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Zazen as an Enactment Ritual

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Buddhist meditation has commonly been considered an instrumental technique aimed at obtaining a heightened mental or spiritual state, or even as a method for inducing some dramatic “enlightenment” experience. But in some branches of the Zen tradition, zazen (Zen seated meditation) has been seen not as a means to attaining some result, but as a ritual enactment and expression of awakened awareness. This alternate, historically significant approach to Zen meditation and practice has been a ceremonial, ritual expression whose transformative quality is not based on stages of attainment or meditative prowess.

The Zen ritual enactment approach is most apparent and developed in writings about zazen by the Japanese Sōtō Zen founder Eihei Dōgen (1200–1253). After beginning with his ritual instructions for meditation practice, especially in his monastic regulations for the monks’ hall in *Eihei shingi*, I will explore relevant teachings about meditation in a selection of his extended essays in *Shōbōgenzō* (*True Dharma Eye Treasury*), as well as in his direct teachings to his monks in *Eihei kōroku* (*Dōgen’s Extensive Record*). This will be followed with a sampling of a few other Zen sources with analogous approaches.

Zazen as Tantra

Before focusing on teachings by Dōgen, we may briefly note that such enactment practice is usually associated with the Vajrayana branch of Buddhism, in which practitioners are initiated into ritual practices of identification with specific buddha or bodhisattva figures. Although Vajrayana is often considered the province of Tibetan Buddhism, increasing attention is being given to the crucial role of the Japanese forms of Vajrayana (J. *mikkyō*).¹ In the Heian period, this *mikkyō*, also known as “esoteric” or tantric practice, was prevalent not only in Shingon (True Word), the main Japanese Vajrayana school, but also in the comprehensive Tendai school in which were first trained not only Japanese Zen founders like Dōgen and Eisai (1141–1215) but also Pure Land founders Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262), as well as Nichiren (1222–1282). Thanks to this *mikkyō* heritage that permeated all of medieval Japanese Buddhism, in many inexplicit ways *mikkyō* or tantric practice can be seen as underlying all subsequent forms of Japanese Buddhism. Further studies exploring the direct and indirect influences of *mikkyō* on Japanese Zen promise to be especially instructive.

For Dōgen and others, Zen shares with the Vajrayana tradition the heart of spiritual activity and praxis as the enactment of buddha awareness and physical presence, rather than aiming at developing a perfected, formulated understanding. In the context of Tibetan Buddhism, Robert Thurman speaks of the main thrust of Vajrayana practice as physical rather than solely mental. “When we think of the goal of Buddhism as enlightenment, we think of it mainly as an attainment of some kind of higher understanding. But Buddhahood is a physical transformation as much as a mental transcendence.”²

The Japanese Vajrayana teacher Kūkai (774–835), the founder of Shingon, emphasized the effects of teachings over their literal meaning. As explicated by Thomas Kasulis, “Kūkai was more interested in the teachings’ *aims* than in their content, or perhaps better stated, he saw the aims as inseparable from their content. He saw no sharp distinction between theory and practice.”³ The understanding of a teaching was not privileged independently from its practical effects. “The truth of a statement depends not on the status of its referent, but on how it affects us.”⁴ For Kūkai, physical postures, utterances, and mental imagery are expressions of ultimate reality, and by intentionally engaging in them, practitioners are led to realization of that reality. The performance of the ritual practice helps effect an expressive realization deeper than mere cognition.

The Physical Expression of Practice-Realization

Both the Vajrayana and Zen emphasis on fully expressed performance of reality reflects the valuing of actual bodhisattvic workings and the realization of a teaching's enactment over theoretical dictums or attainments. In his early 1231 writing on the meaning of meditation, "Bendōwa" (Talk on Wholehearted Engagement of the Way), now considered part of *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen directly emphasizes the priority of the actualization of practice expression over doctrinal theory. "Buddhist practitioners should know not to argue about the superiority or inferiority of teachings and not to discriminate between superficial or profound dharma, but should only know whether the practice is genuine or false."⁵ This priority of a teaching's actual performance is reflected, for example, in the somewhat later Japanese Sōtō Zen prescription, "Dignified manner is Buddha Dharma; decorum is the essential teaching."⁶ The point is to enact the meaning of the teachings in actualized practice, and the whole praxis, including meditation, may thus be viewed as ritual, ceremonial expressions of the teaching, rather than as means to discover and attain some understanding of it. Therefore, the strong emphasis in much of this approach to Zen training is the mindful and dedicated expression of meditative awareness in everyday activities.

In perhaps his most foundational essay on zazen, "Fukanzazengi" (Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen), Dōgen gives detailed postural instructions for sitting meditation, largely patterned after Chinese Chan meditation manuals. The earliest version of this essay, no longer extant, is from 1227, written shortly after Dōgen's return to Japan from four years of studies in China. Later revisions are from 1233 and 1242, the latter cited here from his *Eihei kōroku*.⁷ This essay was aimed at a general audience of laypeople but still describes the practice in ritual terms. Dōgen specifies in detail preparation of the meditation space, suggesting a quiet room, and also grounding of the mental space, including to put aside involvements and affairs and not to think in terms of good or bad. He adds, "Have no designs on becoming a buddha," emphasizing the noninstrumental and instead ritual nature of this activity. He then describes postural arrangements, including details of full lotus and half lotus leg positions, how to hold the hand position, and physical guides for upright alignment, such as ears in line above shoulders and nose above navel. All these are provided so that the practitioner can "settle into steady, immovable sitting."⁸

After the procedural descriptions, which were patterned closely after the Chan sources, Dōgen then comments, "The zazen I speak of is not [learning]

meditation practice. It is simply the Dharma gate of peace and bliss, the practice-realization of totally culminated awakening.”⁹ Here Dōgen clarifies that the zazen praxis he espouses is not one of the traditional meditation programs that one can study and learn, step-by step. “Meditation” is a translation for Zen in Japanese, Chan in Chinese, or Dhyana in Sanskrit, which can be understood in terms of the four stages of the technical *dhyana* practices (often translated as “trances”), which pre-date the historical Buddha in India. But in China this term was used generally to refer to a variety of meditation curricula, the sense indicated here by Dōgen. He goes on to clarify that his zazen praxis bears no relationship to mental acuity, “Make no distinction between the dull and the sharp witted.” Then he adds, “If you concentrate your effort single-mindedly, that in itself is wholeheartedly engaging the way. Practice-realization is naturally undefiled.”¹⁰ In many of his writings, Dōgen emphasizes the oneness of “practice-realization,” that meditation practice is not a means toward some future realization or enlightenment but is its inseparable expression, as will be discussed further below.

The ritual context of Dōgen’s zazen is highlighted at the beginning of his essay, “Bendōhō” (The Model for Engaging the Way), a manual for the proper procedures for practice in the monks’ hall, within which the monks sit zazen, take meals, and sleep, each at their assigned places. This is the traditional mode of Chan practice in China, which Dōgen established at Eiheiiji, the monastery he founded after moving in 1243 from the capital of Kyoto to the remote mountains of Echizen (now Fukui), and which remains one of the two head-quarter temples of Sōtō Zen. “Bendōhō” is one of the essays in *Eihei shingi* (Dōgen’s Pure Standards for the Zen Community), the seventeenth-century collection of all of Dōgen’s writings in Chinese about monastic standards and regulations. “Bendōhō” follows in this text after the more celebrated essay “Tenzokyōkun” (Instructions for the Chief Cook), which propounds the appropriate attitudes and responsibility of the *tenzo*, as well as rituals and procedures to be followed in preparing food in the monastery kitchen.

In “Bendōhō,” Dōgen states that all monks should sit zazen together, “when the assembly is sitting,” and stop together when it is time for all to lie down for the night. He states that “Standing out has no benefit; being different from others is not our conduct.”¹¹ Clearly Dōgen sees zazen as a communal ritual, rather than an individual spiritual exercise. Commencing with the evening schedule, Dōgen imparts the proper ritual conduct for daily activities in the monks’ hall throughout the day, including comprehensive ritual procedures for such activities as serving tea, teeth brushing, face cleaning, and using the toilet (in the lavatory located in back of the monks’ hall). He speaks of zazen as one of such ritual activities and describes in detail the manner and

route in which the abbot should enter the hall to lead the assembly's evening zazen.¹² Later, after describing less formal early morning sitting, Dōgen gives further instructions for zazen that copy in many particulars the detailed postural instructions in "Fukanzazengi." It is clear in context that Dōgen considers zazen the core ritual but still simply one of the many ritual activities in the everyday life of the monks' hall.

The Practice and Training of Buddhas

One of the *Shōbōgenzō* essays that focuses on zazen practice is the 1242 "Zazenshin" (The Acupuncture Needle [or Point] of Zazen). In it Dōgen says, "For studying the way, the established [means of] investigation is pursuit of the way in seated meditation. The essential point that marks this [investigation] is [the understanding] that there is a practice of a Buddha that does not seek to make a Buddha. Since the practice of a Buddha is not to make a Buddha, it is the realization of the *kōan*."¹³ Here, as in many places in his writings, Dōgen emphasizes as the "essential point" that zazen specifically and practice generally are not about seeking some future buddhahood. Rather, they are already the practice of buddhas, realizing with awakened awareness what is crucial in this present situation.

As "Zazenshin" proceeds, it centers on Dōgen's commentary about a story about the great Chan master Mazu Daoyi (709–788; J. Baso Dōitsu), when he was studying under Nanyue Huairang (677–744; J. Nangaku Ejō). Mazu was sitting and his teacher Nanyue asked him about his intention in zazen. Mazu replied that he intended to make a Buddha. Nanyue took a tile and began polishing it with a rock. When Mazu asked what he was doing, Nanyue replied that he was polishing a tile to make a mirror. When Mazu perplexedly asked how this was possible, Nanyue responded, "How can you make a Buddha through zazen?"

This story is frequently referenced by Dōgen, for example, as case thirty-eight in his collection of ninety *kōans* with verse comments in volume nine of *Eihei kōroku*.¹⁴ In one of his two verse comments, Dōgen inverts Nanyue's action by saying, "How can people plan to take a mirror and make it a tile?"¹⁵ implying that such effort denigrates the Buddha already present. In "Zazenshin," commenting after Nanyue says, "How can you make a Buddha through zazen?" Dōgen declares, "There is a principle that seated meditation does not await making a Buddha; there is nothing obscure about the essential message that making a Buddha is not connected with seated meditation."¹⁶ For Dōgen, zazen is adamantly not merely a means to achieve buddhahood. But after

commenting in detail on this story, Dōgen says, “It is the seated Buddha that Buddha after Buddha and Patriarch after Patriarch have taken as their essential activity. Those who are Buddhas and Patriarchs have employed this essential activity. . . for it is the essential function.”¹⁷ Although it is not an instrumental activity for gaining awakening, zazen is still the fundamental activity of buddhas for Dōgen.

“Zazenshin” concludes with Dōgen commenting on and writing his own version of a poem about the function of zazen by Chinese master Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157; J. Wanshi Shōgaku), the most important Sōtō (Ch. Caodong) teacher in the century before Dōgen, who was a primary source and inspiration for Dōgen. For the purpose of this article, the main point in Dōgen’s discussion is that both verses begin with the proposition that zazen is “the essential function of all the Buddhas.” Dōgen comments that “the essential function that is realized [by buddhas] is seated meditation.”¹⁸ Again, he sees zazen as the expression and function of buddhas, rather than buddhahood being a function, or consequence, of zazen.

Along with the playful, elaborate essays in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō*, noted for their poetic wordplay and intricate philosophical expressions, Dōgen’s other major and massive work is *Eihei kōroku*. The first seven of the ten volumes of *Eihei kōroku* consist of usually brief *jōdō* (literally “ascending the hall”), which I will call dharma hall discourses. These short, formal talks are given traditionally in the dharma hall with the monks standing. (The development of the *jōdō* as a Chan ritual form is discussed elsewhere in this volume in the article by Mario Poceski.) Except for the first volume of *Eihei kōroku* from prior to his departure from Kyoto in 1243, the dharma hall discourses in *Eihei kōroku* are our primary source for Dōgen’s mature teaching at Eiheiiji, after he had finished writing the vast majority of the longer essays included in *Shōbōgenzō*. These talks to his cadre of disciples at Eiheiiji reveal his personality qualities and style of training. This training apparently was effective, as Dōgen’s seven major disciples present at Eiheiiji, together with their disciples over the next few generations, managed to spread his Sōtō lineage and teaching widely in the Japanese countryside.¹⁹

In a great many of the *jōdō*, Dōgen discusses zazen as a ritual activity for enactment of Buddha awareness. For example, in dharma hall discourse 319 from 1249, just before celebrating the institution of the first Japanese monks’ hall at Eiheiiji, Dōgen says, “We should know that zazen is the decorous activity of practice after realization. Realization is simply just sitting zazen.”²⁰ Dōgen again emphasizes that his zazen is not an activity prior to realization of enlightenment but its natural expression, comparable to the ongoing daily meditation by Sakyamuni Buddha after his awakening to buddhahood.

However, this ritual zazen expressing realization is not a pointless or dull, routinized activity, inertly enshrining some prior experience. In dharma hall discourse 449 from 1251, Dōgen says, “What is called zazen is to sit, cutting through the smoke and clouds without seeking merit. Just become unified, never reaching the end. . . . Already such, how can we penetrate it?”²¹ Behind these zazen instructions and encouragements to actively enact awareness in practice is a strong attitude of persistent inquiry that permeates Dōgen’s teachings and his challenges to his disciples. Dōgen’s zazen can even be seen as a ritualized mode of silent inquiry, and this attitude of inquiry is reinforced in many of his mentions of zazen.

The ninth day of the ninth month was the traditional date in the Chan monastic schedule when the relaxed summer schedule ended and increased zazen practice began. Although Dōgen did not follow the relaxed schedule in his training set-up, he did honor the traditional date for renewed zazen with talks encouraging revitalized practice.²² Dōgen’s dharma hall discourse 523 from 1252 is the last such talk given on that date to encourage zazen. In that talk he says, “Body and mind that is dropped off is steadfast and immovable. Although the sitting cushions are old, they show new impressions.” Here he refers to the importance of sustaining zazen as a practice ritual and its renewal with fresh impressions (on cushions as well as minds), ritually celebrated on this occasion. He then adds, “It is not that there is no practice-realization, but who could defile it?”²³ This refers again to the oneness of practice and realization and the story about it from the sixth ancestor and Nanyue, which will be discussed below.

In dharma hall discourse 531, his very last *jōdō* in 1252, during which he was succumbing to the illness that would take his life in the following year, Dōgen says in a verse, “A flower blooming on a monk’s staff has merit. Smiling on our sitting cushions, there’s nothing lacking.”²⁴ In this, one of his very last teachings, he describes zazen as a joyful event that celebrates the full expression and blossoming of awakening.

There are many other such examples in Dōgen’s writings. But one of the most revealing dharma hall discourses is 266 from 1248, truly astonishing in disclosing Dōgen’s self-awareness of the subtlety of his training approaches. He states four aspects of his practice teaching and their intended impact on his students.²⁵ He begins with, “Sometimes I enter the ultimate state and offer profound discussion, simply wishing for you all to be steadily intimate in your mind field.” This may refer to the impact of his talks, either from *Shōbōgenzō* or *Eihei kōroku*. Then he adds, “Sometimes within the gates and gardens of the monastery, I offer my own style of practical instruction, simply wishing you all to disport and play freely with spiritual penetration.” This

refers to his teaching about engaging with everyday monastic activities, as in *Eihei shingi*. But in both of the first two instances, the desired impact is not about the students' acquiring some new state of being or understanding, but rather about their fostering steady intimacy in their awareness, or for them to disport and play freely, that is, to respond and engage with spontaneity, in their daily activities. In the third approach, "I spring quickly leaving no trace, simply wishing you all to drop off body and mind." This may refer to abrupt exclamations or startling demonstrations in Dōgen's teaching. But dropping off body and mind, his stated aim, is an expression Dōgen uses both for complete enlightenment and as a synonym for zazen. This dropping off, letting go of physical and conceptual attachments, is the activity of zazen that is enacted in the zazen ritual.

The fourth mode refers most directly to zazen. He says, "Sometimes I enter the samadhi of self-fulfillment, simply wishing you all to trust what your hands can hold." This samadhi of self-fulfillment (J. *jijuyū zanmai*) is another of Dōgen's synonyms for zazen, described fully in Dōgen's early 1231 essay "Bendōwa" (Talk on Wholehearted Engagement of the Way), in which he calls it the "criterion" for zazen.²⁶ In his excellent introductory book on Dōgen, Hee-Jin Kim says that this samadhi of self-fulfillment is "a total freedom of self-realization without any dualism of antitheses, [which are] not so much transcended as realized. [This freedom is] realized itself in duality, not apart from it."²⁷ In this dharma hall discourse 266, Dōgen describes the intention of the samadhi of self-fulfillment as supporting his students simply to "trust what your hands can hold." This implies that zazen supports the practitioner's confidence in their ability to respond aptly to the present situation, or to engage and abide fully in the circumstances of their own "Dharma position," another phrase used often by Dōgen.

In the conclusion of this dharma hall discourse 266, after describing these four teaching modes, Dōgen rhetorically asks, "What would go beyond these [teachings]?" He responds with a poetic capping verse, "Scrubbed clean by the dawn wind, the night mist clears. Dimly seen, the blue mountains form a single line."²⁸ Here Dōgen points to the suchness of reality, which is for him the object of attention in the enactment of zazen, in which is clearly seen the total interconnectedness of all particulars as in the image of the many peaks coalescing into a single horizon. The image "blue mountains form a single line" also implies Dōgen's appreciation of the single-minded lineage of Zen buddha ancestors, each teaching at their mountain temple, who have kept alive through the generations the practice-realization teaching of zazen as the practice of buddhas, rather than as a practice aimed at attaining buddhahood.

Awesome Presence Cannot Be Defiled

Dōgen provides what might be seen as an extended description of the content of the enactment in the ritual of zazen in a 1241 *Shōbōgenzō* essay, “Gyōbutsu igi” (The Awesome Presence [or Dignified Manner] of Active [or Practicing] Buddhas). Near the beginning of this long essay, Dōgen says directly, “Know that buddhas in the Buddha way do not wait for awakening.”²⁹ Awakening for Dōgen is not some event that will occur some other time in the future, after doing the appropriate meditative exercises. He continues, “Active buddhas alone fully experience the vital process on the path of going beyond buddha They bring forth awesome presence with their body. Thus, their transformative function flows out in their speech, reaching throughout time, space, buddhas, and activities.”³⁰ This zazen ritual does indeed involve transformation for Dōgen. We can see in all Zen rituals that, at least ideally, ritual activity does have some impact, or liberative effect, for the participants. And on the other hand, attachment to the mere procedural forms of ritual, in which the forms are followed in a routinized, rote manner, is traditionally considered a hindrance to practice.

This passage of “Gyōbutsu igi,” with its description of the active process involved, gives a clear account of Dōgen’s view of the workings of zazen. “Fully experiencing the vital process on the path of going beyond buddha” highlights the dynamic aspect of the ritual act of zazen. Its ongoing practice is a lively “vital process,” open to the shiftings and complexities of life, and yet one engaging it is already “on the path,” committed to awakening and support of universal liberation. “Going beyond Buddha” is a common phrase in Dōgen’s writings, indicating the ongoing nature of awakening and of the active or practicing buddhas’ conduct. For Dōgen, buddhahood is not some one-time attainment to be cherished thereafter but an ongoing vital process, requiring continued reawakening.

A little further in “Gyōbutsu igi,” Dōgen says, “Practice-Realization is not defiled. Although there are hundreds, thousands, and myriad [of practice-realizations] in a place where there is no Buddha and no person, practice-realization does not defile active buddhas.”³¹ This key phrase, “Practice-Realization is not defiled,” is frequently repeated by Dōgen from a story about Nanyue Huairang, who was featured in the later story of his polishing a tile to make a mirror, discussed previously. This earlier story of Nanyue as a student visiting the Chan sixth ancestor Dajian Huineng (638–713; J. Daikan Enō) is recounted fully in several places by Dōgen, including the 1250 dharma hall discourse 374 in *Eihei kōroku*.³²

In the story, Nanyue appeared before the sixth ancestor, who asked, “What is this that thus comes?” This is a curious, probing manner of asking, “Who are you?” without assuming some fixed “self” or “you,” which of course is antithetical to Buddhist teachings of nonself and emptiness.

Nanyue was speechless, but the story says, he “never put this question aside” for eight years of intensive practice thereafter. Finally, he returned to the sixth ancestor and responded, “To explain or demonstrate anything would miss the mark.”

The sixth ancestor asked whether, if so, there is practice and realization or not. Nanyue validated his eight years of study by responding, “It is not that there is no practice-realization, but only that it cannot be defiled.” The sixth ancestor affirmed that “this nondefilement” is exactly what all the buddhas and ancestors “protect and care for.”³³ Part of the possibility of defilement warned against here is exactly that of meditation practice engaged as a mere means and enlightenment as a remote abstraction separate from our activity and awareness.

As we have already seen, Dōgen often cites this story in the context of his important teaching of the unity of practice and realization (*shushō-ittō*). He proclaims this clearly in his early 1231 writing “Bendōwa.” In response to one of the questions posed, Dōgen states:

In buddha-dharma, practice and enlightenment are one and the same. Because it is the practice of enlightenment, a beginner’s whole-hearted practice of the Way is exactly the totality of original enlightenment. For this reason, in conveying the essential attitude for practice, it is taught not to wait for enlightenment outside practice. . . . Since it is already the enlightenment of practice, enlightenment is endless; since it is the practice of enlightenment, practice is beginningless.³⁴

For Dōgen, true practice of buddha-dharma can only be a response to some present awareness of enlightenment or realization. And enlightenment is not realized, or meaningful, unless it is engaged in practice. Dōgen says that because of this unity, he urges all to engage in zazen, and then he cites Nanyue’s, “It is not that there is no practice and enlightenment, but only that it cannot be defiled.”³⁵

Enactments of Unified Practice, Enlightenment, and Expounding

In the writing *hōgo* (dharma words) 11 from volume eight of *Eihei kōroku*, Dōgen goes beyond the unity of practice and enlightenment to discuss the

unity of practice and enlightenment with the expounding or expression of the teaching.³⁶ These *hōgo* are probably from before he moved away from Kyoto in 1243 and are mostly from letters to individual students, although this *hōgo* 11 is one of the few in which a recipient is not specified. Dōgen says, “Within this [true Dharma] there is practice, teaching, and verification [enlightenment]. This practice is the effort of zazen.”³⁷ It does require some effort to arrive at the monastery, to enter the meditation hall, to sit upright, to keep eyes open, to breathe, and to return to being present and upright in one’s body and mind. This is the effort of zazen practice. Dōgen adds, “It is customary that such practice is not abandoned even after reaching buddhahood, so that it is [still] practiced by a buddha.” Dōgen here points out that even after he became the Buddha, roughly 2500 years ago now in northern India, the historical Śākyamuni Buddha continued to do this meditation practice. When the Buddha became enlightened, that was not the end of Buddhism but just its beginning.

Dōgen goes on to say:

Teaching and verification [enlightenment] should be examined in the same way. This zazen was transmitted from Buddha to Buddha, directly pointed out by ancestors, and only transmitted by legitimate successors. Even when others hear of its name, it is not the same as the zazen of buddha ancestors. This is because the principle of zazen in other schools is to wait for enlightenment.³⁸

As in “Bendōwa,” “Gyōbutsu igi,” and elsewhere, Dōgen emphasizes that his ritual zazen praxis is not passively waiting for some future event or experience, and he notes critically that “[t]he principle of zazen in other schools is to wait for enlightenment.” In many traditional branches of Buddhism, meditation practice may eventually lead to enlightenment. Dōgen states that some people even practice “like having crossed over a great ocean on a raft, thinking that upon crossing the ocean one should discard the raft. The zazen of our Buddha ancestors is not like this, but is simply Buddha’s practice.”³⁹ In this common Buddhist simile of the raft, once one reaches the other shore of liberation, the raft (e.g., of meditative practice) is no longer needed. But Dōgen implies that the practitioner should continue to carry the raft, even while trudging up into the mountains or down into the marketplace.

For Dōgen, zazen is not waiting for enlightenment, but simply the practice of buddhas. This practice is not to acquire something in some other time or in another state of consciousness or being. It is actually the practice of enlightenment or realization right now. And this enlightenment or realization for Dōgen is naturally expressed in practice. Enlightenment that was not actually put into practice would just be some abstracted idea of enlightenment

and would not be actual, verified enlightenment. There could be no true enlightenment that is not expressed in practice.

This unity of practice and awakening expressed fully in this *hōgo* 11 is discussed elsewhere by Dōgen. But here he continues further:

We could say that the situation of Buddha's house is the oneness in which the essence, practice, and expounding are one and the same. The essence is enlightenment; expounding is the teaching; and practice is cultivation. Even up to now, these have been studied together. We should know that practice is the practice of essence and expounding.⁴⁰

The conventional view of spiritual practice and of a buddha's career would be that one first engages in meditative practice, then, after many years or, more likely, a great many lifetimes, one might experience awakening or enlightenment. Only thereafter would one "turn the wheel of dharma," or expound the teaching. But in the above passage and as *hōgo* 11 continues, Dōgen insists that the ritual meditative praxis of the buddha ancestors is completely one with "the essence" of enlightenment but also with its expounding. The Chinese character for "expounding" also means simply "to express." So from the first thought of practice and awakening, the practice completely expresses the enlightenment at hand. The zazen ritual is not only not separate from the verification of enlightenment but also completely expresses, expounds, and enacts that enlightenment. Buddha dharma "never comes from the forceful activity of people, but from the beginning is the expression and activity of Dharma."⁴¹ In some sense, people's postures are always inevitably expressing their current realization. But also the effort and enactment of the practice ritual derives from the responsibility to more thoroughly enact that expression.

This expounding of awakening need not be offered only through verbal dharma talks. It may also be fully expounded and enacted simply through the physical, ritual expression of upright sitting, or zazen. Moreover, for Dōgen, the awakening of buddhas is expounded by buddhas listening to the teaching equally with those who give the teaching. In a later section of "Gyōbutsu igi" (The Awesome Presence of Active Buddhas), Dōgen describes buddhas listening to as well as speaking dharma. "Do not regard the capacity to expound the dharma as superior, and the capacity to listen to the dharma as inferior. If those who speak are venerable, those who listen are venerable as well."⁴² The ritual enactment of a dharma talk is performed by the listeners as well as by the speaker. Dōgen clarifies, "Know that it is equally difficult to listen to and accept this sutra. Expounding and listening are not a matter of superior and inferior As the fruit of buddhahood is already present, they do not listen to

dharma to achieve buddhahood; as indicated, they are already buddhas.”⁴³ As with zazen itself, for Dōgen, the ritual of listening to the teaching is not undertaken as a means to the goal of awakening or understanding but simply as an enactment of the buddhahood already present.

Some of Dōgen’s *jōdō* (dharma hall discourses) in his *Eihei kōroku* pose a further analogy to his approach to zazen as an enactment ritual. He uses his own expounding of the dharma as an enactment ritual rather than as a mere technique to communicate philosophical doctrines or practice instructions. This mode of enactment ritual represents a primary aspect of Dōgen’s Zen expression. For example, in dharma hall discourse 70, given in 1241, Dōgen proclaims:

As this mountain monk [Dōgen] today gives a dharma hall discourse, all buddhas in the three times also today give a dharma hall discourse. The ancestral teachers in all generations also today give a dharma hall discourse. . . . Already together having given a dharma hall discourse, what Dharma has been expounded? No other Dharma is expressed; but this very Dharma is expressed. What is this Dharma? . . . It is upheld within the monks’ hall; it is upheld within the buddha hall.⁴⁴

Dōgen never states the content of the dharma hall discourse, except to say that he is giving it, together with all buddhas and ancestors, and that it is upheld in the ritual activity of the monks in the monks’ hall and buddha hall. This is a ritual discourse that celebrates the ritual itself and its enactment, beyond any other content signified by the ritual. As such, it provides a mirror to the ritual enactment of zazen that Dōgen proclaims as itself the essential realization or enlightenment. And, as in *hōgo* 11 discussed above, this also reflects zazen as itself the expounding or expression of zazen practice and realization.

Dōgen provides a further turn to his mode of ritual enactment in a remark near the end of *hōgo* 4, one of three of the fourteen *hōgo* or dharma words in *Eihei kōroku* volume eight that are addressed to the nun Ryōnen. Ryōnen was one of Dōgen’s women disciples, whom he praises lavishly, saying that she has long had “seeds of prajñā,” and “strong, robust aspiration.” He continues:

Without begrudging any effort in nurturing the way, for you I will demonstrate the precise meaning of coming from the west [of Bodhidharma]. That is, if you do not hold onto a single phrase or half a verse, a bit of talk or a small expression, in this lump of red flesh you will have some accord with the clear, cool ground. If you hold onto a single word or half a phrase of the buddha ancestors’ sayings or of

the kōans from the ancestral gate, they will become dangerous poisons. If you want to understand this mountain monk's activity, do not remember these comments.⁴⁵

In effect, Dōgen is saying not to remember the content of what he is telling her. And yet, he is clearly praising and encouraging her practice. The enactment here seems more important than the particular meaning enacted. But what he goes so far as to call the "precise meaning" of the ultimate teaching (commonly represented in Zen by Bodhidharma's coming from the West) is exactly that in order to understand his activity, then the content of that activity, his comments, should not be remembered. The ritual enactment itself is given primal meaning by Dōgen.

Nonattachment or not clinging is a primary feature of Dōgen's practice-realization as expression. Such clinging would be to neglect rather than to "protect and care for" the nondefilement of practice-realization proclaimed by Nanyue and Huineng. Practice marked by pursuit or attainment of enlightenment can become a form of spiritual materialism or greed and even an unwitting attempt to defile enlightenment. Radical nonattachment through not even remembering the teaching, as suggested by Dōgen to Ryōnen, may actually fully demonstrate appreciation and enactment of the meaning of practice-realization. Dōgen's zazen celebrates and enacts Buddha's practice of inquiry, rather than some practice of acquisition, and takes refuge in the actuality of Buddha's practice, rather than aspiring to some external imagined ideal.

Ritual Enactment Meditation in Chinese Chan

This approach to zazen as a ritual of enactment, which is clearly articulated throughout Dōgen's writings, is not unique to Dōgen. As mentioned at the outset, in Japanese Zen it may derive in part from the significant influence throughout Japanese Buddhism of *mikkyō*, in which the practitioner identifies with and takes refuge in a particular buddha or bodhisattva. The bulk of the Chinese Chan kōan or encounter dialogue literature does not deal directly with meditation as a ritual. But in Chinese Chan, we indeed can see signs and intimations of this practice approach of zazen as an enactment ritual, evident in the following brief sampling of sources, all later mentioned by Dōgen.

We have already seen how the eighth-century Chan master Nanyue explored the enactment meaning of zazen in declaring to the sixth ancestor that "practice-realization cannot be defiled" and later used a rock and tile to demonstrate to his student Mazu that zazen is not about "becoming a buddha."

When Mazu himself became a prominent Chan teacher, he later taught that “[t]his very mind is Buddha.” Although not directly about ritual zazen, this implies an enactment rather than attainment approach to practice. And Mazu’s disciple Damei Fachang (752–839; J. Daibai Hōjō), whom Mazu and Dōgen both praised, spent thirty years on his mountain practicing zazen based on this teaching.⁴⁶

Another prominent disciple of Mazu, Nanquan Puyuan (748–834; J. Nansen Fugan) was asked about the Way by his student, the renowned adept Zhaozhou Congshen (778–897; J. Joshu Jushin). Nanquan responded, “Ordinary mind is the Way.”⁴⁷ When asked by Zhaozhou how to approach this, as if it were something to be attained, Nanquan replied, “If you try to direct yourself toward it, you will move away from it.” Again, this implies an enactment approach to practice, rather than seeking some attainment, which Nanquan clarifies as counterproductive. Nanquan continues that “[w]hen you reach the true Way beyond doubt, it is vast and open as space.”

One of Mazu’s major contemporaries was Shitou Xiqian (700–790; J. Sekitō Kisen). Progenitor of the Caodong (Sōtō) lineage that Dōgen inherited, Shitou is noted for his teaching poem, “Harmony of Difference and Sameness” (C. Cantonqi, J. Sandōkai), which originates the fundamental philosophical dialectic of Caodong.⁴⁸

Shitou also wrote a teaching poem that metaphorically describes his hermitage as a ritual space of meditative practice expression, “The Song of the Grass Hut” (C. Caoanke, J. Soanka). Therein Shitou says, “Just sitting with head covered all things are at rest. Thus, this mountain monk doesn’t understand at all. Living here he no longer works to get free.”⁴⁹ He is modeling a praxis not involved in the effort to gain some understanding or insight but simply intended to allow all things to be “at rest,” just as they are. Shitou further adds, “Let go of hundreds of years and relax completely. Open your hands and walk, innocent.”⁵⁰ He is recommending practice that expresses just simply letting go whether in sitting or everyday conduct, reminiscent of what Dōgen would later call “dropping body and mind.” In such aware and responsive presence, the practitioner may be able to act effectively, innocent of grasping and attachment. The stories of Nanyue, Mazu, and Nanquan and the writings of Shitou indicate a classic Chan background for zazen as an enactment ritual.

A major predecessor for Dōgen’s teachings on meditation is the important twelfth-century Caodong (Sōtō) master Hongzhi Zhengjue, a prolific writer already mentioned for his poem on the acupuncture needle of zazen, discussed in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō* essay, “Zazenshin.” Hongzhi’s meditation teaching, sometimes referred to as silent or serene illumination, was a model

for Dōgen's just sitting zazen. Here is one sample of Hongzhi's clear, evocative articulation of his meditative praxis:

The practice of true reality is simply to sit serenely in silent introspection. When you have fathomed this you cannot be turned around by external causes or conditions. This empty, wide open mind is subtly and correctly illuminating. . . . Here you can rest and become clean, pure, and lucid. Bright and penetrating, you can immediately return, accord, and respond to deal with events.⁵¹

In a later section of this volume of his *Extensive Record*, Hongzhi says, "Sit empty of worldly anxiety, silent and bright, clear and illuminating, blank and accepting, far-reaching and responsive."⁵² As Dōgen would do in his own way a century later, Hongzhi elaborates the workings of a meditation of open, responsive presence in which subtle awakened awareness is enacted.

Zazen as Ritual Enactment in Sōtō after Dōgen

Teachings on meditation as enactment ritual continued among Dōgen's successors in Japan. Keizan Jōkin (1264–1325), a third-generation successor of Dōgen, is considered the second founder of Sōtō Zen after Dōgen. Keizan's manual on Zen meditation, "Zazen Yōjinki" (Writing on the Function of Mind in Zazen), begins, "Zazen just lets people illumine the mind and rest easy in their fundamental endowment. This is called showing the original face and revealing the scenery of the basic ground."⁵³ This resting in and revealing of the fundamental ground certainly continues Dōgen's enactment practice. As this text proceeds, Keizan gives extensive ritual instructions on when, where, and how to perform zazen, incorporating much of the procedural recommendations of Dōgen's "Fukanzazengi" while adding much more detail.

In the midst of these ritual instructions, Keizan also provides detail on how he sees zazen's relationship to and enactment of teaching, practice, and realization:

Zazen is not concerned with teaching, practice, or realization, yet it contains these three aspects. . . . Although teaching is established within zen, it is not ordinary teaching; it is direct pointing, simply communicating the way, speaking with the whole body. . . . Although we speak of practice, it is practice without any doing. That is to say, the body doesn't do anything, the mouth does not recite anything, the mind does not think anything over. . . . Though we may speak of

realization, this is realization without realization, . . . the gate of illumination through which the wisdom of the realized ones opens up, produced by the method of practice of great ease.⁵⁴

Here clearly Keizan is not espousing zazen as some technique to gain enlightenment, or some perfected practice or expounding, but simply is affirming the full endowment of realization already expressed in zazen.

This approach continues in much of later Sōtō Zen. The Sōtō scholar-monk Menzan Zuihō (1682–1769) significantly influenced the development of modern Sōtō Zen. Among his many writings is a long essay called “Jijuyū-zanmai” (The Samadhi of Self-fulfillment), in which he includes excerpts from many of Dōgen’s writings about meditation, including “Bendōwa” and “Zazenshin,” discussed above.⁵⁵ Before the Dōgen selections, Menzan comments briefly on many other Buddhist meditation teachings. Menzan critiques the dualistic meditation of those who “aspire to rid themselves of delusion and to gain enlightenment. . . . This is nothing but creating the karma of acceptance and rejection.”⁵⁶ For Menzan, on the other hand, “zazen is not a practice for getting rid of delusions and gaining enlightenment.”⁵⁷ Commenting on a teaching attributed to the third ancestor, Menzan adds, “If you do not make mental struggle, the darkness itself becomes the Self illumination of the light.”⁵⁸ Later he says, “This is the culmination of the Buddha-Way and the unsurpassable samadhi which is continuously going beyond. For this reason all Buddhas in the world of the ten directions . . . always dwell in zazen.”⁵⁹

In closing, it is important to note that the approach to zazen as an enactment ritual described in this article is far from the only approach to zazen in the Zen tradition or in modern Zen. For example, the modern Rinzai Zen incorporation of kōan introspection into zazen has its own set of associated rituals, many related to private interviews with the teacher. This praxis dates back to the great Japanese Rinzai master Hakuin (1686–1769), contemporary with Menzan, and has roots back to Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163; J. Daie Sōkō) in Song China. This version of the kōan introspection approach includes a curriculum that at least has the appearance of fostering attainment of stages of mastery of kōans and seeking impactful experiences of *kenshō*, or “seeing into [Buddha] nature.”

The kōan curriculum tradition from Hakuin, while contrary to much of Dōgen’s approach to zazen addressed in this article, seems to have been successful and effective for many of its followers, historically and today. It is probably the approach most usually assumed in modern academic general discussions of “Zen practice” and remains popular among some Western practice groups. It is not accurate, however, to stereotype Dōgen’s enactment

ritual zazen as only in Sōtō, since it can also be found used by a number of historical Rinzai teachers and has not necessarily been followed by all Sōtō teachers. We should remember that Zen is far from monolithic; there is a pluralism of Zen traditions and ritual systems derived from Japan, and even more so when we include the developments in Korean Son, in Vietnam, and in Chan as it has evolved in China.

In the West, Zen meditation traditions continue to be influential among a range of spiritual practitioners and contemplatives. And recently, along with its philosophical insights, Buddhist ritual practices are being studied more closely by religious and historical scholars. The enactment ritual approach to zazen expounded by Dōgen may serve as a helpful antidote and be particularly illuminating in Western cultures dominated by materialist and consumerist orientations, where a bias toward acquisitiveness often can color even spiritual activities.

36. This section after the pause, from “Without ceasing, one, two, three raindrops...” until the end of this sermon, is cited from the first volume of the recorded sayings of Ju-ching.

37. According to Collcutt, the seven-hall style, which was “no more than the essential minimum skeleton of the Zen monastery,” may have developed in the Sung and been transferred to Kamakura Japan, but “does not seem to have been applied to Chinese monasteries”; in *Five Mountains*, p. 186.

38. Kuroda Toshio, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to shūkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1990). For other interpretations in the complex issues involved in examining the changes in Buddhism during the Kamakura era, see Matsuo Kenji, *Shin Kamakura Bukkyō no tanjō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha gendai shinsho, 1995); and Kenji Matsuo, “What is Kamakura New Buddhism? Official Monks and Reclusive Monks,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14/1–2 (1997): 179–89. Matsuo tends to support Ishii’s approach but also broadens the context considerably by explaining Dōgen as an example of a “reclusive monk” (*tonseisō*), along with Hōnen, Shinran, Nichiren, and others, who established orders that catered to the needs of monks and laypersons alike, although in contrast to Ishii, Matsuo also stresses the role of individual salvation in these movements.

39. It should be stressed that the laypersons that Dōgen dealt with at Eiheiiji were a far different group than the literati in Sung China, where “The state had lost interest in all but the most illustrious monks and the greatest monasteries. All these factors caused elite Buddhism to focus its efforts on literati and local government officials in order to obtain needed financial and political support,” in Morten Schlütter, “Silent Illumination, Kung-an Introspection, and the Competition for Lay Patronage in Sung Dynasty Ch’an,” in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), p. 137.

Also, one area Dōgen did not attend to was funerals; as Duncan Ryūken Williams points out, Dōgen “did not include funerary procedures in his ritual repertoire, so it was not until the third-generation monk Gikai’s death in 1309 that the first Sōtō Zen funeral was conducted under Chinese Chan monastic regulations. The first Japanese Sōtō Zen monastic regulations, which included a section on how to perform funerals was the *Keizan shingi*,” in *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 40.

40. The Rinzaï Rinka temples were generally based in Kyoto with a network of countryside temples, such as Daitokuji and Myōshinji, with prominent intellectual/literary abbots such as Daitō, Ikkyū, and Bassui, and the Sōtō Rinka temples were generally in rural areas with popular preachers such as Gasan Jōseki, Tsūgen Jakurei, and Gennō Shinshō.

41. Ishikawa Rikizan, “Chūsei Sōtōshū ni okeru kirigami sōjō ni tsuite,” *In-dogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 30/2 (1982): 742–46.

CHAPTER 5

1. See, for example, Richard Payne, ed., *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006).

2. Robert Thurman, “Vajra Hermeneutics,” in Donald Lopez, ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), p. 122.
3. Thomas Kasulis, “Truth Words: The Basis of Kūkai’s Theory of Interpretation,” in Lopez, ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, p. 260.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
5. Shohaku Okumura and Taigen Daniel Leighton, trans., *The Wholehearted Way: A Translation of Eihei Dōgen’s “Bendōwa” with Commentary by Kōsho Uchiyama Roshi* (Boston: Tuttle, 1997), pp. 26–27.
6. Foreword by Ikkō Narasaki Roshi in Taigen Daniel Leighton and Shohaku Okumura, trans., *Dōgen’s Pure Standards for the Zen Community: A Translation of Eihei Shingi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. x.
7. For a full discussion of the textual variants of “Fukanzazengi” and its indebtedness to Chinese Chan sources, see Carl Bielefeldt, *Dōgen’s Manuals of Zen Meditation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). An abbreviation of the “Fukanzazengi” essay from 1243 called “Zazengi” is included as part of *Shōbōgenzō*. It includes mostly the procedural portions of “Fukanzazengi,” with only minor revisions. See Kazuaki Tanahashi, ed. and trans., *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen* (New York: North Point Press, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985), pp. 29–30.
8. Taigen Dan Leighton and Shohaku Okumura, trans., *Dōgen’s Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Kōroku* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), p. 533.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 534.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Leighton and Okumura, trans., *Dōgen’s Pure Standards for the Zen Community*, p. 63.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.
13. Bielefeldt, trans., *Dōgen’s Manuals of Zen Meditation*, p. 190. See also Kazuaki Tanahashi, ed. and trans., *Beyond Thinking: Meditation Guide by Zen Master Dogen* (Boston: Shambhala, 2004), p. 38; and Gudō Wafu Nishijima and Chōdō Cross, trans., *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, vol. 2 (Woods Hole, MA: Windbell Publications, 1996), p. 93.
14. For this story in the 1241 *Shōbōgenzō* essay “Kokyō” (“Ancient Mirror”), see Nishijima and Cross, *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, vol. 1, pp. 239–59. For the version with Dōgen’s verse comments in *Eihei kōroku*, see Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen’s Extensive Record*, pp. 561–62.
15. Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen’s Extensive Record*, pp. 561–62.
16. Bielefeldt, trans., *Dōgen’s Manuals of Zen Meditation*, p. 193.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
19. See Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen’s Extensive Record*, pp. 19–25.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 404.
22. For Dōgen’s attitude toward this element of the traditional Chan practice schedule, see dharma hall discourse 193, in *ibid.*, p. 210.

23. Ibid., p. 466.
24. Ibid., p. 472.
25. Ibid. pp. 257–58.
26. See Okumura and Leighton, *The Wholehearted Way*, pp. 14–19, 21–24, 43, 63–65, 105–6.
27. Hee-Jin Kim, *Eihei Dōgen: Mystical Realist* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), p. 55.
28. Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 258.
29. Tanahashi, *Beyond Thinking*, p. 79.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 80.
32. Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 328–29. The story also appears as case 59 in Dōgen's collection of ninety kōans with his verse comments in volume nine of *Eihei kōroku*, in *ibid.*, pp. 575–76; and in the *Shōbōgenzō* essay, “Henzan” (“All-Inclusive Study”), Tanahashi, *Moon in a Dewdrop*, p. 198. It may be noted that the historicity of Tang dynasty Chan stories is generally suspect, as many of them were not recorded until centuries after the supposed event, and there is no means to verify the oral traditions. Nevertheless, these stories were cherished throughout the later Chan/Zen traditions.
33. Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 328.
34. Okumura and Leighton, *The Wholehearted Way*, p. 30.
35. Ibid., p. 31.
36. Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 519–22.
37. Ibid., p. 521.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Tanahashi, *Beyond Thinking*, p. 94.
43. Ibid.
44. Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 124. For other examples of how Dōgen uses *jōdō* or dharma hall discourses as enactment rituals, see Taigen Dan Leighton, “The *Lotus Sutra* as a Source for Dōgen's Discourse Style,” in Richard Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton, eds., *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2006).
45. Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 507.
46. Dōgen recounts and comments on this story in dharma hall discourses 8 and 319 and calls Mazu's teaching “most intimate.” See *ibid.*, pp. 79, 292–93. Parts of this story are included in cases 30 and 33 of the kōan anthology *Mumonkan* (*Gateless Barrier*). See Zenkei Shibayama, *The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), pp. 214–22, 235–39.
47. This story is cited by Dōgen as case 19 in his collection of 300 kōans without any of his own commentary in his *Shinji* (or Mana, i.e., Chinese) *Shōbōgenzō*, not to be confused with the more noted work *Shōbōgenzō* with long essays, often commenting

at length on kōans. See Kazuaki Tanahashi and John Daido Looi, trans., *The True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dōgen's Three Hundred Kōans*, with commentary and verse by John Daido Looi (Boston: Shambhala, 2005), pp. 26–27. The story also is included as case 19 in the kōan anthology *Mumonkan (Gateless Barrier)*. See Shibayama, *The Gateless Barrier*, pp. 140–47.

48. See Shunryū Suzuki, *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness: Zen Talks on the Sandokai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). See also Carl Bielefeldt, T. Griffith Foulk, Taigen Leighton, and Shohaku Okumura, trans., “Harmony of Difference and Equality,” in *Cultivating the Empty Field: The Silent Illumination of Zen Master Hongzhi*, trans. Taigen Leighton and Yi Wu (Boston: Tuttle and Co., 2000), pp. 74–75.

49. Leighton and Wu, *Cultivating the Empty Field*, pp. 72–73.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

53. Thomas Cleary, ed. and trans., *Timeless Spring: A Soto Zen Anthology* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1980), p. 112.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–19.

55. See Shohaku Okumura, trans. and ed., *Dōgen Zen* (Kyoto: Kyoto Sōtō Zen Center, 1988), pp. 43–135. For more on Menzan, see David Riggs, “The Rekindling of a Tradition: Menzan Zuihō and the Reform of Japanese Sōtō Zen in the Tokugawa Era,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002.

56. Okumura, *Dōgen Zen*, p. 51.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

CHAPTER 6

1. In this section I am providing information for the reader to understand the steps taken to ensure reliability of the data. For further discussion on criteria used to evaluate qualitative versus quantitative data, see Roland Scholz and Olaf Tietje, *Embedded Case Study Methods: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Knowledge* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002). On p. 242, they assert, “Dealing with the case enactively opens the door to intuitive thinking and understanding.” Doing research “enactively” resonates with my mentor Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s methodological orientation, which stresses that a primary aim of a religion scholar is to strive to see the world through the eyes of the people you are studying. Applying this to an ethnographic approach ideally leads to “intuitive thinking and understanding.”

2. Paula Arai, *Women Living Zen: Japanese Sōtō Buddhist Nuns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). This underscores the benefits of establishing extended relationships in the field. Not only would I not have known there was even a ritual called the *Anan Kōshiki*, I would also not have had an understanding of the context in which to see and analyze the significance of this ritual for their community.