a transcendent, unmediated personal experience or even a transcultural and transhistorical subjective experience. The *kōan* practice, designed as the tool to

³⁰⁵ The painting of Bodhidharma is preserved in Ryūunji; photographed on March 8, 2008. For the image of National Master Daitō, *Hakuin: Zen to shoga* (Tokyo: ADK, 2004), p. 54.

achieve this experience, is taken as an “illogical” or “irrational” inquiry to break through customary thinking and perception and to bring about a realization of the “true-self.” The above-introduced paintings and calligraphy have been taken as good examples of Hakuin’s works that portray the embodiment of the religious experience as such.

For example, Hakuin’s “Bodhidharma” above is always used to characterize his art, and it is always said that the simplicity, powerfulness, and depth felt from its line, color, and figure represent the climate of his Zen. In fact, as we have seen in the earlier chapters, Hakuin’s art has been expressed as being “powerful,” “solid,” “profound,” “penetrating,” “settled,” “severe,” and as reflecting his religious experience. Hakuin’s art is characterized by the fullness of spiritual, mystical power that it manifests. Attracted by such powerful art, art collectors Hosokawa Moritatsu (1883-1970) and Yamamoto Hatsujirō (1887-1951) energetically gathered Hakuin’s artistic works such as paintings, ink drawings, and calligraphy. Outside Japan, the German intellectual Kurt Brasch (1907-1974)³⁰⁶ published his book of Hakuin’s art works emphasizing the “spiritual Hakuin.” This emphasis on religious experience has made Hakuin’s art into a product that is unexplainable with words and thus an inexpressible work of something that can only be felt. The strong and consistent tendency to equate his art exclusively with the product of religious experience has established the “experiential Hakuin.” This attitude has been the basis of one part of

³⁰⁶ Brasch published his work titled *Hakuin to Zenga* in both German and Japanese in 1957. The German version’s title is *Hakuin und Die Zen-Malerei* (Tokyo: Japanisch-Deutsche Gesellschaft). This work is his collection of Hakuin’s paintings, ink drawings, and calligraphy, and it shows his attempts to understand Hakuin’s religiosity and the climate of his Zen through his art and to introduce his art to Western art collectors as well as connoisseurs, (and thus, in a sense, to introduce Hakuin’s Zen to the West). The international interest in Hakuin’s art might have resulted from the increasing interest in Zen in the West, the so-called “Zen-boom,” in the generations after the Second World War. It is safe to say that around that time period, or probably even today, Hakuin’s “name” became known in the West as a result of interest in his artwork. He also studied the aesthetic of *ensō-zu*, or “circle figure,” the *ensō* that has been a central notion and symbol of enlightenment experience in Zen. He emphasizes that the *ensō* concept itself originated in China but first appeared as art in Japan.

the trilogy of how Hakuin should be remembered.

I problematize this dominant tendency that has ended up privileging the “experiential Hakuin,” at the risk of ignoring his equally present and cogent moral voice hidden in his art. In fact, it is certain that Hakuin’s works are “experiential,” as Hisamatsu, Okamoto, and others argued, but not all of them. A discussion of the previously dominant tendency follows the lead of early leaders such as D. T. Suzuki and Hisamatsu in the Zen Orientalist tradition, emphasizing that meditation and enlightenment express the core Zen experience and creating the standard that Zen art is the product of the religious experience. Yet our awareness of the created importance of religious experience as a source of legitimation in Japanese Zen ideology should not only caution us against a too one-sided focus on Zen art, but also should reveal Hakuin’s ignored paintings. These works of his social and political critique have remained outside the standard interpretation of Zen art and thus they have long been ignored. In this chapter, I will rehabilitate that ignored art and listen to Hakuin’s strong moral voice.

I begin with a brief discussion of the dominant interpretations of Zen art informed by the essentialist and Orientalist tradition which was influenced by Japanese nationalism both in the pre-war era and again in the formulation of doctrines of “Japanese uniqueness” in the post-war era.

The Previous Dominant Interpretations of Zen Art

Let’s now turn to a discussion of the dominant interpretations of Zen art to understand the aestheticization of Hakuin. How have scholars and intellectuals interpreted and categorized Zen art? How have their tendencies essentialized Hakuin’s art as the Zen aesthetic? How has Hakuin’s work been evaluated to create a normative identity for him? Here I focus on D.T. Suzuki, Furuta Shōkin, and Yoshiga Kōshiro,

who have particularly placed the privilege of experience in understanding Zen aesthetics.

1. D. T. Suzuki: The Essentialization of Zen Art; the Art of Nothingness

There are two important mutual points in understanding D.T. Suzuki's essentialization of Zen art. First, he thinks that Japanese art (which is for him synonymous with Oriental art) consists of the elements of imbalance, asymmetry, poverty, *sabi*, *wabi*, simplicity, and aloneness. Second, he thinks that all these features are closely related to and finally deducible from a central conception of Zen: "the One in the Many and the Many in the One." In other words, all particulars come from and return to the Absolute, which is nothingness, or *mu*. What he thus created is, importantly, the notion that Zen art is the art of nothingness while it is also Japanese art. It is his essentialist attempt that embraces the entire Japanese culture under Zen, and as a result, major Japanese artistic traditions, such as the tea ceremony, gardening, and martial arts, are reinterpreted as expressions of the Zen experience: Zen is not the product of Japanese culture; Japanese culture is the product of Zen. It goes without saying that such Zen essentialization, primarily based on the experience and doctrine of nothingness, has maintained the "experiential Hakuin" as well as "experiential Rinzai Zen."

While Japanese art is Zen in nature and Zen aestheticism is uniquely Japanese, it is important to underline that this equation has provided a rationale for Japanese claims of uniqueness and cultural supremacy and developed the nationalist claim of Japaneseness.³⁰⁷ Importantly, it is in this context of the political use of Zen that Hakuin as "experiential" was produced and promoted to the almost iconic status of

³⁰⁷ For more detail information on D.T. Suzuki's claims of Japaneseness and other nationalistic views of Zen, see Chapter 3.

Japanese Rinzai with the emphasis on Zen's ultimate spirituality. It is also crucial to underline that the equation has been the basis of studies of Zen aesthetics in the twentieth century, succeeded by subsequent scholars such as Hisamatsu, Yanagida, and Furuta, among others.

2. Furuta Shōkin: What is Zenga?

Furuta Shōkin (1911-2001) argues that the aesthetic of Zenga (lit., 'Zen painting') is formed by three elements: first, it deals with the so-called *kōan*; second, it depends upon Zen thought (or teaching); and third, it manifests Zen religious experience. In this argument, indicating his attempt to strongly deny the simple definition of "Zenga" as any painting by Zen priests, he understands Zenga as painting that portrays the painter's ultimate state of religious experience and his spirit of Zen. In this light, such art must transcend any intellect, rule, custom, and technique, the best examples of which he finds in Hakuin and Sengai.

Interestingly, precisely because of this exclusive emphasis on experience as the criterion of Zenga, his argument leads to his denial of the Gozan (Five Mountain) art that flourished in medieval Japan. For him, then, any artwork of the ink drawing, or *suibokuga*, genre, not even that of Sesshū (1420-1506), which was popular and widely appreciated under the establishment of the Gozan culture, is not considered to be Zenga. This negation of the Gozan art as Zenga is remarkable because it reveals Furuta's basic understanding that the Gozan art represents the typical intellectual, technical artwork in which the artists portray Zen themes with their excellent drawing, which is not based on their religious experience. He labels this sort of artwork *ga no Zen*, or "Zen of the art"; Zenga is *Zen no ga*, or "art of Zen." Experience holds primacy before everything else in what he calls Zenga, and such art is the crystallization of the painter's *kenshō* experience. This position, supported by D.T.

Suzuki, is buttressed by Hisamatsu's model, i.e., that aesthetic cultivation is identified with religious cultivation, and also by the noted historian, Yanagida Seizan, who understood that the aesthetic attraction of Hakuin's art is partly from Hakuin's childhood experience of "hell and its terrors" and partly from his religious experience itself.

Hisamatsu once noted that Hakuin's work is something expressed as "powerful," "solid," "profound," "penetrating," "settled," "severe," and "mystic," and also something portrayed in a bold, decisive style. Yanagida once noted that Hakuin's art is penetrated by "extraordinary darkness" and "horror from hell." I sense that much of Hakuin's art is still a long way off from perfection and sophistication—see the example of his calligraphy titled "Homage to the Great Bodhisattva of Hell" at the beginning of this chapter. Even the "Bodhidharma" and "Zen master Daitō" are not "artistically beautiful," but rather "powerful," "mythical," or "deep." Hakuin's drawing style or technique is certainly sometimes meticulous, but it is not necessarily brilliant; in fact, it is mostly rather poor. The lines sometimes look too weak and sometimes too strong. In fact there are many paintings which make one feel that Hakuin was saving ink and also those which one could barely identify as paintings. However, these technical evaluations do not matter to those who enjoy the feelings they get from Zen art. The only thing they care about is that the primary value and significance of Hakuin's art is focused only on the expressive qualities, not as artistic paintings, but as manifestations of the Zen spirituality he achieved. The aesthetic of Zenga can be seen in the absolute predominance of "Zen" over the artistic quality in the works. Zenga is the art of Zen itself

3. Yoshiga Kōshirō

Yoshiga Kōshirō, a historian of Japanese Buddhism, criticizes the three criteria of what Zen art is which have been generally accepted as decisive for the past decades: 1) the artist is a Zen priest, 2) the title or motif of the work is closely related to Zen, and 3) the way of expression is Zen. He argues instead that the nature of Zen art must be found in the idea that “the fundamental energy which produces the work is prominently religious,”³⁰⁸ and thus such art is the very expression of *satori* (enlightenment). He suggests that “Zen art is the crystallized expression, expressed by means of words and paintings, of the ultimate state of enlightenment experience and its subsequent state derived from the post-*satori* practice.”³⁰⁹ According to Yoshiga, whether the artist in question is achieving *kenshō* or not becomes the bottom line for being able to produce Zen art.

This is an interesting argument to me because it makes me realize that earlier scholars represented by D.T. Szuuki, Hisamatsu, and Furuta did not ask *who* produces Zen art. According to Yoshiga, even if artists skillfully portray Zen motifs like Bodhidharma, Lin-chi, and Hotei with their excellent techniques, their productions are not Zen art unless they are enlightened. Even if such unenlightened people produce calligraphy of Zen sayings like “Fundamentally there is not one thing”³¹⁰ with their extraordinary techniques, their productions are only the similitude of Zen art. Conversely, if one is already enlightened or imagines himself to be enlightened, the questions of whether he is a Zen priest or not and whether the subject is related to Zen or not are not important, and his work is always Zen art, whether or not the production

³⁰⁸ Kōshirō Yoshiga, “*Zen geijutsu towa nanika*” in *Zen to geijutsu*, eds., Shōkin Furuta, Seizan Yanagida, and Shigeo Kamata, *Zen to nihonbunka* Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Pericansha, 1997), p. 55. The work, *Zen to geijutsu*, has not been translated into English, and hence any quote from this work in this section is translated by myself.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³¹⁰ Victor Sōgen Hori, *Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Kōan Practice* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), p. 217. This is the translation of “*honrai muichimotsu*.”

is one that is not good at all by any artistic standard. This observation allows us to claim that Yoshiga's model leads the notion that the difference in maturation of religious experience functions as the decisive factor in placing one work of art above the others. Religious experience determines the value of Zen art. This concept, along with D.T. Suzuki and Furuta, can best be understood in the words of the art collector Yamamoto Hatsujirō: "I do sense not beauty but great strength and immovable solidity penetrating Hakuin's works."³¹¹

This exclusive characteristic of Zen art as the visual manifestation of religious experience, under the established cultural milieu that meditation and enlightenment express the core Rinzai Zen experience, has essentialized Hakuin as the "experiential." This essentialization of Hakuin as experiential has established this figure as an ardent meditation master as well as a versatile artist, yet in a closed manner. Our interpretation and memory of Hakuin has been informed by not only what Japanese Rinzai Zen should be, but also the essentialist and Orientalist tradition that has given rise to Zen as a cultural establishment.

Hakuin's Use of Art as Political Protest: A New Prolegomena of Tokugawa Zen Art

It is problematic to generalize about Hakuin's art with the standard interpretation that Zen art is a visual manifestation of religious, mythical experience. His paintings examined below lie outside this "rule" completely. These can be a clue as to how the dominant interpretations have crafted the image of Hakuin in light of the

³¹¹ Tsuneo Tsuji, "Kinse zenso no kaiga: Hakuin, Sengai wo chushin ni" in *Zen to geijutsu*, eds., Shōkin Furuta, Seizan Yanagida, and Shigeo Kamata, *Zen to nihonbunka*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Pericansha, 1997), p. 244. In this work, Tsuji focuses on examining a variety of types of Hakuin's artwork in light of his biography. One important point is the author's argument that Hakuin used to spread Zen teachings in the works called *giga* ("cartoons," or, more literally, "joke pictures") like the hell pictures in which one of the Ten Kings of the Underworld appears as a bodhisattva in red underwear. The author does not analyze the meaning embedded in these works. In terms of the *giga*, Yoshizawa points out in his work *Hakuin: Zenga no sekai* that these paintings are examples of the lack of serious research on Hakuin's art. He argues that these paintings are not comics, but are profound religious messages expressed with all of Hakuin's powers of artistic creativity and technique. For more information, see pp. 61-97.

exclusive emphasis on religious experience as a source of legitimation in Japanese Zen ideology that have long repressed his moral voice. Here I examine Hakuin's six political paintings and some of their variations.

1. "Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji"
(*Fuji daimyo gyōretsu zu*)

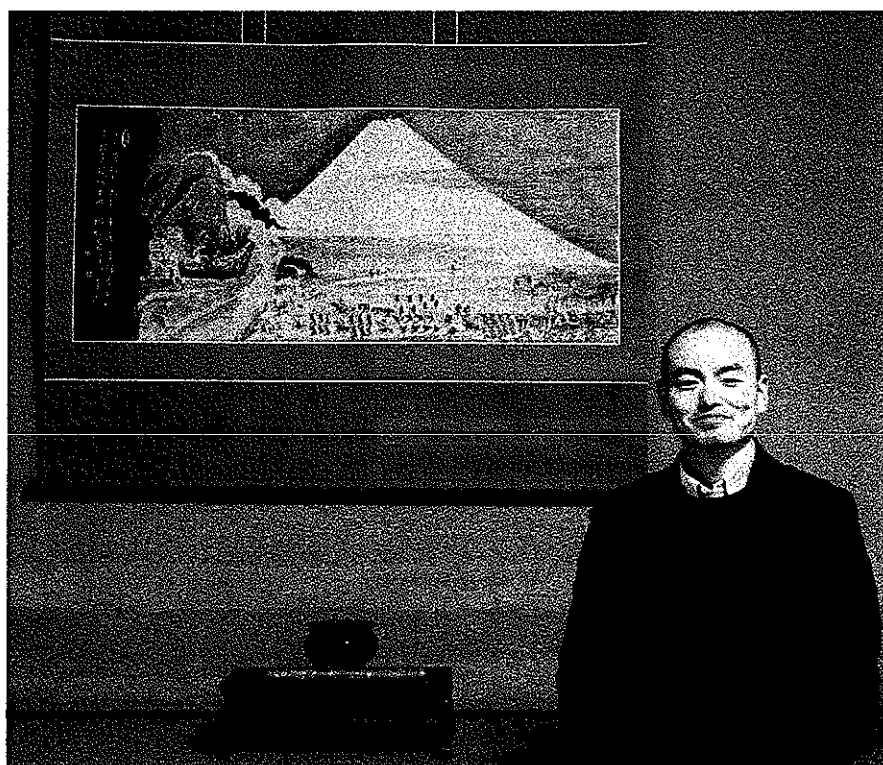


Figure 27: Daimyō Procession Painting³¹²

This painting is currently preserved in Jishōji in Oita Prefecture. I argue that this painting shows Hakuin's social, political criticisms of the times and that it shows his visual campaign protesting against the abusive power and authority of political elites and against their lavish and self-indulgent lifestyles gained through the labors of the lower class. This is not at all a mere religious painting.

³¹² This painting is preserved in Jishōji, Oita; photographed on March 6, 2008.



Figure 28: Daimyō Processions

According to scholar Takeuchi Naotsugu in his work, *Hakuin*, which is the largest collection of Hakuin's artistic works as of 2008, he estimated that this painting was composed when Hakuin was eighty years old and determined that it was given to the priest Daijū Zennyō (1720-78),³¹³ one of Hakuin's noted disciples, along with others such as Tōrei Enji, Suiō Genro, and Gasan Jitō, and who was the twelfth abbot of Jishōji in the Nakatsu Clan of Buzen, what is now Oita Prefecture in Kyushu. Takeuchi presumed that Hakuin made this painting as his gift for the celebration of Daijū's entering Jishōji as the abbot, the gift including a memory of Shizuoka (called Suruga at that time), where Mt. Fuji is the representative for the area. However, this optimistic and kind of romantic viewpoint of Takeuchi's leaves room to reevaluate who Hakuin sent the painting to and who the intended audience was, and thus Hakuin's purpose embedded in this grand painting.

³¹³ Daijū Zennyō was born in Houki, what is now Tottori Prefecture, and one of those who succeeded Hakuin's Dharma transmission. In October, 1764, the fourteenth year of Hōreki or the first year of Meiwa, he became as the twelfth abbot of Jishōji in Nakatsu, Buzen. On March 3, 1765, he was recorded in Myōshinji as the Dharma successor of Sozan Sosō, the previous abbot of Jishōji. His honorific Zen master title conferred posthumously by the then Emperor in 1781, three years after his death, is Daihi Jōshō Zenji, or "Zen Master of Daihi Jōshō." In 1756, the sixth year of Hōreki, he compiled *Keisōdo kuzui* ("Poison Flowers in a Thicket of Thorns," the record of Hakuin's sayings, and published it in 1758, the eighth year of Hōreki. There were close interchanges with a famous artist Ike Taiga (1723-1776). For more information, see *Shōbōzan Myōshinzenji shūhazu* (Kyoto: Myōshinjiha shūmuhonjo sōmubu, 1976) and also see *Hakuin monka itsuwashū sen: Keikyoku sōdan zenyakuchū*, ed., Nōnin Kōdo (Kyoto: Zenbunka kenkyūjo, 2000).

Both the works of *Keisō dokuzui*, or “Poison Flowers in a Thicket of Thorns,” which is a record of Hakuin’s sayings, and the Biography of Hakuin, which is the so-called *Nempu*, mention that *Keisō dokuzui* was written in the sixth year of Hōreki, in 1756, when Hakuin was seventy-two years old. However, it is clear that it was actually published two years later, in 1758, because the preface written by Sugawara Tamenari notes the date of August in the eighth year of Hōreki. *Keisō dokuzui*, vol. 9, includes a description that reads as follows:

題富士山図。手写。
写得老胡真面目、杳寄自性堂上人。
不信旧臘端午作、鞭起芻羊問木人。

Fujisanzu to daisu. Shusha su.
Rouko no shinmenmoku wo utsushiete, haruka jishōdō no hito ni kisu.
Kyūroutango no saku wo shinzezunba, suuyou wo benkishite bokujin ni toe.

“Titling the figure of Mt. Fuji and describing it by himself.
I have portrayed the True Face of Bodhidharma,
And present it to the priest of Jishōji, so far away.
If you don’t understand this painting on a December Boy’s Festival,
Flog a straw sheep and ask a wooden man.”

The inscription on the painting, “Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji” reads as follows:

写得老胡真面目、杳寄自性堂上人。
不信旧臘端午時、鞭起芻羊問木人。

Rouko no shinmenmoku wo utsushiete, haruka jishōdō no hito ni kisu.
Kyūroutango no toki wo shinzezunba, suuyou wo benkishite bokujin ni toe.

“I have portrayed the True Face of Bodhidharma,
And present it to the priest of Jishōji, so far away.
If you don’t understand the time of the December Boy’s Festival,
Flog a straw sheep and interrogate a wooden man.”

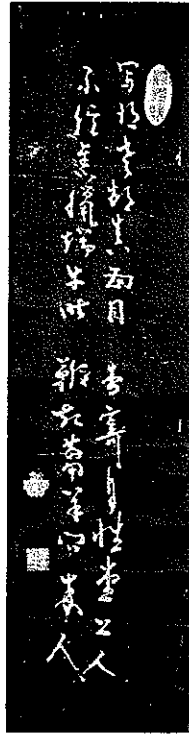


Figure 29: Inscriptions on Daimyō Procession Painting

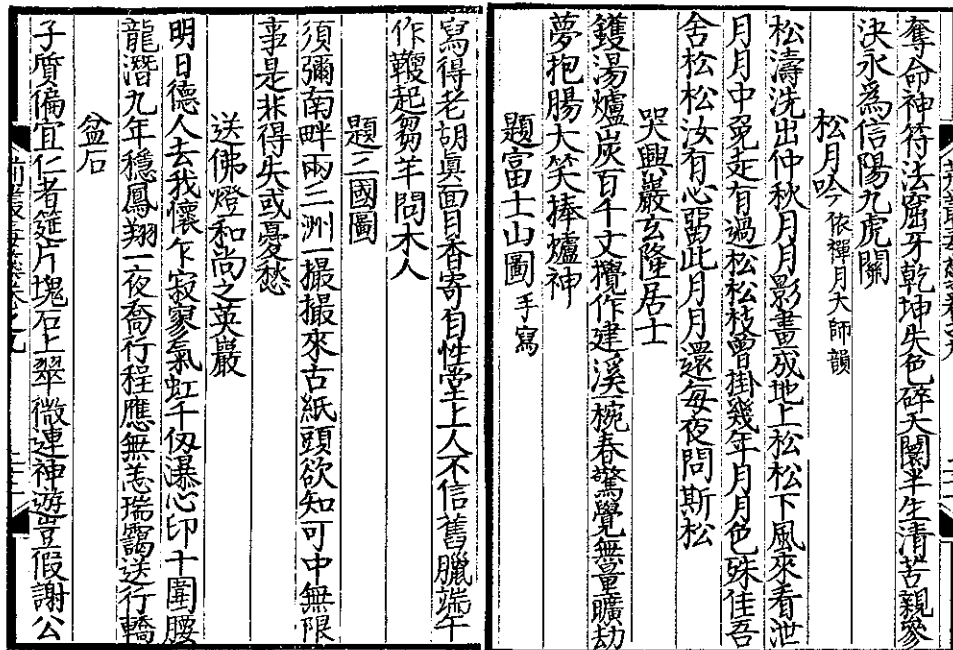


Figure 30: Descriptions of Mt. Fuji Painting in *Keisō dokuzui*³¹⁴

³¹⁴ This text is preserved in Ryūunji.

The last two lines in both cases are the exactly same and are difficult to understand. This indicates that the inscription was made before 1758, and, in fact, the description in *Keisō dokuzui* (shown in Figure 32) shows that Hakuin wrote the inscription and made the painting at the same time. Moreover, given the fact that the priest Daijū entered Jishōji in the first year of Meiwa, in 1764, Takeuchi's position that the painting was given to Daijū would probably be wrong. I suggest that the painting was actually sent to Sozan Sosō, the previous abbot of the temple, who also studied under Hakuin for three years.³¹⁵ It thus is appropriate to understand that the painting was made at least before 1758, when Hakuin was seventy-four years old.

This timing of Hakuin's production of this painting is worth noting as a link with his writing, *Hebiichigo*. This was written in 1754, that is to say, when he was seventy years old; however, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, it was banned from publishing at least as of June, 1755, according to the historical record called *Kyoto shorin nakama kiroku* (lit. "Record in Kyoto Bookstore Companies"). Further, a record called *Kinsho mokuroku* (lit. "Catalogue of Prohibited Writings") in 1771 includes *Hebiichigo* in its section, "*Zeppan no bu*" (lit. "Out of Print Section"), as a book to be prohibited from publishing.³¹⁶ Thus, it is possible to argue that the painting can be considered to be Hakuin's continued or even extended activity from *Hebiichigo*, after the prohibition of its publication.³¹⁷

A major interpretation of this painting, "Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji," has long been supported by Yoshizawa, a current leading researcher of Hakuin. In his

³¹⁵ There is an old copy of *Keisō dokuzui* at the Matsugaoka Library, Kamakura, a copy that includes handwritten margin notes by Hakuin himself. One margin note, adjacent to the line, "送帶上座歸郷; 'presenting for monk Sosō's return home,'" comments, "豊前中津自性寺; 'Jishōji in Nakatsu, Buzen,'" and further the line clearly reads that he studied for three years under Hakuin. The line reads: "清苦三年最有功唯愁往往半途窮靜中閑處親參決回復東山已墜風."

³¹⁶ See more information in the previous chapter.

³¹⁷ Hakuin made several paintings of Mt. Fuji and, as far as I know, made another version of the *sankin kōtai* painting, which, however, seems to be a much more elegantly painted and a more peaceful landscape painted with a light touch, compared to the Jishōji version.

recent work, *Hakuin*, and in other articles as well as in his lectures at the Hakuin Forum in March, 2009, he regards Zenga not just as the manifestation of religious experience, but also as the representation of Zen teachings. Hence he examines the religious meaning and significance embedded in a variety of Zenga. He argues that Hakuin's painting, "Daimyō Processions before Mt. Fuji," is the most comprehensive pictorial expression of his views on Zen and is the most representative example of his Zen art. Having said this, it is a fact that this painting has long been ignored in research. He emphasizes that the painting shows Hakuin's insistence on the importance of the *kōan*, i.e., the "Sound of One Hand" and the post-*satori* practice. He asserts that Hakuin was not simply an artist, but that in everything he did he was first and foremost a religious master and thus that his art has to be understood as conveying his religious teachings.

The painting centers on Fuji's giant presence and under it the daimyō processions toward the west. The processions are depicted in extraordinary detail. As the inscription on the painting reads, Hakuin portrayed Bodhidharma in the painting—probably, this painting was made at the request of the priest of Jishōji, who had earlier asked Hakuin to draw him a picture of Bodhidharma. However, it is a fact that the painting contains no figure of Bodhidharma. Regarding this point, Yoshizawa argues that, instead of giving Bodhidharma's figure itself, Hakuin portrayed the representation of the "true face of the Bodhidharma," or, in other words, "Buddha-nature" or "self-nature," in the form of the sacred Mt. Fuji, and that he teaches the importance of hearing the 'Sound of One Hand' as, before everything else, the portal to realizing that Buddha-nature.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ For more information, see Katsuhiro Yoshizawa, *Hakuin: Zenga no sekai* (Tokyo: Chūkōshinsho, 2005), pp. 31-33.

According to Yoshizawa, the painting consists of two sections: the part of Fuji and that of the daimyō procession. On the one hand, he contends that the former part shows a truly peaceful scene, dominated by the looming presence of Mt. Fuji representing Buddha-nature and symbolizing in conceptual terms the absolute principle, the first principle, or suchness, that is to say, the Buddha Law.³¹⁹ On the other hand, he contends that if the former part represents the sacred aspect of reality, the latter part stands for the secular aspect of reality because it shows the daimyō procession that is the very embodiment of the ‘secular law’ representing the shogun-daimyo system of the Tokugawa government. According to Yoshizawa, this manifestation of the secular law proceeds like a line of ants beneath the impassive gaze of the Fuji, the towering, immovable symbol of the Buddha Law. The important point here is that the contrast between Mt. Fuji and the procession is identified with the contrast between the Buddha Law and the secular law. This argument results from his standpoint that Hakuin’s art is the visualization of his religious teachings.

Thus Yoshizawa also underlines this contrast as representing Hakuin’s ideal Zen practice, which has two basic directions: *Jōkyū bodai*, or “above, to seek enlightenment; *geke shujyō*, or “below, to save all sentient beings.” The latter is the so-called “post-*satori* practice” based on the practice of the Four Universal Vows. Yoshizawa argues that the painting, “Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji,” can be seen as Hakuin’s teaching on the importance of “saving all sentient beings” as the goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Hakuin urges one to view the painting in this manner in order to devote himself to the *kōan* “Sound of One Hand.” In a sense, does Hakuin depict Mt. Fuji, which represents the self-nature or Buddha-nature to be sought, which Hakuin sent, with his humorous pun, to the priest of Jishōji, which literally means “the temple

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 34. Yoshizawa uses the terms 聖諦, 第一義諦, 真諦 which I have translated into “the absolute,” “the first principle,” and “suchness,” based on *Japanese-English Buddhist dictionary* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1999).

of self-nature”?

Hakuin’s art has been described by many scholars and intellectuals in a variety of fields, but with the same observations regarding how it is described, as something “powerful,” “solid,” “profound,” “penetrating,” “settled,” and “severe.” Given the fact that not all of Hakuin’s works are covered by this type of evaluation, Yoshizawa’s approach is unusual. For Yoshizawa, Hakuin’s art has to be best understood as “the religious messages he tried to convey with all of his powers of artistic creativity and technique,”³²⁰ stressing that Hakuin is a religious man, not simply an artist. While Yoshizawa’s approach is not based on the emphasis on Hakuin’s art simply as the visual manifestation of religious experience, the problem is that it still reduces the art to religious teaching and practice, at the risk of excluding his social, political criticisms of the time.

Hakuin’s painting, “Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji,” should be understood as Hakuin’s extending political critique against the *sankin kōtai* from his writing, *Hebiichigo*. Although here I avoid repeating the contents of the writing, knowing that this writing is a known work in Hakuin literature, it is crucial to stress that he was a fearless fighter for social justice whose campaign on behalf of farmers resulted in his condemnation of the political abuse of power and authority. The painting attacks the government policy, *sankin kōtai*, and protests the ostentatious dignity and wasteful extravagance of this system, all of which placed an enormous burden and suffering on the peasantry. Hakuin, who understands the peasant’s rebellion as “a desperate rat will bite a cat,” calls on eliminating such extravagance and expenditures and saving those oppressed people through this painting.

³²⁰ Ibid., p. 268.

2. “The Figure and Inscription of the Forerunner with a Bristle-Spear”
(*Keyari gasan*)



Figure 31: The Forerunner with a Bristle-Spear³²¹

This painting is currently preserved in the Osaka City Museum of Modern Art, where the huge collection of art collector Yamamoto Hatsujiro (1887-1951) is preserved. Hakuin does not mention the date when he made the painting, but Takeuchi estimates that this painting is a composition from his mid-seventies. There exists the only one version of this painting at this moment.³²² I propose that the intended audience of this painting is those who are political elites such as governmental officials and daimyō squandering futile, wasteful expenses on their extravagant lifestyles and ostentatious processions.

Along with the previous painting, this painting also protests the political and

³²¹ This painting is preserved in the Osaka City Museum of Modern Art, Osaka; photographed on March 11, 2008.

³²² I have not seen other versions.

economic excesses of the *sankin kōtai* policy. The protest becomes more direct and ironic than the previous painting in the inscription, which reads:

毛鎗をもつて立てししす
しかも大きなしじじゃ
小じゃりが飛ぶは あれ見よ

Keyari wo motte tateshishisu
Shikamo ookina shijija
Kojari ga tobuwa are miyo.

“Holding a bristle-spear, the forerunner pees!
What a furious pee it is!
Look at how much gravel is splashed around!”

In the daimyō processions, the forerunners, called “*keyari yakko*,” lead the way, swinging their bristle-spears in all directions as they go. These ostentatious forerunners served as the “driving off” actors of the procession, with a sense of ritual purification, on the long travel to Edo. But while Hakuin intentionally describes the forerunners as wearing a kimono with two characters meaning “money,” the number of the forerunners also symbolized the power and authority of the procession, and thus they were placed at the head of the daimyō procession, emblems of its power and authority. For Hakuin, however, as these processions were nothing but meaningless displays of wealth, vanity, and power, the forerunner symbolized the worst aspects of the false bravado procession. Therefore, by depicting a half-naked forerunner urinating at a furious pace, Hakuin demeans this symbolic actor, the very face of the daimyō procession, while the words “Look at how much gravel is splashed around!” reflect Hakuin’s acrimonious expression of his political critique. Hakuin’s claim using the half-naked forerunner, as the symbol of political power, reminds us of a well-known scene of Hans Christian Andersen’s work, “*Kejserens nye klæder*,” (The Emperor’s New Clothes) in which there was a boy who said, “But he has nothing on!”

3. “Ofuku Burning Moxa” (*Ofuku okyū*)

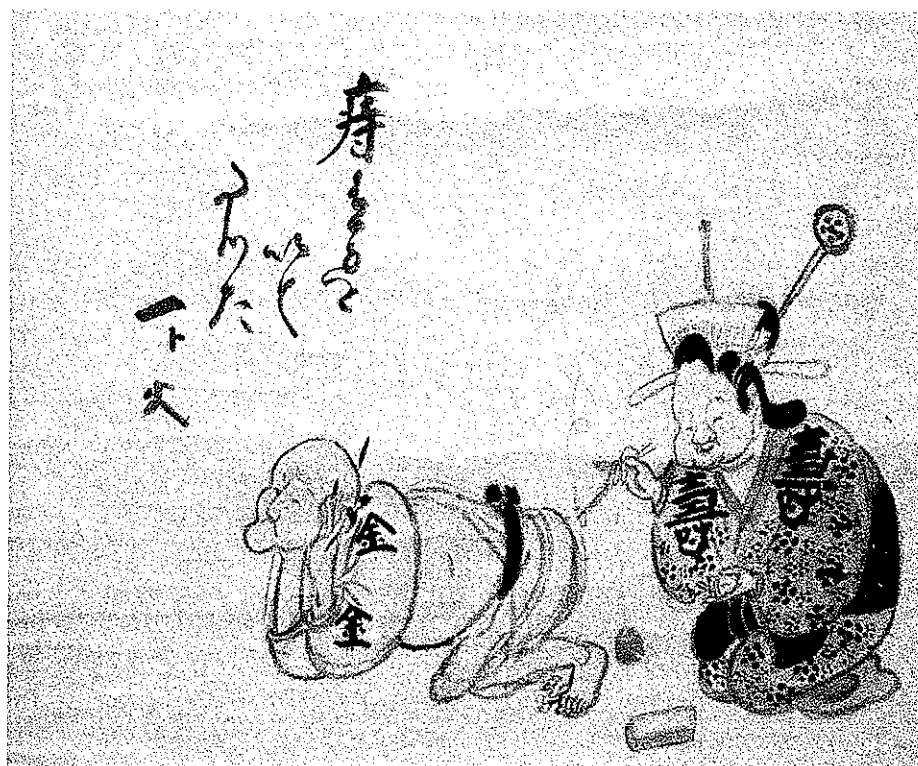


Figure 32: Ofuku Burning Moxa³²³

This painting is currently preserved in the Eisei-Bunko Museum in Tokyo, where a huge collection belonging to Hosokawa Moritatsu (1883-1970), or the Hosokawa family in general, a daimyō in Higo, the present day Kumamoto in Kyushu, is preserved. There is only one version of this painting; however, while Hakuin used the image of Ofuku in many of his paintings, she also enters into many writings. Hakuin does not mention the exact date when he made this painting. However, Takeuchi estimates that this painting was made in his mid-seventies. Knowing that Hakuin’s writings, *Oniazami* (Part 1), *Hebiuchigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa*, were written, chronologically, in 1751 (Hakuin at 67 years old), in 1754 (at 70 years old), in 1759 (at 75 years old), and presumably in 1760 (at 76 years old), and because all of these

³²³ This painting is preserved in the Eisei-bunko Museum, Tokyo; photographed on March 4, 2008.

writings contain Hakuin's criticisms reflected in this painting "Ofuku Burning Moxa," it is possible to presume that this painting was made in around his seventies. The target of this painting can be those who live it up, wasting money on their luxurious and extravagant lifestyles.

This painting depicts the woman Ofuku who is giving a man a moxa treatment, as a painful cure for his hemorrhoids. The inscription reads:

痔有るを以てたった一ト火

Ji aru wo motte, tatta itto bi.

"For a sufferer from hemorrhoids, Treat with one ember of moxa."

Hakuin regards hemorrhoids as a chronic illness. In particular, Hakuin denotes hemorrhoids as well as chronic illness, as problems or types of behavior and desires which one cannot easily get rid of. Now the woman Ofuku tries to cure the root cause of that chronic illness by burning moxa. Moreover, it is interesting to point out that the man wears a kimono with two characters for "money." This indicates the ultimate pursuit of material needs and desires, which the man cannot stop or at least cannot easily get rid of. Thus this image expresses Hakuin's punishment of the man obsessed with money or material desire, for to Hakuin, the material desire for money is nothing but a "chronic illness." Therefore, Hakuin tends to remedy this "chronic illness" of the man attached to such desire by cauterizing it with moxa as a punishment. Hakuin condemns the reliance on money, the pride that daimyō and rich men take in their power, causing the common people to suffer by extorting an enormous burden of taxes from them.

Another important remark is how Hakuin describes Ofuku. This Ofuku wears her kimono with two characters for "longevity," and because the name "Ofuku" itself

literally means “happiness,” thus the expressed figure of Ofuku symbolizes “happiness and longevity.” The kimono that Ofuku is wearing also has many of the characters of *umebachi no mon*, which symbolizes the Tenjin, in which Hakuin was a believer since his childhood.³²⁴ I argue that this Ofuku represents Hakuin himself, and that this Hakuin Tenjin is teaching the best way to achieve happiness and longevity, which doubtless everyone wishes.

4. “Parental Retribution and a Crippled Beggar on a Wheeled Cart”
(Shinbatsu izari guruma)



Figure 33: A Crippled Beggar on a Wheeled Cart³²⁵

³²⁴ The *Tenmangu* is dedicated to Tenjin, the deified form of the statesman and poet Sugawara Michizane (845-903). While the main Tenjin shrine was the Kitano Tenmangu in Kyoto, countless smaller Tenjin shrines were constructed throughout Japan. Tenjin came to be worshipped as the deity of literature, scholarship, and calligraphy. A Tenjin shrine was located in Sainenji, a Ji Sect temple adjacent to the home where Hakuin was born and grew up.

³²⁵ This painting is preserved in Yabumoto Fine Arts, Tokyo; photographed on February 26, 2008.



Figure 34: A Crippled Beggar (*Kojiki gasan*)³²⁶

Hakuin does not mention the date when he made this painting. Considering the version at the Osaka City of Art Museum, Takeuchi estimates that Hakuin made it when he was in his mid-seventies. The version at the Osaka City of Art Museum is preserved as a part of the collection of Yamamoto. Regarding the Yabumoto version, the current owner, Yabumoto Shunichi, does not remember exactly where it comes from. However, Yabumoto provides me with a memorable story about why he ended up purchasing this painting. The painting was the very first art object he purchased since he succeeded his father in the business of fine arts. He was extremely attracted by the painting when he first saw it, because it reminded him of his youth when he rebelled against his parents' way of thinking and developed his defiant attitudes towards his father. Yabumoto overlaps himself with the subject of the painting who kicked his

³²⁶ This painting is preserved in the Osaka City Museum of Modern Art, Osaka; photographed on March 11, 2008.

father and became a crippled beggar in a karmic retribution.

Through this painting, Hakuin definitely indicates the importance of taking care of one's parents. However, it is also significant to consider that the purpose of this painting is to criticize the then political power, authority, and system by which the farmers and the lower classes suffered. The painting shows the social conditions of the time under which there were people suffering from malnutrition and becoming crippled beggars everywhere, especially in the time when famine was not rare at all, and regular political oppressions were common.

a) The inscription of the Yabumoto version, which reads:

右や左の長者様、いじやりに一銭被下まし、若ひ時親をけりました罰でケ様ニなりました、いじや(り)めでごじやります一銭の御助けを頼みます。江戸の弘法水様へ歸ます、ひだりうごじやります。

Migi ya hidari no choujasama, ijari ni issenhikudamashi, wakaitoki, oya wo kemashitabatsude keyou ni narimashita. Ijarimede gozarimasu. Issen no otasuke wo tanomimasu. Edo no koubousama he kaerimasu. Hidariu gojarimasu.

“Rich people on right and left, please give this crippled beggar one sen. In my youth I kicked my parents around, and I became like this. I am a crippled beggar on a wheeled cart, now I pay for it. Please give me one sen. I am returning to Kobo-water in Edo. I am dying of hunger.”

b) The inscription of the Osaka City Museum version reads:

若ひ時 親を蹴ました罰で ケ様ニなりました
いざりめでござります 一銭の御助希を頼みます
ひだりうござります

Wakaitoki, oya wo kemashitabatsude keyou ni narimashita. Izarimede gozarimasu. Issen no gojoki wo tanomimasu. Hidariu gorimasu.

“In my youth I kicked my parents around, and I became like this. I am a crippled beggar on a wheeled cart, now I pay for it. Please give me one *sen*. I am dying of hunger.”

It is clear that these verses indicate the importance of parents, a critique of violence, and a visceral display of karmic retribution. However, while such interpretations are not entirely mistaken, I sense that the depiction of this man is too powerful to be satisfied by such interpretations alone. Hence, I rather consider this image of the starving man to be Hakuin’s covert message against power and authority; that is to say, his political critique and commentary on social justice. It is no exaggeration to say that this visual image represents Hakuin’s scathing attacks against the abuse of power and authority. The image was presumably produced around his mid-seventies, by which time publication of *Hebiichigo* had already been prohibited. In other words, his paintings are an alternative way to represent the political criticisms revealed in his writings. In another work, *Kabezoshō* (“A Mutterings to the Wall”), written in 1759 when Hakuin was seventy-five, he speaks up as follows: Iniquitous and haughty government officials pride themselves upon their prosperity, amuse themselves with many women, and live in luxury. When their funds to continue such a lifestyle meet with difficulty, those officials oppress farmers, and extort money and possessions from them, besides periodically increased tribute. Since the farmers have no way to escape, they must sell their belongings, even their pots and kettles, and put their clothes in pawn shops. The officials bleed them of their all, just like squeezing oil by pressing a compressor. The squeezed farmers suffer and famish, and, being unable to support wives and family, they finally have to choose to starve to death just as the fish dying in a puddle of a wheel track.³²⁷

With this image of the starving man, Hakuin’s intention can be seen not only in the warning of karmic retribution, but in the straightforward criticism of government

³²⁷ For more information, see Yoswhizawa’s *Hebiichigo and Kabezoshō*, pp. 201-03.

excesses and failings, based on his keen observations of the social conditions of the times.

5. “Shrimp” (*Ebi*)

Hakuin made several paintings of shrimp as far as I know, and here are three different versions. Hakuin’s painting of shrimp shows his critique of the luxurious, lavish, self-indulgent lifestyles of political authority such as daimyo, village officials, and even imperial household as his intended audience.

Hakuin does not mention the date when he made those paintings of shrimp. His writings, *Oniazami* (Part 1), *Hebiichigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa* were written, chronologically, in 1751 (Hakuin at 67 years old), in 1754 (at 70 years old), in 1759 (at 75 years old), and presumably in 1760 (at 76 years old). Because all of these writings contain Hakuin’s criticism reflected in this painting, it is possible to argue that the painting was made at least in his seventies. Considering the first version introduced below, Takeuchi estimated that Hakuin made it in the beginning of his eighties, because of the deep tones of ink and the powerful brushing stroke.

a) The first version: preserved in the Eisei-Bunko Museum in Tokyo. The verse described in the painting reads:

鬚げながく 腰まがる満で生き度くは 食をひかへて 食をひか
へて

Hige nagaku koshi magaru made ikitakuwa shoku wo hikaete shoku wo hikaete.

“If you wish to live long enough that your beard grows long and your back grows round, eat sparingly, eat sparingly.”

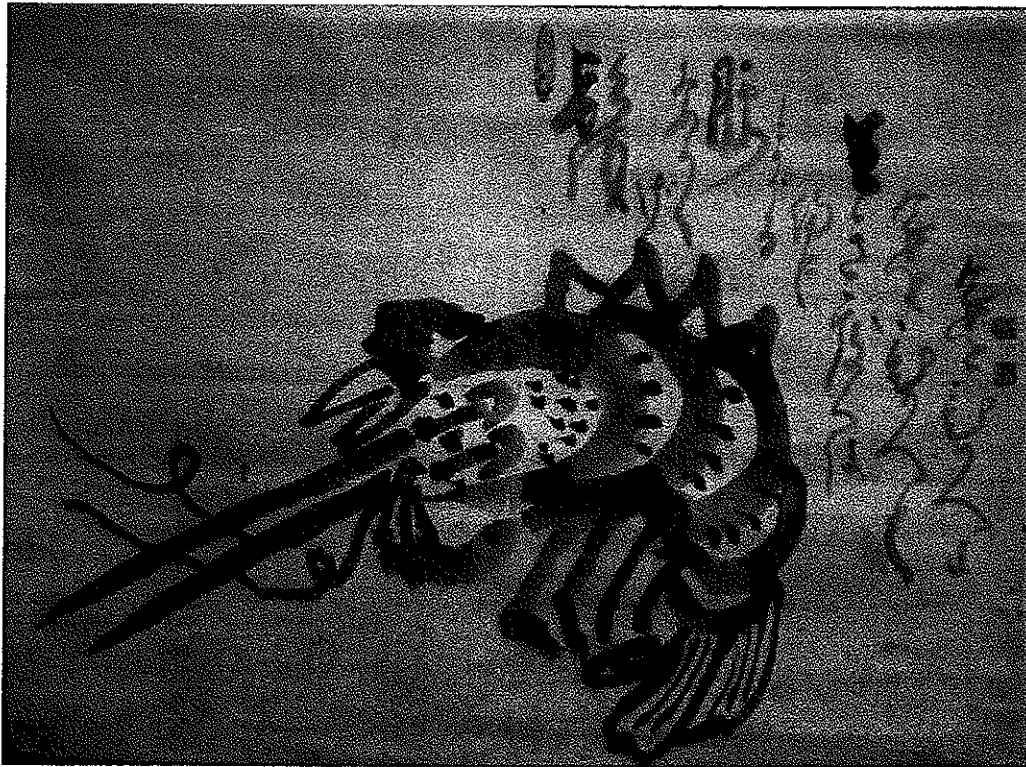


Figure 35: Shrimp (the Eisei-bunko Museum)³²⁸

b) The second version: preserved in the Fine and Arts Yabumoto in Tokyo. This is the version replacing the last term “eat” into “desire,” and thus: “eat sparingly, restrain desire.” The inscription thus reads:

ひげながく 腰まがるまで生きたくば 食をひかへて 独里衾を
セ与

*Hige nagaku koshi magaru made ikitakuwa shoku wo hikaete hitorine
wo seyo.*

“If you wish to live long enough that your beard grows long and your
back grows round, eat sparingly, sleep alone.”

³²⁸ Photographed on March 4, 2008.

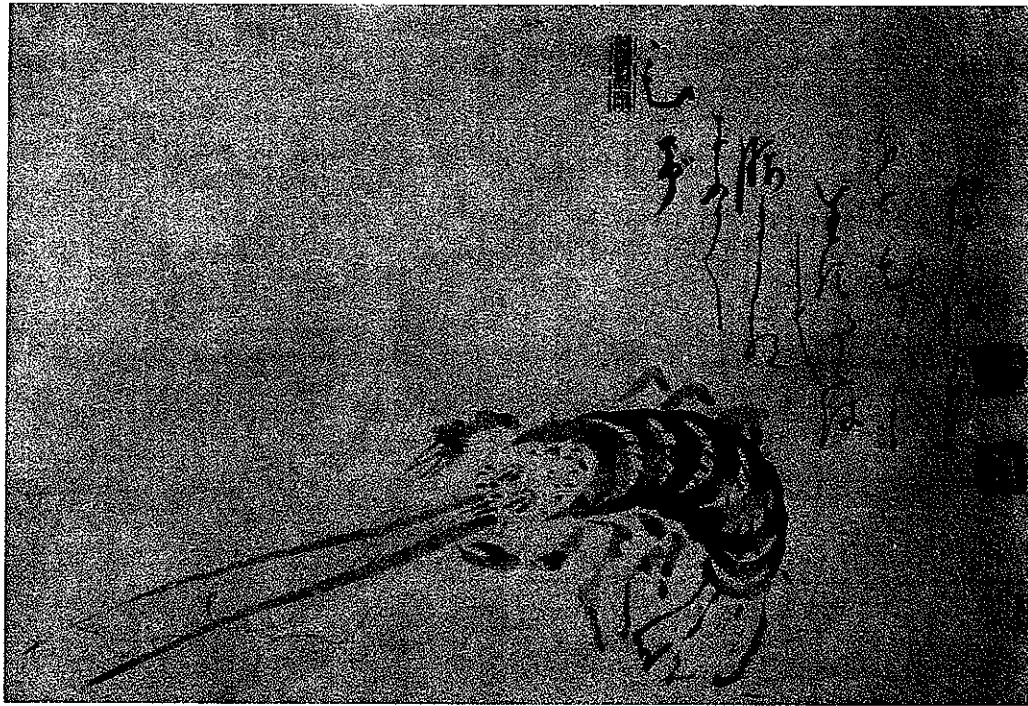


Figure 36: Shrimp (Yabumoto Fine and Arts)³²⁹

According to Takeuchi, when it was pointed out that a lay practitioner would find this advice difficult to follow, Hakuin amended it.

c) The third version: preserved in Ryuunji in Tokyo. The inscription on this painting reads:

鬚げながく 腰まがるまで生き度くば しよくをひかへて 食を
ひかへよ

Hige nagaku koshi magaru made ikitakuwa shoku wo hikaete shoku wo hikaete.

“If you wish to live long enough that your beard grows long and your back grows round, desire sparingly, eat sparingly.”

³²⁹ Photographed on March 1, 2008.

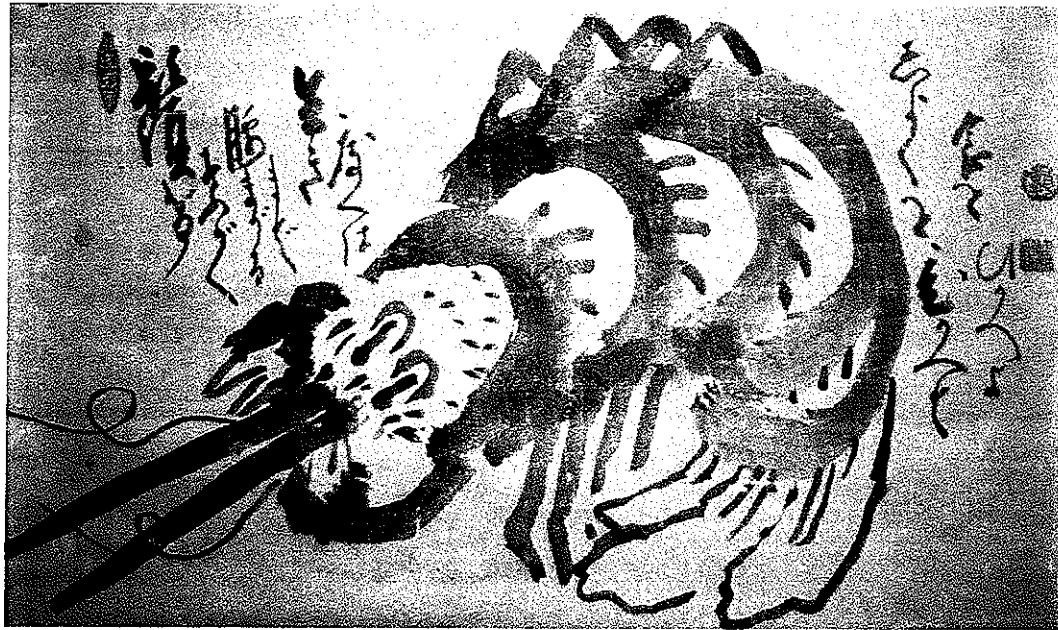


Figure 37: Shrimp (Ryūunji)³³⁰

Unlike the first version, here I translate the phrase “*shoku wo hikaete, shoku wo hikaete*” into “desire sparingly, eat sparingly,” precisely because Hakuin uses the first word, “*shoku*,” in hiragana, not the same as the second word, “*shoku*,” written with a Chinese character. Therefore, the first “*shoku*” could be “desire,” whose alternate reading is “*shoku*.” Hakuin’s underlying message of the painting, *Shrimp*, shows that the daimyō ought to stop having expensive parties, reduce the number of concubines and mistresses, and eliminate extravagant expenditures. The phrase “desire sparingly, eat sparingly” then corresponds perfectly with Hakuin’s campaign on behalf of farmers or the lower classes with his strong moral voice against the abuse of power and authority.

It is important to think about three views of why he uses shrimp as his model for his political and social criticism. First, obviously shrimp is a kind of seafood. The

³³⁰ Photographed on March 27, 2008.

area of Hakuin's residence is adjacent to Suruga Bay, and this indicates that it is certain that Hakuin was very familiar with shrimp and would have chances to have it very often. Second, one of Hakuin's contributions to Japanese Zen has been generally considered to be his way of expounding Zen teaching in terms easily understandable to the people, and this is true in this precise case that Hakuin uses the shrimp as its example of his criticism—the shrimp which must be very familiar for those living close to Suruga Bay. Third, however, the shrimp modeled in Hakuin's paintings is not just simply a shrimp or crayfish, but actually and more exactly a big spiny lobster, which is not cheap. Who could easily eat or get such a big lobster under the severe hierarchy and oppression controlled by the Tokugawa shogunate? Could farmers or the lower classes eat or even get the expensive seafood in the time the annual tax tribute was strictly required as well as in the time famine was not rare? NO. Hakuin's use of the shrimp can be read as a metaphor for the political authority's luxurious, lavish, and self-indulgent lifestyles gained through the labors of the citizenry. Observing the farmers who circulate petitions and eventually rise in rebellion and expressing his sympathy for them, Hakuin carries on a campaign for the political authority for eliminating his extravagance, cutting his expenditures, and devoting himself to the welfare of the people.

6. “Ant on a Mill” (*Ari niusu zu*)



Figure 38: Ant on a Mill³³¹

This painting is currently preserved in Ryūunji in Tokyo. There is another version of this painting with the same inscription, the version shown in Takeuchi’s work, *Hakuin*, which says it is preserved in the private collection of the Uematsu family.³³² Through this painting, Hakuin warns that people who continue to conduct their evil deeds will fall into hell. The inscription reads:

磨をめぐる 蟻や世上の耳こすり

Ma wo meguru ariya sejourno mimikosuri.

“An ant circling the mill provides a whisper/hint for the world.”

³³¹ This painting is preserved in Ryūunji; photographed on March 18, 2008.

³³² We do not know exactly where this version is currently preserved.

To understand this inscription, there is a hint in *Keisōdo kuzui* containing the following verse under the title, *Gijyōma-zu*, or “the figure of an ant circling the mill”:

閑蟻、鉄磨を遶る、遶り遶って休歇無し。六趣の衆生に似て、輪
 転して出期無し。此に生まれ、彼に死し、鬼と成り、畜と成る。
 此の患難を免れんと欲せば、須らく隻手の声を聞くべし。

“A silent ant is circling an iron mill, coming around and around without rest. Humans in the Six Paths are like this, never finding release from rebirth. Born here, dying there, becoming a demon, becoming an animal. If you seek to be free from this hardship, you should hear the sound of one hand.”

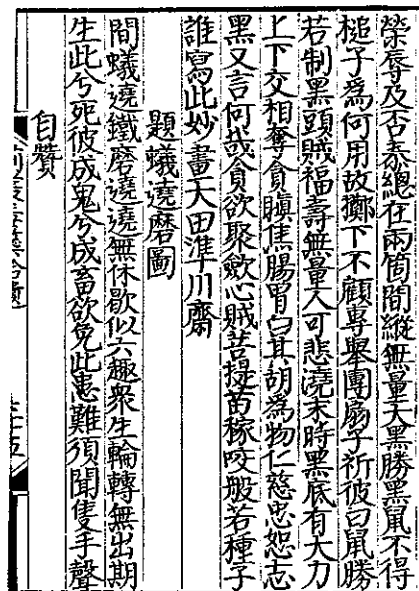


Figure 39: Descriptions of “Ant on a Mill” in *Keisō dokuzui*³³³

This verse is basically the same content as the inscription in the painting. According to Hakuin, people generally think that an ant circling the mill but not being able to find how to get out from it is certainly foolish. Hakuin then warns that not only the ant but also humans ourselves conducting their luxurious lifestyles and evil deeds are the

³³³ This text is preserved in Ryūunji.

same as the ant after all—they circle around the Six Courses, or *rokudō*, and never get out of it.

Now, the image of the ant reminds us of the painting in which the daimyō processions are passing in front of Mt. Fuji. Concerning the daimyō processions or political elites/authorities, Hakuin says once in *Hebiichigo*, “Relying on their blessings and fortune, they take pride in their power, cause the common people to suffer, extort taxes, and, piling up limitless evil karma, at their deaths fall inevitably into hell.”³³⁴ Warning that the daimyō processions are going toward hell, not to Edo, (actually the daimyō processions look like ants, compared to the towering figure of Mt. Fuji!), does Hakuin explain it by using the example of the ant circling the millstone? Hakuin uses multiple alternative ways to convey his social, political criticism against the abuse of power and authority.

All the images introduced above haunt me, because those images are, to me, overlapped with what is happening around the world today. For example, the fights in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, and Sudan of undetermined length, undetermined costs, undetermined sacrifices, and undetermined consequences; children, men, and women in countless places in the world where military violence is coupled with an utter waste of resources; Myanmar’s ruling military junta refusing to allow the UN and U.S. Navy ships to help the country deal with the devastating cyclone, Nargis, of May 2008, regardless of the more than 2.4 million people affected, more than 1 million needing help, and about 35,000 pregnant cyclone survivors in urgent need of proper care; unarmed protesters being beaten and killed, including 40 murdered Buddhist monks, by the security forces of the Myanmar military junta in September, 2007 and the government lying about the number of deaths during the demonstration and crackdown, but there are reports of hundreds; the Chinese government’s oppressive

³³⁴ Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 209-10.

and violent crackdown on anti-government protesters in Tibet in March, 2008; the continuously violent conflict between Ethiopian troops and Islamic militants in Somalia over ancient clan loyalties, religion, and government, in which thousands of civilians have been killed since 2007; thousands of wounded Somalian and Ethiopian adults and malnourished children who need urgent medical care; thousands of refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia who try to enter Yemen by sailing across the Aden Bay due to the long conflict and extreme poverty, but in their own way of “Middle Passage”; and the dictatorship in North Korea which has developed the capability to develop nuclear weapons at the price of disregarding the extreme poverty among the common people. More examples could be listed. The man on his wheeled cart has a common destiny with faces we see in the media every day.

Hakuin was much more than a major Japanese priest, writer, and artist who helped revive Rinzai Zen. He understood that the abuse of power and authority creates social injustice and inequality, which in turn leads to political and social struggles that culminate in rebellion. He understood who it is that suffers from such power and authority—they were always the farmers or the lower classes. These views are clearly revealed in his paintings, along with his writings. It is important to consider how timeless the humane and social issues Hakuin dealt with are. The issues are unchanging and everlasting, not just in Japanese religious history, but also in human history, and thus demand new responses from each generation when reading Hakuin. Such resources of his political critique and social justice still remain largely unexamined today. We cannot ask this enough: “*What state of mind is it that allows for the concentration of luxury in one person, while causing many to suffer?*”³³⁵ I can only hope that somewhere, the daimyos and shoguns of our day are listening.

³³⁵ Ibid., pp. 217-18.

A Strange Coincidence around the Daimyō Procession Painting

Regarding Hakuin's painting, "Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji," it is interesting to think of it in light of the relationship between Jishōji and Ryūgenji, where I was born and grew up. Both the temples are closely connected by the daimyō Okudaira of the Nakatsu Clan in Buzen (what is now Oita Prefecture): while Jishōji is the main family temple of the Okudaira family, Ryūgenji is one of their sub-temples in Edo, (or Tokyo), due to the *sankin kōtai* system. In short, Ryūgenji was the temple for the Okudaira family who had to stay in Edo due to the *sankin kōtai* and for the remaining family who had to stay there as hostages. According to a temple archive preserved in the Ryūgenji,³³⁶ the Lord Okudaira Masashige received ten thousand *koku* from the shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune the eighth (1684-1751), in 1717 and the Lord first settled his Nakatsu Castle with a total of a hundred thousand *koku*. While the history of the Okudaira family goes back much earlier, Okudaira Masashige, who was the first lord of the Nakatsu Castle, was born in Edo in 1694 and died in Edo in 1746 at the age of fifty-three. His posthumous title is *Ryūgeninden tokuōdōken daikōji*.³³⁷ His funeral was held not in Ryūgenji, but in one of Okudaira's other temples in Edo called Seikōin.

Unlike Jishōji, Ryūgenji was an Okudaira temple in Edo when they come down to the capital due to the *sankin kōtai*. According to other temple archive in Ryūgenji called *Okudaira kō kakeihōgō; Ryūgenji kiritsu hōkei*, or "The Family Lineage of the Lord Okudaira; the History and Lineage of Ryūgenji," containing the original hand-written record of the history of Ryūgenji by the Lord Okudaira Masashige

³³⁶ *Okudaira ke denki* (1684), *Ryūshoin keidai kiroku* (1701), *Okudaira kō kakeihōgō; Ryūgenji kiritsu hōkei* (1741). Also *Ryūsho Ryūgenji shi* written and compiled by Matsubara Taidō in 1927. He has asked me to rewrite the history of Ryūgenji.

³³⁷ 龍源院殿徳翁道見大居士

himself, the temple's previous name was Ryūshōin, originally built before the seventh year of Eiroku, or 1564. The Lord's notes tell the reason that he saw the mark of that date on the fortune slip box and the box for talismans for easy births set in Ryūshōin's Kannon Hall dedicated to the Water-moon kannon. However, he notes the almost 110 years of no history and no record of Ryūshōin from 1564 to 1676 as "the time of Ryūshōin's destruction." It was in 1739 that the Lord Okudaira Masashige became the new founder of Ryūgenji, supplanting the previous founder, Shōreiin no nishuzo, of Ryūshōin, and changed the temple's name from Ryūshōin to Ryūgenji. In this context, Jishōji and Ryūgenji have been closely related through the Okudaira family.

What is hermeneutically interesting about this point is the fact that Hakuin sent his painting, "Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji," to the priest, Sozan of Jishōji. I have investigated whether Hakuin actually described the Okudaira processions in the painting, but we do not know the exact answer—I could not discern the family's decisively unique symbols, like heraldry, on the warriors' ornaments such as war fans and bristle-spears during the *sankin kōtai*. First of all, Hakuin does not describe any evidence of it in order to determine which daimyō it is. However, it is interesting to add a new possible view that Hakuin creates his painting of the daimyō processions of the Lord Okudaira who controlled the area where Jishōji is located, and this has a special meaning to me. What is important about this view is that the meaning is not primarily in the possible historical fact, but in the significant hermeneutical connection through which I am studying Hakuin as a descendant of an Okudaira temple and as a priest standing in Hakuin tradition. This makes me feel special.

Hakuin is a seminal figure in contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen. In particular, he is regarded as having revived the contemporary Rinzai tradition, which is monopolized by the Hakuin lineage today. This monopolization means that all present

Rinzai priests understand themselves to be direct disciples of Hakuin in the Dharma heritage. In recent years, Hakuin has been remembered as a painter and calligrapher whose reputation as a versatile artist goes beyond the sphere of religion.³³⁸ In both contemporary Rinzai and its closely-affiliated scholarly and intellectual circles, a hagiography of Hakuin has been created, maintained, and elaborated with special attention to his arduous practice and the spiritual aspects of his art. However, one of the most important aspects of his work has been largely overlooked: Hakuin's political critique and plea for social equality and justice in the face of the power and authority of the Tokugawa shogunate, which I have shown by focusing on his works of "Daimyō Procession before Mt. Fuji," "The Figure and Inscription of The Forerunner with a Bristle-Spear," "Ofuku Burning Moxa," "Parental Retribution and A Crippled Beggar on a Wheeled Cart," "Shrimp," and "Ant on a Millstone." These works cannot be defined simply as the visual and artistic product of Hakuin's religious experience.

Being superimposed over his writings, *Oniazami*, *Hebiichigo*, *Kabezoshō*, and *Sashimogusa* (in chronological order), which I have shown in the previous chapter, Hakuin's artwork, which I have considered above, brings about a conclusion: Hakuin is not simply an artist, but a religious man and an extraordinary and ingenious producer of paintings that channeled his writings. This mutual relationship between his writings and paintings means that while Hakuin's art will not be fully understood unless we extend our analysis to his writings, his art should not be equated exclusively with his religious experiences, completely disregarding his social, political, and moral voice—he is also a social critic and reformer to which the tradition gave birth. Hakuin's art being previously understood in such a traditional and one-sided way of

³³⁸ There was a collection of Hakuin's paintings, which was called *Yōrosen*, published in 1759 when Hakuin was 79 by the Lord Ōzeki Masuoki of Kurobane Clan, which is today located in Tochigi Prefecture. Moreover, some of his paintings are also included in the work *Kasshi-yawa*, which is the collection of Matura Seizan's essays. He was the daimyō of Hizen-hirato domain, what is now the northern part of Nagasaki Prefecture.

emphasizing on experience is the tradition's highly selective textual construction of what should be remembered and what should be forgotten about Hakuin. This is a selective reconstruction dating from, more or less, the twentieth century, the reconstruction developed around the elite Zen establishment up through today. Thus its purpose is largely ideological. The selective data of religious figures often represent the "best" a given culture has to offer its deceased and, used alone, are potentially misleading indications in cultural historical reconstructions. The meaning of these reconstructions, then, is not primarily in their historicity but in the significant modifications achieved by the agency of how Hakuin should be remembered.

Looking at Hakuin's political paintings, as well as his political writings, his concern for social justice is not simply an isolated example of who Hakuin was. Rather it can be seen as a dominant theme evident in his life. Let me repeat this: Hakuin was a fearless fighter for social justice whose campaign on behalf of farmers resulted in his condemnation of the Tokugawa elites' abuses of power and authority as they exploited the lower classes. Asking the question of how the art of one of Japan's most illustrious religious figures can, in fact, be seen as an effective political protest, Hakuin's art shows that his moral voice with political and social criticism of power and authority must be reevaluated and added as one of the critical components of who Hakuin was, in writing a new, more accurate history of this figure. This new reading of Hakuin can be used to reexamine some of the moral crises of our own times involving abuses of power, injustice, and the many violations of human bodies and spirits we see around us every day. Reclaiming this aspect of Hakuin restores a moral voice. To delimit him with essentialist or Orientalist experiential aesthetics is to diminish his use of the visual medium as an expression of his broader moral project.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary Rinzai Zen Buddhism, the concept that meditation and enlightenment (*kenshō* or *satori*) express the core Zen experience has been critically important yet malleable. With the primary emphasis on “experience,” Rinzai Zen has operated well in its experiential world of multiple approaches, meanings, and practices that helped elevate the sect to its present establishment in the larger landscape of Japanese religions. Both priestly and scholarly interests in this Zen order have been focused exclusively on famous masters, meditation, *kōans*, philosophical concepts, and the “high as well as elite culture” aspects of the tradition, i.e., the tea ceremony and the lineage transmission. As a consequence, the previous privileging of this side of Zen has obscured a far more ethically or religiously valuable picture of the other side of Zen.³³⁹

This dissertation is an attempt to rehabilitate this “other side of Zen” by focusing on the Tokugawa-Rinzai master, Hakuin. In this study, I explored the dynamics of tradition formation, invention, and maintenance and the role of cultural memory in tradition: I focused on how cultural memory, socially constructed and shaped through its selective process of remembrance, forgetting, and invention, works in the making of a religious community. I considered how the image of Hakuin has been heavily crafted in the development of contemporary Rinzai Zen, as the entire Orientalist and essentialist tradition has given rise to the certain categories and values that define the Zen world as well as the field of Zen studies. By doing so, I investigated the creation of a legacy of Hakuin which has long ignored his considerable role as a social critic and reformer. I brought his strong moral voice

³³⁹ I borrow the phrase “the other side of Zen” from Duncan Ryūken Williams’ recent publication, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). This work has been an inspiration for my project that rehabilitates Hakuin’s voice, long neglected behind the idealization of dominant “official” interpretations of him.

against the abuse of political power and authority that intensified social injustice and inequality for farmers or lower class people, which finally culminated in rebellions. I strongly believe that this aspect of Hakuin might better present him in actual practice as a more ethical and religious man, rather than as merely a static ideal of the tradition.

This study of Hakuin highlighted a cultural, ideological critique of memory, tradition, and the various social forces that constrain and limit the direction of tradition formation, (re)invention, and transmission. I argued that a religious tradition is a continually emerging phenomenon shaped and reshaped through its representations in a specific historical context. I also argued that tradition is not primarily a concrete social reality. Instead, it is a social and cultural object that is always crafted through the highly selective decisions of people who see themselves as members of the tradition; thus, tradition constantly fluctuates, designed to meet the needs and agendas of the present as to what the tradition and its past should be. I maintained that the Hakuin tradition is the best example to illustrate that tradition is a socially and culturally determined construct and has a performative function in its dynamic process of formation, (re)invention, and transmission. This view provided the necessary context for analyzing the notion that presenting and representing oneself as a tradition or culture through a series of memory, image, and interpretation is a performative choice, a strategic move that questions and reinforces the previous classifications to maintain the tradition itself. The Hakuin we remember today is a product that continues to be produced out of this creative mechanism of tradition.

In the process of this cultural, ideological critique of the Rinzaï-Hakuin tradition, however, I knew that I could not simply dismiss the traditional view as purely ideological. It is precisely due to the hermeneutical significance of forming, developing, and transmitting the tradition, the significance that reveals the tradition's not static, but dynamic, active, and creative nature in which people begin to accept the

invented nature of their traditions as the very source of their authenticity, partly out of necessity and partly out of a perceived validation of the dialogic nature of tradition. What people do, what they produce here, is not simply their creation and is in fact much greater than the creation because people live their lives in it. I hope that this study strives to contribute to a significant inquiry into the nature of tradition not only as a pervasive and enduring motif in a chain of history, but, perhaps more importantly, as a powerful living force influencing the directions of human thought and action.

Although I said that my work of revealing the “other side of Hakuin” is an attempt to rehabilitate a neglected part of who he was, I must know that this rehabilitation simultaneously becomes a reconstruction of this figure. This is an inevitable consequence of interpretation. In a funny way, we are always a part of our interpretive projects.

Here is an interesting story from the *Shasekishū*, the collection of Buddhist popular tales, in which four monks, imitating Vimalakīrti’s silence, vowed to conduct seven days of silence. On the first night, when the light was dying, one of them called a servant to relight the candle. The second monk pronounced: “You are not supposed to talk.” The third monk cut in: “You two have broken your vow.” The fourth monk announced in triumph: “I am the only one who didn’t talk!”³⁴⁰ I sense that to position, victoriously, my attempt to rehabilitate Hakuin’s long-silenced voice from the past as purely non-constructive while dissolving the traditional view of this Zen master into an ideological construct is to become this fourth monk who naively sees his vantage point give him an advantage over others. Hakuin died 240 years ago. Our remembering of this brilliant master is always a re-creative memory process.

The history of Hakuin must be reevaluated and certainly remains to be written. I hope that my work will be a solid and innovative first step in the direction of

³⁴⁰ Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, p. 269.

showing a neglected, silenced, and even repressed aspect of this considerable figure. By demonstrating the necessity of incorporating cultural and ideological criticism into the study of memory and tradition, I also hope that my work will be a small contribution to a wider understanding of a significant moral voice in Japanese Zen tradition.

Let me return to the story of my grandfather introduced in the Preface.

It is a sticky July evening in 2008, a day before the *Obon* ceremony of our temple, Ryūgenji. My grandfather continues to recount Hakuin's enthusiasm for teaching, overlapping his own 76-year experience of teaching. I shut the door to his room, muffling the noise of the ceremony preparation that swells from the kitchen and living rooms, the laughter and the instruction of the disciple priests and the women temple followers who are all helping with the *Obon* preparations. My grandfather turns to his second story, "My Practice." He says, "Ma-chan [my nickname among my family], being this age, my practice is reading, writing, and speaking while I am getting hard of hearing, because my motto is 'lifelong practice; retirement upon death.'" He continues with a wide smile, "But I decided to extend my retirement. The day of my death is the first day of my teaching in hell. Not quite like the metaphor, 'I am a thousand winds that blow,' I am not in my grave." "Why will you be in hell?" I ask. He says with a smile, "Otherwise, I will not see you!" He is a Zen priest full of humor to the end.

I smile back at my grandfather. In a few minutes my mother will come to this room to bring his dinner. "Ma-chan," she will say, opening the door with two knocks, "here you are. Someone is looking for you." After hastily explaining the dinner menu to my grandfather, she will add, "There are a lot of preparations going on in the kitchen and people who are cutting up all of the ingredients for *chirashi-zushi* [a kind of mixed vinegared rice with pickled vegetables] for 200 people visiting during

tomorrow's ceremony. Come and help us." "Give greetings properly on behalf of your father to these people who are pitching in to help, since he has his talks in Nagoya tonight and won't be home until tomorrow morning before the ceremony."

I will apologize, close my "conversation notes," folding over a small corner of a page to mark my place. I will walk to the kitchen with my mother, join the group of 8 people who, chatting with one another, are shredding carrots, *shiitake* mushrooms, and *abura-age* [deep-fried bean curd], and I will help two people who are washing 200 blue Western-style dishes for the sushi. Eventually, at my mother's insistence, I will eat as well, responding to those middle-aged ladies' questions about my studies, about New York, about my wife, about my plan to have babies, and about my future plans. After dinner, I will help the priests who are preparing the temple's main hall for the ceremony, by vacuuming the hall, covering the entire space with red carpets, and setting up 150 chairs, and I will help my brothers, Shigeki and Yoshiki, who are cleaning up and decorating the Buddhist altars, and setting up many offerings of food and drink on the altars. I will watch my mother bring offering after offering to us. As the hours of the evening pass, I will grow distracted, anxious to return to talk with my grandfather, who, however, has already gone to bed, just moments ago, keeping to his ordinary routine and sleeping next to his wife, Shizuko, 96 years old, who has been incapacitated by strokes and yet is lifting her left hand to me wordlessly. In my line of sight, near her moving hand, I will find against the covers the open volume which my grandfather has left behind by his dinner table and which shows on its opened page Hakuin's calligraphy, "Homage to the Great Bodhisattva of Hell," which he was talking to me about earlier as his favorite work of Hakuin's art.

I go back to my room, to be alone. I lean back against the headboard of my bed, adjusting a pillow behind my back, and hear his words resonating in my mind: "The day of my death is the first day of my teaching in hell." In a few minutes I will go

downstairs, rejoin the preparations, and my family. But for now my mother is distracted, laughing at the stories her friends are telling her, unaware of her son's absence. For now, I start to write, having by my side the picture of Hakuin's calligraphy: "Homage to the Great Bodhisattva of Hell," or "*Namu jigoku daibosatsu.*"

GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE

- Amaterasu ōmikami 天照大神
 Ari ni us zu 蟻に白図
 Bankei Yōtaku 盤珪永琢
 Baso Dōitsu 馬祖道一
 Bukkō 仏光 (国師)
 bunraku 文楽
 bushidō 武士道
 Buzen 豊前
 Daie Sōkō 大慧宗杲
 Daihi Jōshō Zenji 大非浄聖禪師
 daiichiza 第一座
 Daikyōin 大教院
 Dainichi nyorai 大日如来
 Daishū Zenjo 提州禪怒
 Dajōkan 太政官
 Dewa sanzan 出羽三山
 Dōgen 道元
 dōjō 道場
 Dokugo shingyō 毒語心經
 Dōkyō Etan 道鏡慧端
 Ebi 海老
 Eisei bunko 永青文庫
 Emperor Gosakuramachi 御桜町天皇
 Emperor Nakamikado 中御門天皇
 Engakuji 円覚寺
 Enmei jikku kannongyō 延命十句觀音經
 ensō-zu 円相図
 Fudō 不動
 Fuji daimyō gyōretsu zu 富士大名行列図
 Furukawa Gyōdō 古川堯道
 fushō Zen 不生禪
 ga no Zen 画の禪
 Gantō Zenkatsu 巖頭全藏
 Gasan Jitō 峨山慈悼
 Gassan 月山
 geke shujyō 下化衆生
 giga 戯画
 Gijyōma-zu 蟻邊磨図
 Ginshuzo ni atau 銀首座に与ふ
 Giten Genshō 義天玄詔
 gogo no shugyō 後吾の修行
 gohyaku nenkan shitsu 五百年間出
 gongen 権現
 Gozan 五山
 Hagakure 葉隠
 Haguro 羽黒
 Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴
 Hakuin ki 白隠忌
 Hakuin oshō nempu 白隠和尚年譜
 Hakuin oshō zenshū 白隠和尚全集
 Hakuin kōroku 白隠廣録
 Hakuin hōgoshū 白隠法語集
 Hakuin to sono deshitachi 白隠とその弟子たち
 Hakuin zenjishū 白隠禪師集
 Hakuin zenji hōgo zenshū 白隠禪師法語全集
 Hakuin zenji jihitsu kokuhon shūsei 白隠禪師自筆刻本集成
 Hakuyūshi 白幽子
 Hebiichigo 辺鄙以知吾
 Heirinji 平林寺
 Hinasan taikyōji Kokurin Rōshi ni teisuru sho 比奈山退去時鵠林老師に

呈する書
 Hizzen hasunoike 肥前蓮池
 Hōjō Tokimune 北条時宗
 Hōkyōji monzeki 宝鏡寺門跡
 Hōnen 法然
 honrai muichimotsu 本来無一物
 honzan 本山
 Hosokawa Keiichi 細川景一
 Hosokawa Moritatsu 細川護立
 hōtō 法燈
 hyōgenka 表現家
 Ikeda Munemasa 池田宗政
 Ikeda Tsugumasa 池田継政
 Ike Taiga 池大雅
 Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純
 Imakita Kōsen 今北洪川
 Ina Hanzaemon Tadaoki 伊奈半左衛門忠宥
 ingyōkaku 因行格
 Inzan Ien 隱山惟琰
 Ishii Mitsuo 石井光雄
 Itsumadegusa 壁生草
 jihitsu kokuhon 自筆刻本
 jihitsu shin'pon 自筆真本
 jikishi ninshin kenshō jōbutsu 直指人心 見性成佛
 Jishōji 自性寺
 Jizō 地藏
 Jōdo shinshū 浄土真宗
 Jōdoshū 浄土宗
 jōkyū bodai 上求菩提
 Jōmyōshin no miya 浄明心院宮
 jōruri 浄瑠璃
 Jōshōmyōin no miya 浄照明院宮
 jūshoku 住職
 Kabezoshō 壁訴訟
 kabuki 歌舞伎
 kanchō 管長
 Kanzanji 寒山寺
 kagyōkaku 果行格
 kakochō 過去帳
 Kanhotsubo bodaishin no ge; tsuketari Mikakimori 観発菩提心の偈 附けたり御垣守
 Kaiankokugo 槐安国語
 kambun 漢文
 Kannon 観音
 Kanzan Egen (Musō Daishi) 関山慧玄 (無相大師)
 Kanzan shisen daikimon 寒山詩闡提記聞
 Kasshi yawa 甲子夜話
 Katō Shōshun 加藤正俊
 kazoku-shugi 家族主義
 Keikyoku sōdan 荆棘叢談
 Keisōdokuzui 荆叢毒蘂
 kenshō 見性
 Keyari gasan 毛鎗画賛
 Kiichiji 帰一寺
 Kinko zenrin sōdan 近古禅林叢談
 Kinse zenrin genkōroku 近世禅林言行録
 Kinse zenrin sobōden 近世禅林僧宝伝
 Kinsho mokuroku 禁書目録
 Kita Shirakawa 北白川
 kōan 公案
 Kohiki uta 粉引歌
 koji 居士
 Kokuseiji 国清寺
 kokutai 国体

Kōmyō daibontenō 光明大梵天王
 Kōno Taitsū 河野太通
 Kōshōin monzeki 光照院門跡
 Kurobane 黒羽
 Kyōbushō 教部省
 kyōdan 教団
 Kyōdōshoku 教導職
 kyōgen 狂言
 Kyoto shorin gyōjikamigumi shoshōmon
 hyōmoku 京都書林行事上組諸証文
 標目
 Kyoto shorin nakama kiroku 京都書林
 仲間記録
 Kyūyū no sō no hihan ni kotaeru 旧友
 の僧の批判に答える
 Manzan Dōhaku 卍山道白
 Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen 白隠
 禅師座禅和讃
 Matsubara Taidō 松原泰道
 Matsudaira keizu 松平系図
 Matsudaira ki 松平記
 Matsudaira Shigenobu 松平昌信
 Matsugaoka bunko 松ヶ岡文庫
 Matsuji 末寺
 Matsura Seizan 松浦静山
 Meiji Emperor 明治天皇
 Meiji tenō ki 明治天皇紀
 Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方
 Mori Daikyō 森大狂
 mu 無
 mu no geijutsu 無の芸術
 Myōki Sōseki 妙喜宗績
 Myōshinji denomination 妙心寺派
 Myōshin kaisanki 妙心開山忌
 Myōshinji ten 妙心寺展
 Myōshinji Shūmuhonjo 妙心寺宗務本
 所
 Nabeshima Naotsune 鍋島直恒
 naikan no hō 内観の法
 Nakatsu han 中津藩
 Namu jigoku daibosatsu 南無地獄大
 菩薩
 Nanpō Jōmyō (Daiō Kokushi) 南浦
 紹明 (大応国師)
 nanso no hō 軟酥の法
 Naze ima hakuin ga ka 何故今白隠画
 か
 Nembutsu Zen 念仏禅
 nengu 年貢
 Nichiren 日蓮
 nihonjinron 日本人論
 nihon Rinzai Zen chūkō no so 日本臨
 济禅中興の祖
 nikujiki saitai 肉食妻帯
 Nippō Sōshun 日峰宗舜
 Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎
 Nonomura Genryō 野々村玄龍
 obon お盆
 Ogino Dokuon 荻野独園
 Ofuku okyō zu お福お灸図
 Okayama han (Bizen han) 岡山藩
 (備前藩)
 Oki 隠岐
 Okudaira Masashige 奥平昌成
 Omodakaya 沢瀉屋
 Oniazami 於仁安佐美
 onjō shugi 温情主義
 Oradegama 遠羅天釜
 Ō-Tō-Kan 応燈関
 Ōzeki Masuoki 大関増興

Rashōmon 羅生門
 Rikukawa Taiun 陸川堆雲
 Rinzaïroku 臨濟錄
 rōhatsu jishū 臘八示衆
 rokudō 六道
 Ryōanji 龍安寺
 Ryōkan 良寛
 Ryōmonji 龍門寺
 Ryūgenji 龍源寺
 Ryūshōin 龍翔院
 Ryūtakū Kaisō Shinkī Dokumyō Zenji
 Nempu 龍澤開祖神機独妙禪師年譜
 Ryūunji 龍雲寺
 Sakushin osana monogatari 策進幼稚物
 語
 sankin kōtai 參勤交代
 Sashimogusa さしも草
 sassho 拶所
 sedai 世代
 Segaki Festival 施餓鬼会
 Seikidō 成篋堂
 Seizenjikō daishi (daisu) 清然自香大姉
 sekishu no onjō 隻手の音聲
 Sengai Gibon 仙崖義梵
 Sesshū 雪舟
 Shaku Sōen 釈宗演
 Shasekishū 沙石集
 Shinbatsu izariguruma zu 親罰いざり
 車図
 Shinkī Dokumyō Zenji 神機独妙禪師
 Shinran 親鸞
 Shinsan zenseki mokuroku 新纂
 禪籍目録
 Shōbō Genzō 正法眼蔵
 Shōinji 松蔭寺
 Shōju rōjin 正受老人
 Shōreiin no ama 松嶺隱之尼
 Shōshū Kokushi 正宗国師
 shūgendō 修験道
 Shūhō Myōchō (Daitō Kokushi) 宗峰
 妙超 (大燈国師)
 sōdō 僧堂
 Sokkōroku kaienfusetsu 息耕録開筵
 普説
 Sōtō 曹洞
 Sozan Sosō 祖山祖帚
 suibokuga 水墨画
 Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真
 Suiō Genro 遂翁元蘆
 Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙
 Taikan Bunshū 大觀文珠
 taikyō senpu undō 大教宣布運動
 Taishō 大正
 Taiyōzaddokai 退養雜毒海
 Takujū Kosen 卓洲胡僊
 Tankai 譚海
 Tenmangu 天満宮
 toiya 問屋
 Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光
 Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康
 Tōrei Enji 東嶺円慈
 Tōshōgū goengi 東照宮御縁起
 Tōshōgū goyuikun 東照宮御遺訓
 Tōshō sōgyōki kōi 東照宮創業記考異
 Totō Tenjin 唐渡天神
 Ten-phrase Kannon Sūtra for Prolonging
 Life 延命十句觀音經
 Tsuji Zenosuke 辻善之助
 Tsumura Sōan 津村淙庵
 Uchinoko sōdō 内ノ子騒動

umebachi no mon 梅鉢の紋
unsui 雲水
Wuzhum Shifan 無準師範
yamabushi 山伏
Yabukōji 藪柑子
Yaemugura 八重葎
Yasenkanna maki no ge 夜船閑話
卷之下
Yokota Nanrei 横田南嶺
yōkyoku 謡曲
Yōrosen 揺櫓船
Yudono 湯殿
zazen 坐禪
Zenbunka kenkyūjo 禪文化研究所
zenbyō 禪病
Zendō 禪道
zendō 禪堂
zenga 禪画
zen no ga 禪の画
Zenshu 禪守
zeppan no bu 絶版之部

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