

Liberating the Koan

The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism

Edited by STEVEN HEINE & DALE S. WRIGHT. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. xii, 322 pages. ISBN 0-19-511748-4, US\$52.00 hardcover; ISBN 0-19-51174-9, US\$21.95 paperback.

Opening a Mountain: Kōans of the Zen Masters

STEVEN HEINE. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. xiv, 200 pages. ISBN 0-19-513586-5. US\$25.00 hardcover.

Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Kōan Practice

Compiled, translated, and annotated by VICTOR SŌGEN HORI. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003. xiv, 764 pages. ISBN 0-8248-2284-6. US\$37.00 hardcover.

Zen Grove Handbook for Zen Practice

English translation and editing by ZENRIN CHIDŌ ROBERT E. LEWIS. Jacksonville: Zen Sangha Press (distributed by the Zen Studies Society Press, Livingston Manor, N.Y.), 2001. xiv, 562 pages. ISBN 0-9651499-4-3. US\$39.95 hardcover.

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Koans 公案 have fascinated audiences and perplexed scholars outside Asia for nearly a century, especially since D. T. Suzuki popularized Zen Buddhism. The numerous explanations in popular accounts and historical surveys of Zen, the dozens of philosophical and psychological interpretations and handful of historical investigations in scholarly journals and anthologies, and the nearly countless commentaries in publications directed at practitioners, have neither diminished the intrigue nor settled the matter of their meaning. The books under review augment a fresh wave of scholarship in English on this rather unique genre of literature and mode of Buddhist practice.

The Kōan compiles eleven previously unpublished articles by experts in the field of Ch'an or Zen studies. As the editors' Introduction makes clear, the articles deliberately avoid a focus on the psychological or mystical aspects, and critique the tradition's own self-narrative, which includes the conceit that koans defy scholarly analysis. The aim is to bring us to a deeper historical understanding that places the koan tradition in political, linguistic, and popular cultural contexts. To be sure, there are significant gaps in the book's purview, some acknowledged by the contributors: little if any account of the Korean koan tradition, research

into the history of the disciple's private consultation with the master, anecdotal evidence gleaned from published *teishō* 提倡 or Zen masters' lectures on koans, description of the literary study that is part of the monk's koan training, and systematic analysis of ritual behavior in the tradition and of the genre of capping phrases attached to koans. Although the use of lineage charts has become controversial, it would have helped orient the reader; and the lack of a glossary with the Chinese characters for the maze of names and technical terms in Chinese and Japanese is truly regrettable, especially since the volume does not standardize transliteration and has numerous typographical errors. (The terms *Ch'an* and *Zen* are both used, as are *kung-an* and *kōan*; this review will simply write *koan* as the generic term, following one author's suggestion.) Despite these gaps, the volume is a veritable gold mine of historical information and insights, at times in tension with one another. It might happen that none of it would help a scrap in a student's task of responding to a koan in an institutional practice situation, but anyone who would spend words on koans had best absorb the knowledge demonstrated in this book first.

A surprising undercurrent of the volume is the ironic parallel between many of its arguments and the standard picture of Ch'an/Zen that they challenge. Just as Ch'an masters were supposed to be iconoclastic, the scholars themselves break down current and traditional images and destroy stereotypes of Zen. John McRae and Albert Welter shatter the image of a golden age of Ch'an in the T'ang with masters spontaneously combusting preconceived ideas; Morten Schlütter and others deconstruct the alleged confrontation between the Lin-chi 臨濟 (J. Rinzai) and Ts'ao-tung 曹洞 (J. Sōtō) schools; and Victor Sōgen Hori debunks the belief that koans are an irrational means to achieve an unconditioned mental experience. Just as koans are imagined to be case precedents set by T'ang masters, research again and again uncovers historical and linguistic precedents to the genre and its practice. Just as Ch'an presented itself as a "special transmission outside the scriptures, not dependent on words or letters," these scholars present a heterodox view of a Ch'an that is highly literate and literary.

Each of the eleven densely written chapters could easily be read as the germ of an entire book and deserves extensive review. The most overtly iconoclastic chapter is T. Griffith Foulk's historical overview of "The Form and Function of Koan Literature." The primary use of this literature, Foulk argues, is not to induce an enlightenment experience but to assert authority. The rhetoric proclaimed that an enlightened one was "seeing eye to eye" with the Buddhas and patriarchs, but the literary frame suggests that one Ch'an master was trying to best another. Koan commentaries and collections are structured by a hierarchy of increasing, often preemptive authoritative voices that usurp statements by previous masters and posit the contribution of the most current author as the last word, final arbiter, or ultimate authority. Such assertion of the current master's authority usually had to be made indirectly, since his position as commentator was ostensibly subordinate to the original's; and since according to *prajñāpāramitā* logic, last words are ultimately false, so the master had to say that there can be no last word. The precedents of *kung-an* in Chinese jurisprudence and their literary framing in Ch'an collections reinforce the structure of a master judging his interlocutor or his predecessor.

Foulk's re-contextualizing of *kung-an* also discloses the historical process of their extraction from a larger body of literature, the anachronism of always linking their use to the practice of seated meditation, and their connection to the monastic rituals of "ascending the

hall” or “entering the room” (of the master). Foulk’s attention to behavioral clues reveals how koan literature came to function as a body of standards that regulate ritual behavior as well as rationalize a master’s authority. His analysis of the koan’s rumored inscrutability takes an ironic twist, however. He argues that the literary frame of many koans which on the surface are “entirely mundane and unremarkable,” sets them up as “impenetrable to the intellect” (p. 39), and once one sees through the frame and realizes that words are arbitrary or useless, one is no longer deluded by the literary trick. Satori or enlightenment then is a matter of interpretative ability. Here Foulk acts like his own kind of Ch’an master, removing the matter from logical analysis, realizing that koan literature is a highly structured and imaginative literary genre, and exposing it as such (p. 41), thus breaking its secret promise of enlightenment. His structural argument, moreover, turns on his locution of “final,” “ultimate,” or “last” in interpreting the place of every latest word on a koan case, for without that locution there would be no need to see the series of comments on koans as hierarchical.¹ Yet the point that the master is demonstrating his authority as much as his insight still stands, and though this innovative chapter does not give us the last word on koans, it clearly presents one authoritative voice on the matter.

In contrast to hierarchy, “structural parity between the student as incipient patriarch and the patriarch as realized student” (p. 70) is what John McRae considers a precondition for the emergence of the “encounter dialogues” that pervade koan literature and often describe enlightenment experiences. McRae’s investigation of the antecedents of these two-sided exchanges between Ch’an master and disciple shows that they can presuppose a number of elements in Buddhist practice, including an expectation of a possible enlightenment that cannot be directly caused but at best catalyzed, a student’s faith in a path to future liberation and its disillusionment by a teacher, or an investment in the idea of immediacy, the “here and now” of the seeker’s quest. Our knowledge of encounter dialogues and their precedents, on the other hand, comes from fixed written language, not presence or witness of oral exchanges; and the transcriptions that constitute the genre deliberately used techniques to dramatize a sense of spontaneity and immediacy, which in truth was replicated in writing and open to ritualization.

McRae traces the gradual emergence of the encounter dialogue through the historical phases of Ch’an in the T’ang and Sung dynasties. He finds antecedents in the doctrinal but monological “questions about things” of the Northern School, and in Buddhist interrogations that used metaphorical language as early as the eighth century. The sudden appearance (in writing) of the mature oral genre occurs in the mid-tenth century, in accounts of Ma-tsu 馬祖 who lived two hundred years earlier. By that time social interaction and the use of anecdote were features of Ch’an literature, and fabricated enlightenment stories played a role as well.

¹ We can find a test case for Foulk’s thesis in a story about Ch’an master Yen-t’ou 嚴頭, who was indeed famous for his “last word” Ch’an (see p. 85 of Heine’s *Opening the Mountain*). Case 51 of the *Pi-yen lu* 碧巖錄 [Blue cliff record] relates Yen-t’ou’s final repartee in an exchange: “If you want to know the last word—just this!”, which is capped first by the compiler of the *Record*, Hsüeh-tou 雪竇, “This last word is already expressed for you,” and then by commentator Yüan-wu 圓悟, “[This last word] was already there before any words” and “When Hsüeh-tou wrote his last word, he fell into the weeds trying to save people.”

Best known is the story of Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng 慧能, which indicates a shift that made it acceptable to transcribe the probably everyday event of private conversations between teachers and disciples. (We will return to the issue of privacy in the collections of koans or “public cases” later.)

McRae’s shift from questions of historicity to questions about narrative structure and orality is a relief. Whether or not the recorded encounters actually happened, the inscribed dialogues provided a skeleton “upon which teachers and students could improvise” (p. 71). His ambivalence toward certain issues, and his own conundrums, indicate his own occasionally shifting attitude. He calls the first appearance of an extensive form of the encounter dialogue “stunning,” and yet he repeats again at the end of the chapter a conviction that the genre was not without precedent. He wavers between reading texts as recording historical events and seeing them as purely literary and fictional; or between assuming a practice of spontaneous orality behind the written genre and implying that the dialogues represent only ritualized words. Of course both sides could describe the genre, but the reader will sometimes wonder which text does what.

In a chapter on “Mahākāśyapa’s Smile: Silent Transmission and the Kung-an Tradition,” Albert Welter explores how and when Ch’an became a “special transmission outside the teaching.” It was in Sung literature, not the T’ang, much less in the time of the legendary Bodhidharma, who is supposed to have authored the verse claiming Ch’an’s specialness. Welter argues that the prevailing view in T’ang and early Sung was not Ch’an exceptionalism but a “harmony between Ch’an and the teaching” (i.e., the scriptures), even as late as the *Transmission of the Lamp* of 1004, known for its celebration of peculiarly Ch’an lineages. Two decades later another transmission record displaced this view with the “special transmission” doctrine, and then two prefaces to the earlier *Lamp* history expressed the two competing views of Ch’an’s place in Buddhism.

Welter traces the debate between the two views back to syncretist Tsung-mi 宗密 in the ninth century, but shows how it became formative of the whole Ch’an tradition much later in the Sung. Welter’s genealogy of doctrines has the “special transmission” doctrine giving rise successively to the notion of a mystical transmission beyond words, a claim of Ch’an difference and specialness, the development of *kung-an* as a teaching means to promote the doctrine, and the need to establish a connection all the way back to Shakyamuni. This last step is what occurs in case six of the famous koan collection, the *Gateless Barrier* (*Wu-men kuan* 無門關, J. *Mumonkan*), where the Buddha bequeaths the treasury of the true Dharma eye to Mahākāśyapa for smiling upon his holding up a flower. Welter argues, moreover, that the Sung-period innovation of a “special transmission” represented only some Ch’an factions, many of which were reluctant to deny the importance of scriptures.

Several historical views are debunked as myths in this chapter, though not for the first time in recent scholarship: the picture of a T’ang golden age of Ch’an, of a silent transmission leading from the Buddha through Kāśyapa to the T’ang patriarchs and beyond, of a general rejection of scriptures by Ch’an masters, and of a fundamental agreement among them about the identity of their tradition. Welter’s juxtaposition of texts adds fresh perspectives on the historical data, but his special contribution lies in demonstrating one tendency that most Sung masters had in common: an increasing reliance on T’ang scholastic teachings, rituals, and

conventions. His illustration of how and when the myth of a special transmission arose could only be sharpened by more discussion of why.

The difference between the Ch'an of the T'ang and Sung dynasties is a major theme in Ishii Shūdō's 石井修道 chapter. As opposed to the intrinsic enlightenment represented by the T'ang, Ishii sees Sung Ch'an as distinguished by its emphasis on acquired or experienced enlightenment and its cultivation in the practice of *kung-an*, especially in the form of *k'an-hua* 看話 [koan introspection]. Like other authors in the volume, Ishii thus finds an anachronism in the commonplace picture of T'ang patriarchs like Ma-tsu and Lin-chi as suddenly awakening and spurring others on to a great enlightenment. He traces what we could call a text-to-text transmission, but he also cites texts that negate a sense of hierarchy in succeeding teachers. With an aim to clarify the process by which koan collections arose, Ishii focuses on the crucial role of a text known as the *Tsung-men t'ung-yao chi* 宗門統要集 that provided the *Gateless Barrier* with half of its forty-eight cases and deeply influenced the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Pi-yen lu*, J. *Hekiganroku*) and the development of *k'an-hua* Ch'an as well. Readers may find this chapter rather steep going; it is by far the most technical in the volume and would have gained from stylistic editing and translation of many titles it cites. Still, most readers can enjoy the translated excerpts from texts by Ta-hui 大慧, the inventor of *k'an-hua* Ch'an, and Ch'an scholars will profit from its concrete suggestions for further research. My question concerns the discovery that the *Tsung-men* of 1093 repeats many of the stories of the 1004 *Transmission of the Lamp*, but in a "very different terminology." What does that difference tell us about story telling and recording, as opposed to merely copying a source?

Steven Heine is not content to repeat the popular story that T'ang masters like Lin-chi were iconoclasts who heaped scorn on beliefs in the supernatural. His chapter continues his refreshing line of research into the Chinese folklore visible in koan literature by exploring the ambiguous relationship between iconoclasm and supernaturalism in koan cases about Mount Wu-t'ai. This mountain was the site of evocative dances and rituals to evoke the presence of Mañjuśrī, thought to dwell there. Heine's literary history of the pilgrimages is matched by his analysis of various versions of the encounter dialogue between Mañjuśrī and the pilgrim Wu-cho 無著 who (in the *Blue Cliff* version Heine translates in full) is captivated by and then released from the vision of the bodhisattva's temple and the imagined strength of its congregation. This is one of several examples of a fundamental ambiguity in Ch'an discourse, "neither affirming nor denying [the supernatural] while at once evoking yet disarming and disdaining it" (p. 145).

Heine balances the psychological, internal interpretation of the dialogues with a view to their external, social side and reflection of otherness—not Ch'an's otherness and distinctness but the alien forms that threatened its ruse of iconoclasm. The encounter dialogue appears here as a doubled space of contention, not only between master and monk but also between Ch'an and other disciplines, or even between iconoclastic Ch'an and iconographic Ch'an. The encounter might oppose two kinds of religiosity, one communing with spiritual realities in a mysterium tremendum and the other dismissing transcendent symbols and advocating the here and now; but the distinction between the two tended to be overcome by their interplay in the dialogue as a whole. Heine's penchant for seeing more than meets the eye finds layer upon layer of irony, ambiguity, ellipsis and paradox, construction and deconstruction—

leaving the impression that koans are indeed impenetrable. In the end we face the evacuation of meaning with which Heine, quoting Roland Barthes, closes his chapter.

Popularizations of Zen today continue to split the whole school into two traditions, the Lin-chi and the Ts'ao-tung, at least since the twelfth century when other "houses" died out. Supposedly, the Lin-chi sect uses koans to precipitate satori, whereas Ts'ao-tung instead practices silent sitting. Sometimes our current myths add more detail by conjuring up a debate in the 1100s between the Lin-chi master Ta-hui, who promoted "koan introspection," and the Ts'ao-tung master Hung-chih 宏智 who allegedly taught "silent illumination" to the exclusion of koans. Morten Schlütter's chapter shows how oversimplified the popular characterization is. True, the Lin-chi master Ta-hui did attack "silent illumination" as heretical and useless, and advocated concentration on a single word or phrase (the *hua-t'ou* 話頭) of a koan story, such as *wu* 無 (*J. mu*), as a shortcut to enlightenment for laymen. His self-chosen adversaries, however, were masters in Fukien who were reviving the Ts'ao-tung tradition and competing for the financial support of local literati. Ta-hui's polemic prevailed, and soon the famous Wu koan was adopted by Ts'ao-tung masters as well. Although the sectarian consciousness he created was not to last in China, before it died out there it was transmitted to Japan. It is the division in the Japanese heritage that is mistakenly projected back into the whole school.

Schlütter's complex interweaving of historical teachers, textual passages, and hypotheses shows a meticulous command of his subject matter, but the reader who seeks a shortcut to the main points may wish to go directly to the final section, "The Politics of the Kung-an." From the rest, we learn of several other challenges to popular accounts: Even before Ta-hui, both traditions in China used koans, both practiced silent meditation, and both accepted the doctrine of inherent Buddha Nature. If there was a temporary difference in orthopraxis, it turned on whether one should seek "a shattering moment of enlightenment" or cultivate one's inherent enlightenment—hence the *versus* in the chapter's title: "'Before the Empty Eon' versus 'A Dog Has No Buddha-Nature.'"

Schlütter's textual evidence at times undermines both his own view of the crux of the controversy, as well as Ta-hui's criticism of Ts'ao-tung masters. Schlütter quotes stories of several Ts'ao-tung masters in Ta-hui's time who experienced a "great enlightenment" or sudden awakening when hit or forcibly interrupted in trying to say something in response to a koan (pp. 172f). These stories indicate that a breakthrough experience did indeed play a role in the Ts'ao-tung tradition. It would seem either that the difference in praxis was subtle beyond words, or that the stories differ from actual Ts'ao-tung practice and express an accommodation to whatever proved politically expedient. Or perhaps the enlightenment stories of both traditions are just so many dead words. Schlütter himself suggests that these stories with their repeated motifs are as much assertions of the power of the particular tradition as an account of the experience of its masters.

In the clearest chapter in the volume, Dale Wright also undermines the controversy by placing it in the broader context of koan history and "transformative language." He proposes that Ta-hui's *hua-t'ou* interrupted the rich heritage of what we could call a reliance on words, and ironically the practice of reducing a koan to a single critical phrase with no meaning issued into silent illumination. By undercutting conceptual understanding, such practice had the effect of encouraging faith, thus opening Ch'an to the Pure Land tradition with which it

eventually fused. The anti-intellectualism of “koan-contemplation” Ch’an also drove literati elsewhere, in effect helping to form the Neo-Confucianism that came to supersede Ch’an in cultural influence. (Wright’s timing of these influences, however, is challenged by information in the chapter by Michel Mohr, who reminds us that Ta-hui was already preaching to Neo-Confucians, and that the blend of one school of Ch’an with Pure Land practices was already widespread in the Northern Sung). To accommodate to this new competition, Ch’an began to create metaphysical justifications that actually contradicted the point of the practice. We can understand D. T. Suzuki’s attempts to explain that koans are unexplainable as a continuation of this legacy.

Wright discovers in koan history a fascinating interplay of identity and difference that works on several levels. The strange and unusual sayings chosen by compilers of koan collections operated as a “sign of difference,” differentiating the enlightened from the non-enlightened and the original speakers from later contemplators, while identifying those who got the point with buddhas and patriarchs, their state of mind with that of the original speaker. A test of that identity developed when the practitioner had to compose a “capping phrase” that recapitulated the point of the koan or, in later Japanese practice, had to discern which capping phrase from a collection matched his koan. The implication is that the right linguistic expression would match the mind of the original master, indeed of all the buddhas and patriarchs. Wright finds precedents to the transformative language of koans in three linguistic practices outside the Ch’an tradition and drawn from sutras: the use of *dhāraṇī* invoked the power of language to work non-conceptually; the Pure Land’s invocation of the name of Buddha worked to transmit the Buddha-mind; and *kuan* 關 or contradictory passages were contemplated to precipitate a conceptual breakthrough.

Wright notes that koans, in the literal sense of “public records,” paralleled their namesake in the legal system by establishing a set of standards to stop private understanding. He does not mention the pervasive secrecy regarding what occurs in private interviews with the teacher which are signaled by the stock phrase, “entering the abbot’s room [for instruction],” and mentioned even in early Sung sources (see Mohr’s chapter, p. 249). An operative assumption in his chapter seems to be that koan literature can also tell us more or less what went on behind the words, either in public meditation halls, or in private, in the mind of the practitioner. The focus on expressions as traces of an original mind may overlook that which was not captured by language: not a deeper, non-conceptual level, but simply actual practices whether or not evidenced in texts.

Interestingly, the chapter on Ikkyū 一休 and koans by Alexander Kabanoff mentions an example of oral traditions (those of Daitokuji 大徳寺) that, if made accessible, could shed much light on the traditional secrecy. Kabanoff exposes Ikkyū’s highly ambiguous attitude toward koan practice in his analysis of this eccentric monk’s poems. Ikkyū was a master of the koan stories and collections like the *Blue Cliff Record*, but he revered Ta-hui for trying (unsuccessfully as Kabanoff points out) to eradicate that collection and stop further deterioration of Ch’an through routinized practice of literary interpretation. Many of Ikkyū’s poems use koans to denounce koan use as it was standardized in his day. Some poems, Kabanoff suggests, are themselves answers to koans and so function in whole or part much like capping phrases; but his interpretations often leave the reader hanging and seem to confirm Ikkyū’s “unending search for the Absolute without any hope of finding a final

solution" (p. 213). The unmentioned irony in this chapter is that Kabanoff's scholarship shows how inaccessible these poems would be without his detailed tracing of literary allusions and intertextual references. It is as if the poems force us to engage in the kind of literary interpretation that, when successful, tells us what a lot of waste the endeavor has been.

A kind of text that celebrates secrecy is the topic of the chapter by the late Sōtō scholar, Ishikawa Rikizan 石川力山, writing about *kirigami* 切紙, the strips of cut paper (and later bound volumes) used to transmit secret instructions, usually about rituals. In the medieval Sōtō tradition, a kind of *kirigami* that gave questions and answers related to a single koan most likely evolved in turn from secret koan manuals, compilations of the capping phrases of a teacher in the lineage, and Chinese and Japanese koan collections. Each lineage transmitted its own documents, and possession of *kirigami* could count as proof of Dharma transmission. Ironically to this reader, understanding their words and accompanying diagrams seems to presuppose rather than document an initiation into esoteric teachings (at least in the two supplied examples). Ishikawa notes that the Tokugawa-era Sōtō patriarch Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方 denounced them as useless concoctions, but scholars will agree with Ishikawa in considering them a relatively untapped source of historical information about koans.

To compensate somewhat for the seal of secrecy placed on disclosure of one's own koan practice, as well as for the limits of textual evidence, Michel Mohr includes recent personal observations by practitioners and teachers, in an explanatory mix that generally keeps his sources in historical perspective but sometimes obscures his main points. Focusing on koan practice in the Rinzai tradition especially since Hakuin 白隱 (1686–1769), Mohr's "Emerging from Nonduality" is another example of erudite scholarship that goes well beyond rampant stereotypes. Sōtō Zen in Japan incorporated koan practice until the 1800s; the Rinzai tradition displays as much discontinuity as consistency in its reliance on koans; and strong sectarian consciousness in Zen is largely a post-Meiji development. The very word *kōan* is a generic term covering several different literary and meditative practices, including not only its function as a catalyst of the Great Doubt leading to a great release, but also, in Mohr's interpretation, its use as a screen to catch the practitioner's understanding and allow the teacher to test it. In their diverse functions, koans were not confined to monks sitting in stillness but advocated by Hakuin and his model Ta-hui as "meditative work in movement" for lay practitioners. Teachers such as Hakuin's disciple, Tōrei 東嶺, regarded *kenshō* 見性 awakening not as the property of Zen but as basic to Taoist, Confucian, and even Shintō teachings. Finally, the practice is directed not towards an ultimate experience called *satori* 悟, but beyond awareness of nonduality and toward its integration into daily life "until no trace of transient exalted states remains" (p. 266).

Mohr provides useful pointers in his digressions on the somatic dimension in and educational parallels to actual koan practice. Following others, Hakuin circumvented discursive thinking in the practice by teaching right body posture and attention to breathing, with references to a Taoist vision of the body as a system for circulating *ch'i* 氣 energy through the *tan-t'ien* 丹田. Contrary to scholarly as well as popular accounts, there is no textual evidence in Hakuin's Zen for a sequential practice of five types of koan, much less for a system. Still, the intention of the Rinzai curriculum is to achieve levels of increasing awareness—the word that Mohr prefers to *experience*. What Mohr seems unaware of is that

several of his major historical claims remain unspecified; the section on the “Three Events [of the Tokugawa era] That Forced Innovation,” for example, never specifies what the innovations were, indeed what exactly the content of Hakuin’s transformation of Rinzai Zen was. Mohr’s immersion into Zen texts and oral accounts sometimes leaves us, if not gasping for air, then grasping for connections.

Victor Sōgen Hori’s chapter, “Kōan and *Kenshō* in the Rinzai Zen Curriculum,” does permit a glimpse into the private side and an even deeper probe into actual koan practice. His linguistic and phenomenological analysis of how koans function is directed against views that take koans as instruments which work against reason to induce a breakthrough to non-cognitive, pure consciousness. His critique of the instrumentalist interpretation leads to an argument for a “realizational” understanding, drawn from the Sōtō master Dōgen’s framework as well as his own experience as a Rinzai monk. In the realizational interpretation, the koan is a performance of *kenshō*, which is not a dualistic “seeing (one’s own true) nature” as the term literally translates, but insight into non-duality. In actual practice, the koan transforms from an object to be contemplated into the very activity working within the practitioner; “the monk himself in his seeking is the koan” (p. 288), and realizing (recognizing and actualizing) this is *kenshō*. Essential to the practice is the development of the monk’s *kyōgai* 境界 or observable mind-set until he can act intently but un-self-consciously. Equally important is the development of *hōri* 法理 or the kind of “dharma reason” that engages the mind in understanding the rationale of the koan.

Hori does not so much dismiss other accounts of Zen and koans as re-tune them. Koans in their linguistic embodiment are not irrational, yet do often contain contradictory or paradoxical statements as his examples show. They are not illogical but demand the unusual logic of non-duality. The practice as a whole is not anti-intellectual and non-conceptual; the monastic curriculum includes intellectual study, but intellectual understanding is only one component of *kenshō*, for nonduality must be experienced and not merely cognized. Realization is not a state of mind, unmediated and unconditioned by thought and language, but a way of being and behaving whose *shōi* 聖意 expression, true to non-duality, may express something unconditioned. It is not a breakthrough to pure experience but a breakdown of dualistic thinking. From the side of conventional understanding and truth, realization appears to differ from the conventional; from the side of inconceivable liberation, however, it really is inseparable and nothing but the realization of duality. The reader will notice the number of dualities doubled in Hori’s analysis: we have not only dual and nondual, but apparent and real, first appearances and second appearances, and of course two sides. Hori’s analogy of a one-sided mirror still presents a barrier: from the right side one can see through such a mirror, but a pane of glass still separates. When I turned the page and saw a diagram to explain this “nonduality of duality and nonduality,” my heart really sank, and I was left with another koan: if nonduality and duality both appear as duality, how do you tell the difference?

Hori’s ensuing linguistic analysis better performs the task of clarification. Drawing on John Austin’s analysis of performative utterances, he shows how many koans function as puns, single words or phrases with two senses understood at once, together. The pun of the koan in its linguistic guise is between not just two senses, but also two functions, descriptive and performative, or even between two performances, as in the case of Chao-chou’s 趙州

"Go wash your bowl" that as an answer to a request for instruction performs both a monastery rule and the fact of nonduality. For the great doubters of the scholarly study of Zen, this incisive chapter, capping the more historical contributions of the other authors, ends the book with an apt admonition: "only in thought and language can enlightenment be realized" (p. 309).

Steven Heine's marvelous new book, *Opening a Mountain*, brings the magic back into Zen. Like the compilers of old in Sung China and Kamakura Japan, Heine gives us a collection of koan cases with his own commentary, this time with a novel focus on the supernatural, mythological, and magical elements in the genre. Intending to complement and enhance conventional, particularly psychological interpretations that emphasize iconoclastic aspects, he uses this focus on the supernatural to select sixty cases from fourteen sources, including several rarely represented in English translation. The title refers to the establishment of a new monastery or teaching lineage, but "opening a mountain" can also connote the benevolent transformation of mountains as dangerous realms and formidable barriers. "Entering a mountain" or "passing through a mountain gate," can mean setting out on a spiritual journey that, as Heine's instructive Introduction and commentary demonstrate, is often fraught with peril or faced with challenges from mysterious forces and beings. A solid grounding both in the kind of historiography presented in *The Kōan* and in folklore studies makes Heine's approach innovative and extraordinarily informative, complementing and adding a lighter touch to his essay in the anthology. The Introduction clearly explains the book's approach and structure as well as the history of its sources, and Heine's style intersperses variety and repetition in a way that makes this an easy book to follow.

The sixty cases are drawn from Dōgen's as well as classical Chinese koan collections and their two major precursors, the recorded sayings of masters and the transmission of lamp histories. This necessarily limited selection nevertheless represents a full spectrum of historical traditions of Zen (Heine uses the more common Japanese term): the early Northern and Ox-head Schools as well as the Southern School attributed to Hui-neng and Ma-tsu, and in addition to the Lin-chi, Ts'ao-tung and Japanese Sōtō lines, an aberrant "Northern style" of Zen surrounding Mt. Wu-t'ai that incorporated esoteric, tantric, and lamaist religiosity (p. 66). The cases are divided into five sections thematizing mountain landscapes, irregular rivals, supernatural forces, symbols of authority, and repentance and self-mutilation. The sections are further subdivided into several motifs, but rather than repeat the structure here, I will mention a few of the motifs at random. In these stories we encounter ferocious tigers that can devour the unprepared or symbolize the enlightened master; goblins, ghosts and demons that dare exorcism and emancipation by a master's rhetoric, ritual, or state of concentration; wild foxes and other "shapeshifting" spirits who can waylay an unsuspecting monk or personify a deviant or devious master; wizards and hermits whose challenging lifestyle or behavior entices the abbot of a nearby temple to "check them out"; a bodhisattva who materializes to bewitch pilgrims and invite his own evaporation by an enlightened word or gesture; and nuns, "Zen grannies" and other troublesome or dangerous women (a staple in Chinese folklore) like "Iron Grindstone," who can crush a monk opponent in dharma combat, or the old woman on Mt. Wu-t'ai who taunts pilgrim monks and dupes them like "sand in rice" and "thorns in mud." Trances, vision, and dreams both point the way and mislead. And the robes or the staffs

and fly whisks wielded by masters symbolize their authority in a duplicitous way, both reinforcing iconoclasm—by immobilizing or striking down attachments—and reinstating the difference between the enlightened master and unenlightened monk. To be iconoclastic or subversive, however, Zen must first refer to icons or presuppose conventional meanings, rituals, and symbols. Koan literature cannot demythologize without invoking and evoking a mythology. From the perspective of historiography, Bodhidharma, for example, is a thoroughly mythical figure, but he is cast as a demythologizing iconoclast who in turn can be satirized as a “red barbarian.”

Heine’s discussion of each case differs from commentary by other modern translators like Thomas and J. C. Cleary, Heinrich Dumoulin, and Wilhelm Gundert, by revealing unexpected connections between various versions of a story as well as the link to the supernatural. His approach also draws attention to the power side of representations of truth, not only the power of the Zen master over rivals, demons, and local gods, but also the power in the successfully asserted authority of the master or his lineage. The intent of many koan stories was to show how the threatening, rivaling or obstructing magical forces can be transformed into friends and icons of the Dharma, or how the supernatural elements in an external environment can be transmuted into symbols of internal realization. Lin-chi, for example, defuses the power of Mañjuśrī and Mt. Wu-t’ai by proclaiming that the only bodhisattva is what’s right here in front of you. But the Zen masters do not always get the better of a situation, and the rhetoric of non-duality does not always prevail in Heine’s reading, in contrast to the usual interpretations in contemporary published *teishō* and Zen teachers’ commentaries for their practitioners, where it seems that if a lineage holder appears in a koan case he can only be venerable and wise (one might compare, for example, Heine’s reading of case 12 of the *Wumen kuan* about Master Jui-yen 瑞巖 who calls out to and answers himself; Heine interprets the case as criticizing Jui-yen).

Heine once again stresses the ambiguity in koan literature that he articulates as its dual structure: its paradoxical and iconoclastic aspect on the one hand and its investment in myth and mystery on the other. And ordinarily he does see nonduality as winning out, the magical and mysterious forces subdued. Yet his analysis seems to disguise another ambiguity in his own stance toward koan literature. On the one hand, he displays the “double folds” of Zen discourse as thoroughly infused with magical and mythological elements—and not only the discourse but the historical institutions as well, if we do believe in a referent outside the text. On the other hand, he frames the magical, mythical, supranormal, “irregular,” esoteric, wild, and mountainous as the Other to Zen (p. 19), as heterodox, contending with, contesting and threatening Zen. This framework in turn implies a normative or central monastic Zen that duels with its fringe rival. Sometimes, Heine sees a “movement back and forth” between the two aspects in a koan case. What his work also shows, however, is a Zen (if we can use one word to name a multitude) that is syncretic to the core, much more interdependent with “folk religion,” Taoism, and other non-Buddhist religions than one usually admits.

There is a similar unrecognized ambiguity, or actually two, in presenting the motif of self-mutilation. First, the cases cited are as often about the mutilation of another as of oneself: Chū-chih 俱胝 cuts off his disciple’s finger, Nan-ch’üan 南泉 cuts the cat in two, Kuei-shan 澗山 has the “ability to cut off the tongues of everyone on earth” (p. 52). The theme of violence in koan literature is aberrant enough to deserve more comment here, and Heine

might have thrown new light on René Girard's *Violence and the Sacred*. Secondly, Heine wavers between recognizing violence literally and reading it as purely metaphorical (pp. 10, 174, 178). If (self-) mutilation was a popular practice in the China of the times, as Heine tell us, then why press the interpretation that considers violent sacrifice "entirely . . . a metaphor or symbol of the severing of attachments . . ." (p. 178)?

Opening a Mountain has a few faults, including an index limited to the personae cited and a map that demarcates broad regions in China but designates only one mountain, Mt. Wu-t'ai. Except for proper names, only the Japanese is given for many originally Chinese terms, notably *kōan*, *Tendai*, and *Zen*. There is no treatment of material from the Kamakura Japanese koan collection *Shōnankattōroku* 湘南葛藤錄, compiled especially to train warriors practicing Rinzai Zen on the "Five Mountains" [*Gozan* 五山]. There is also no mention of perhaps the most famous "irregular" in Zen literature, Han-shan 寒山. He may not be featured in standard koan cases, but Heine does include anecdotes that are not usually recognized as koans (e.g., cases 50 and 55) and might have included one about this madman of Cold Mountain. A few comments run counter to the findings presented in *The Kōan*; this book speaks of a "golden age of Zen" in the T'ang, defines the koan in an instrumentalist manner, and talks about Hakuin's "system" (pp. 7 and 34).

From a more expansive perspective, however, *Opening a Mountain* seems intended for popular as well as scholarly consumption, and truly is a treat to read. It is a welcome addition to Heine's previous two works on the genre.² Although Heine sometimes seems at a loss as to the meaning of a particular statement in a case, the book as a whole re-signifies, re-enchants, and re-mythologizes the stories in a way that avoids the loss of meaning alluded to at the end of his anthology essay. Playing upon an earlier comment, "evaluations are a double-edged sword" (p. 84), he ends this book with a quip that repeats a line in the case under discussion: "What is the correct evaluation of the case's discourse on the meaning of death and supranormal powers? 'I just won't say!'" (p.196).

Zen Sand by Victor Sōgen Hori is the best scholarly book on actual Zen practice in Japan to appear in recent decades. The bulk of the work is an annotated translation of 4,022 capping phrases, the verses that compilers of koan collections appended to lines in koan cases, that masters attached to the koan expressions of their predecessors, and that students still pick out or compose to demonstrate their insight into a koan. But the book is much more than a new collection; its hundred-page Introduction is a compendium of the history, philosophical underpinnings, Chinese cultural siblings and practical use of the genre that elaborated koan literature into continuing living tradition, long after koan cases were more or less canonized.

The preface and chapters one, two and five of the Introduction trace a triplefold evolution, of the genre itself, of this book as a particular example, and of the monk's training in typical Japanese Rinzai monasteries today. We find the phrases themselves, commonly called *jakugo* 着語 in Japanese (*chu-yü* in Chinese; Hori uses mostly Japanese terms, since

² *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition: A Tale of Two Shōbōgenzō Texts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) (Wright's article in *The Kōan*, p. 208, nicely summarizes one of its main theses); and *Shifting Shape, Shaping Text: Philosophy and Folklore in the Fox Kōan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

one purpose is to provide a handbook “for kōan practice”) as interlinear additions in classical koan collections such as the *Blue Cliff Record*. Capping phrase collections evolved over five hundred years ago in Japan, from handwritten crib notes that aided monks in their practice to printed pocket books that functioned as reference manuals. They were probably modeled after Chinese “golden phrase” collections that predate Buddhism, as well as the manuals that instructed Buddhist poets in the complexities of Chinese poetic structure. National Master Daitō 大燈國師 (1282–1337) made wide use of the phrases, interspersing them for example in his collection of 120 koan cases, but most likely they did not become part of a monk’s practice until phrase books began to circulate among the assembly, sometime between the 1400s and 1600s. Following the *Kuzōshi* 句雙紙 or Verse Notebook of Master Tōyō Eichō 東陽英朝 in the fifteenth century, in 1688 the abbot Ijūshi 已十子 compiled the *Zenrin kushū* 禪林句集 [Zen forest (i.e., sangha) verse collection] with annotation and sources for some four thousand phrases, and a postscript that points to their double function: evoking enlightenment and providing literary study to express it. This collection formed the basis of the Rinzai abbot Shibayama Zenkei’s 柴山全慶 1952 collection of 2,646 phrases (revised in 1972), which in turn forms half of the sources of the book under review. *Zen Sand* translates both Shibayama’s phrases and the 1973 *Zengoshu* 禪語集 collection of Tsuchiya Etsudō 土屋悦堂, in order to reflect the usage of capping verses in the two current lineages deriving from Hakuin.³ Hori extracts the title of his collection from one of its verses, suggestion that the pure gold of Zen awakening must be mixed with the sand of words if it is to be communicated.

Hori began his translations in 1976 at the beginning of a twenty-year career as a Rinzai monk in Japan, and considers it the godchild of *Zen Dust*, Miura Isshū and Ruth Fuller Sasaki’s volume on koan literature written in the ’60s on the same monastery grounds of Daitokuji in Kyoto. *Zen Sand* is a transmission of cultural knowledge that will benefit practitioner and scholar alike. Hori makes clear that his account of the monk practitioner’s evolution through the Rinzai curriculum is a “normative” vision expressing the ideals of actual practice, and not merely a descriptive account. Both in its focus on Japan and its normative dimension, it supplements Robert Buswell’s more comprehensive study of a Korean monastery, the only other account of actual Zen practice I know of by a scholar of Buddhism.⁴ Hori stresses that the practice, for all its literary ballast including the use of capping phrases, is first and foremost a religious endeavor aimed at awakening. Combining Hakuin’s vision with later developments, he repaints the picture of the practitioner moving through ordinary doubt to the Great Doubt directed to oneself, the Great Root of Faith that grows in tandem, and the Overpowering Will to carry on, until Great Death transforms into a

³ Hori is not explicit, however, about whether his two sources are divided according to the two lineages, and whether together they include all the “new systematized responses that Hakuin accepted as correct” (p. 87).

⁴ Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). A sociologist, David L. Preston, has published a study of an American Zen community: *The Social Organization of Zen Practice: Constructing Transcultural Reality* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). We still await a book-length study of Zen (or syncretist Ch’an) Buddhist practice in contemporary China and Taiwan.

Great Awakening. But *kenshō*, a first awakening, requires the awakened self to break out of *samādhi* back into the conventional world; and the last stage in the practice, ideally, is a ongoing maturation that requires leaving the monastery, engaging for a time in an unrelated lifestyle, and extinguishing all traces or self-consciousness of awakening. Historically this stage could include living as a hermit, who in this perspective would not be cast as a Zen “irregular.” Today, more often than not, Rinzai monks leave the monastery before completion of the curriculum, marry, and assume abbacy of small hereditary temples which are seldom sites of *zazen* 坐禪 practice.

Hori's introductory chapters also sketch the history of koan practice and classification, adding to the wealth of information in *The Kōan*. Though koans evolved from encounter dialogues, and were sharpened to a single point or critical phrase by Ta-hui (a usage still adopted today), in Sung China they were presented in discourses to the assembled monks and not assigned to them individually, as became the practice in medieval Japan. Classifications of koans go back to Kamakura Japanese teachers; later the five groups attributed to Hakuin expanded into three more. His “system” comprised not so much sets of different koans as levels of understanding any one of them. Once one breaks through to “the Fundamental” by embodying a koan (typically *mu* 無 or “the sound of one hand clapping”), the teacher coaxes the monk out of the undifferentiated realm with assignments so he is not stuck like “a worm in the mud.” Hakuin devised some “difficult to pass” koans that, in the words of one contemporary *rōshi*, “take that *satori* and crush it like tree leaves into dust” (p. 23). Hori's book is full of wonderful details: monastic koan training creates only a “sacred fetus” that must grow into a mature being; monks might make wood blocks with Yin and Yang faces to present responses to the set of the koans known as the Five Ranks of Tōzan [Tung-shan 洞山]; and capping phrases complement a koan as wasabi complements sashimi—by way of contrast. Capping phrases are not footnotes that add material but performative “thrusters and parries in the joust of Zen” (p. 37). Sometimes cheers and sometimes jeers, they applaud or jibe at and attempt to trump a predecessor's words.

Hori's account of koan and capping phrase practice confirms Foulk's analysis in *The Kōan* but with two important qualifications. First, the one-upmanship displayed in piling phrase upon phrase, with the top phrase meant to bury the preceding ones, characterizes only some of the cases, or some of the practice. Secondly, the practice certainly involves literary study, but in the service of an awakening beyond words. The chapters on literary study and literary games fulfill Hori's promise in the anthology essay to relate the other side of koan practice, and constitutes what in my opinion is his most original contribution. Literary study is an essential part of a practice that includes all the monk's activities, which are not limited to *zazen* and *sanzen* 參禪 [interview with the teacher] in any case. But literary study begins only after the student has demonstrated some insight into the koan. In fact, most of it is reserved for senior monks who have completed the first half of the curriculum, the sequence of koans, checking questions, and capping phrases. In the beginning, “no reading and no writing” is the rule (p. 40). (How much of this is the ideal situation and how much the actual praxis, Hori leaves unclear.)

There are two stages in the literary side of practice. After the monk can demonstrate that he has “kenshō'ed” a koan, he will be checked and then may be asked to pick out the “right” phrase to check further his understanding or to spur deeper insight. This exercise requires that

he study and even memorize hundreds of phrases so that they become so familiar they might pop into mind while sweeping the garden or preparing the bath. Later, the monk may be asked to provide a *kakiwake* 書き分け or written explanation in the form of an essay that explains, not the koan's point but its linguistic components, terms, names, or glyphs. Although not uniformly required in all Rinzai monasteries, this exercise requires some intent research, and its result is corrected by the *rōshi* 老師 like a student's work. The monk may also be asked to compose in classical Chinese a *nenrō* 拈弄 or short, imaginative verse that Hori dubs "deft play," playfully and freely handling the part of the koan under investigation, attempting even to best all previous comments. The monks' own *jakugo* inevitably assume a first-person stance, sometimes arrogantly, and may incorporate the irreverent and even vulgar tone of many classical Chinese verses.

The Chinese literary game is, for Hori, the clue that helps us discover the still questionable origins of the koan. He hypothesizes that koan literature is an offspring of the literary game as well as of the Buddhist precedents described in *The Kōan*. Not only does the non-Buddhist literature lend koan discourse many of its particular phrases, but there are deep "family resemblances" with Chinese literary practices as well. Hori names five. The game where players challenged one another to complete a verse, often by recognizing a hidden allusion, provide a model for the Zen praxis of capping a previous phrase by catching an allusion. Allusive and analogical speech was the norm, enabling the player to speak of something without directly naming it or the principle underlying the comparison. Chinese literary games were also highly competitive and often used martial metaphors, echoed in koan cases. The criteria for "winning" were similar: surprise, deception, feint, and "reversing the opponent's spear" or turning the tables on him. Chinese literati and Zen students alike had to pass examinations. Somewhat surprisingly, Hori sees a "mind-to-mind" transmission going on elsewhere in Chinese literature too, for example, in stories of two friends so intimately attuned to one another that one's song on a lute or simple phrase perfectly conveys his feeling to the other. Words in koan literature, like language in the literary game, can work in an "expressive-affective" manner and not merely as a distorting medium, although Hori notes that koans reflect both attitudes toward language.

Hori's hypothesis and the resemblances he finds seem to substantiate Foulk's claim that reduces the koan to a literary exercise expressing authority, despite his criticism of Foulk's view that koan cases were like public cases on a judge's docket. Hori describes the koan as "an incomprehensible cipher to those not steeped in the literary world of Chinese symbol and metaphor, history and legend" (p. 51), and states that "[m]astery of the allusive language of Zen is taken as one of its marks of authority" (p. 47). But Hori again parries that interpretation: literary prowess provides "horizontal insight" at best, not the "vertical insight" that allows one to perform the koan and that "takes one outside language to experience itself" (p. 51). He presses again his view that koan practice is primarily a religious exercise, a practice that eventually undermines its secular literary ancestors to realize awakening.

There is a productive tension that winds through Hori's presentation like a snake in a wine cup, to allude to one of the capping phrases. It concerns the incommensurability between gold and sand, an awakening experience beyond language and its linguistic expression. Hori's explanation of both Zen experience and Zen language, informed by the philosophical school known as linguistic analysis, is persuasive and yet ultimately inconclusive. In one move he

points out that the contentious term *experience* equivocates between first-hand knowledge and an experiencing alleged to be pre-conceptual or non-cognitive. Hori's defense of Zen awakening against its despisers then turns the tables on them by allowing that *pure* (i.e., non-cognitive) *experience* is indeed purely ideological rhetoric, and then proposing that awakening is only as ineffable as any first-hand experience is to someone who does not share the same repertoire of experiences. "Know for yourself hot and cold," one capping phrase says. For equally experienced people, moreover, "language is not a medium of distortion and falsehood but the very vehicle for immediately seeing into one another's heart and mind" (p. 60). An expression like "the sound of one hand clapping" has both a sense and a reference for the experienced (p. 12), and Zen words can be as meaningful as any language. Language, moreover, can be affective-expressive as well as referential;⁵ but whichever its function, its transcendence requires its mastery (pp. 57, 58). "Zen is *free in* language, not *free from* language" (p. 89). I gather from Hori that the words that tell us not to depend on words are not paradoxical in the sense of canceling out one another; they lure us to discern the snake in the wine cup. In several interspersed statements, however, Hori leaves us in suspense. Is the meaning of a koan a snake or is it only an archer's bow reflected in the liquid? And will we know only by gaining the "vertical insight" that "takes one outside language to experience itself" (p. 51), as if there were an experience outside language? In his personal reflections Hori writes, "Zen teachers insist that . . . after one has completed the practice, [the] kōan has no meaning at all, fixed or otherwise." (p. 29)

Hori's principal purpose, in any case, is to provide practitioners with an informed manual for Japanese Rinzai koan study; this presumably is why he chose to translate the two widely used contemporary Japanese collections of capping phrases instead of, say, the *Zenrin kushū* of 1688. He organizes the 4,022 phrases, as is one standard way, according to the number of Chinese characters in the verse, and supplies each with up to eight concise annotations, including Japanese pronunciation, cross-references to a glossary, primary source, and number in the two works he translates. His sources are meticulously explained, and his ninety-three-page glossary clarifies the allusions, images, symbols, personae and terms necessary to appreciate the phrases. A detailed but incomplete index, including Chinese characters, closes the book.

There is no way to summarize the capping phrases that comprise the heart of Hori's contribution. He reminds readers that they use lively, concrete, metaphorical language much more than technical or philosophical terms like "the Fundamental" or "non-duality" which, when attached as explanation, begin to "stink of Zen" (p. 14). Though they are sand from which we must wash the gold, they can be enjoyed at random by any reader.

Zenrin Robert Lewis's *Zen Grove Handbook* translates Shibayama Rōshi's collection, one of the two sources for Hori's translation. Lewis's patient work also began in 1976, when he commenced practice under Eidō Tai Shimano Rōshi at Dai Bosatsu monastery in New York. The preface by Eidō acknowledges that Zen practice involves literary study as well as

⁵ For more theoretical support, Hori might also have invoked Heidegger's view of language as presencing things and disclosing the world, in addition to the affective-expressive theory of language that he prefers.

realization, and encourages an American appreciation of the verses. Lewis's collection starts with one-character verses, whereas Hori's takes up with four-character phrases; Lewis also translates the short explanation that Shibayama appended to each verse and Hori omitted (there were no such explanatory notations in Tsuchiya's *Zengoshu*, the second of Hori's sources). Hori notes (p. 86) some criticism of Shibayama's version for explaining the meaning; I suspect many readers will find both verse and explanation open to creative response. To an extensive bibliography of sources Lewis's book adds a Rinzai lineage chart, a character index, and a detailed concordance of English words and their number in the collection.

Both Zenrin Lewis and Sōgen Hori came to the verses as beginning Zen students with Ph.D.s in fields distant from Buddhist Studies and classical Chinese (Lewis in mathematics and Hori in philosophy), and both intend their translations primarily for fellow practitioners. They acknowledge that their translations depend upon the knowledge of other scholars; Hori consulted a considerable number of experts and displays a remarkable familiarity with resources for the background of koan literature. It is beyond my ken to tell whether one translation is more accurate than another; the question may rather be which happens to express better the phrase's *kyōgai* or spirit (Hori, p. 93)—and that may depend upon the *kyōgai* or mind-set of the practitioner (see Hori in *The Kōan*, p. 294). Both, I think, improve upon two previous independent attempts by Isshū Miura with Ruth Fuller Sasaki, and Shigematsu Sōiku.⁶ Here are some examples, without the transcription of the Japanese:

沙裏淘金

Lewis: Wash for gold in the sand.

Hori: Wash the gold from the sand.

崑崙嚼生鐵

Shigematsu: The chaos bites raw iron.

Lewis: Confusion chewing at cast iron.

Hori: Chaos chews up raw iron.

好肉上剜瘡

Shigematsu: To gouge out cavities on good meat.

Miura-Sasaki: To gouge out healthy flesh and make a wound.

Lewis: Operate on, cut a wound into, healthy flesh.

Hori: He cuts a wound into healthy flesh.

蝦跳不出斗

Shigematsu: A lobster, leaping, never gets out of the bushel.

Lewis: The shrimp jumps about, but can't escape the measure.

Hori: The shrimp can't jump out of the scoop.

⁶ Isshū Miura & Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *Zen Dust: The History of the Koan and Koan Study in Rinzai (Lin-chi) Zen* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966); also in their *The Zen Koan: Its History and Use in Rinzai Zen* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965). Shigematsu Sōiku, *A Zen Forest* (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, 1981).

黑漆崑崙夜裏走

Lewis: The black-as-lacquer *Kunlúns* rushing through the night.

Hori: Black chaos runs in the night.

At the risk of beating the poison-painted drum that kills all who hear it,⁷ I close with this phrase:

一句道着

Lewis: Manifest the way in a single expression.

Hori: One word says it all.

⁷ Hori's glossary, p. 696, explains this allusion as a drumhead painted with the poison from the feathers of a certain kind of blackbird.

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