

## The Life of Menzan Zuihō, Founder of Dōgen Zen

David E. RIGGS

*International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, Japan*

Menzan Zuihō (1683-1769) was one of the most illustrious writers and reformers of Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism in the Tokugawa period (1603-1867). Menzan is thought of primarily as a meticulous and hard working editor of the writings of Dōgen (1200-1253), the founder of the Sōtō lineage, but under the cloak of simply returning to the old ways, Menzan used the long neglected texts of Dōgen in entirely new ways to create a reconstituted tradition based on careful textual learning rather than on secretly transmitted lore. After his early years in Kyushu, where he came under the influence of the newly imported Chinese Buddhism called Ōbaku Zen, Menzan traveled to the capital where he came into contact with early proponents of a new focus on Dōgen. Menzan spent most of his later life in Obama City north of Kyoto, first as abbot of Kūinji, and then doing his research and writing at a nearby hermitage. In addition to his work on Dōgen, he did fundamental research on monastic regulations, precepts, ordination, and dharma transmission. Menzan's groundbreaking research into all aspects of Zen texts and teaching set a new standard for Sōtō Zen learning and created a framework for Sōtō thinking and practice which persists to this day. With over one hundred titles to his credit, most of which saw print during his lifetime, Menzan's output dwarfs all other authors of his school. Although Menzan presented himself a conservative editor and historian, in fact he brought about sweeping changes in the doctrinal basis and the daily practice of Sōtō Zen.

*Keywords:* TOKUGAWA SŌTŌ ZEN, MENZAN, DŌGEN, ŌBAKU, INVENTION OF TRADITION, PURE RULES, ORDINATION, DHARMA TRANSMISSION.

### INTRODUCTION

Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方 (1683-1769) was one of the most illustrious writers and reformers of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867). During this era, there were major changes in Zen practice and a wide ranging creative re-evaluation of Buddhist doctrine, and Menzan was probably the most creative as well as the most careful and prolific of all

the index volume S-Kaidai 654-664.

<sup>48</sup> Kagamishima 1988, 6.

<sup>49</sup> The description that follows is taken from Urs App's overview, in which he credits Yanagida Seizan for introducing Mujaku to modern scholars, including the pioneering scholar Paul Demiéville who read and was extremely impressed with Mujaku's work during his research on *The Record of Linji* in the late 1950s. App 1987, Yanagida 1966.

<sup>50</sup> Kagamishima 1961, pp. 215-289.

<sup>51</sup> App 1987, p. 162.

<sup>52</sup> Baroni 2000, pp. 152-153, 205-217.

<sup>53</sup> Jaffe 1991.

<sup>54</sup> Kagamishima 1988, pp. 4-5.

<sup>55</sup> Bodiford 1993, p. 219.

## 要旨

### 面山瑞方、道元禪の始祖

デービッド・リッグス

面山瑞方（1683～1769）は、江戸時代に曹洞宗が展開した「宗統復古運動」に関する最も著名な著述家及び改革者の一人である。面山は主に曹洞宗開祖道元（1200～1253）の著作の忠実かつ有能な編集者として知られているが、彼は道元のやり方に戻って、何百年もの間なおざりにされていた原典を注解すると同時に、当時の慣行を無視して儀礼を再構成し、新しい教理を組み立てた。面山は二十歳まで過ごした九州で、中国から新しく入ってきた黄檗禪と呼ばれる仏教の影響を受けた後、江戸へ出て「宗統復古運動」の流れに飛び込んだ。その後福井県の小浜市の空印寺で数年間住職の役割を勤め、退職後は近所の永福庵で二十八年間研究を進め、数々の本を出版した。道元に関する著作の他に規範、受戒、嗣法について革新的な論文を書いた。禪の原典と教義におけるあらゆる彼の革新的な研究は、曹洞宗の学問に新しい規範を定め、今日まで続いている曹洞宗の思想と実践における枠組を作り出した。百冊にも上る面山の著作の大部分は異例のことに生前に出版されたが、曹洞宗の他の学僧の著作をはるかにしのぐものである。彼は保守的な編集者及び歴史家としての面をみせた一方で、実は曹洞宗の教義と実践に広範囲の変化をもたらしたのである。

the Sōtō Zen figures of the time. His approach to learning and his emphasis on historical sources continue to this day to be characteristic of the Sōtō school, and his reforms of doctrine and practice are the foundation of the contemporary school. Menzan did not, however, limit himself to purely Sōtō texts and problems, and it is clear from details of his life that there was a much freer exchange of ideas and a closer relationship between schools of Zen than is seen in modern Japan. His life is of interest for what he did, but also because the abundance of writings he produced contain many details of Buddhism of the middle Edo period.

Despite his accomplishments, Menzan is not remembered in Sōtō Zen circles as an innovative figure, and the Tokugawa period was for many years dismissed as a backward embarrassment. Among Sōtō Zen students and scholars, Dōgen 道元 is always taken as the source of all authority, and today, as if to emphasize that attitude, the school often refers to itself as Dōgen Zen. Menzan's writings, although highly respected, are regarded as merely helpful notes and background information with which to gain access to the great insight and awakening of the founder. Menzan certainly wished to be seen in that way, but in many ways he was as much a revolutionary as a conservator. Not only did Menzan read Dōgen with the greatest attention to textual detail and painstakingly research Dōgen's sources, he attempted to put into daily practice what he saw as the way that Dōgen would have done things. In this campaign Menzan was willing to go against both the practices of the established powers and the ways of his own teachers, whom he held in the greatest respect. Menzan's detailed command of the works of Dōgen is widely remarked on, but his efforts did not stop there. Perhaps even more impressive was his willingness to fill in areas that Dōgen left blank and to decide ambiguities in Dōgen's work by interpreting the texts that Dōgen himself would have had access to. Menzan used ancient materials for his reform project, but the selection and interpretation were very much his own.

To understand the importance of Menzan as well as his role in the development of Dōgen Zen, a word about Dōgen is in order. Dōgen is present in almost any study of Sōtō Zen, but why it is that he occupies such a dominant position? From the perspective of the modern Sōtō school it is not surprising that Menzan should have devoted his life to the study of Dōgen. Indeed, in the last century, the vast majority of Sōtō related studies, both in Japan and in the West, have been focused on some aspect of Dōgen.<sup>1</sup> Dōgen was responsible for the introduction of the Sōtō Zen lineage to Japan, and his writings have become the font of orthodoxy for contemporary Sōtō Zen. It is all too easy to assume that this should obviously be the case, and that he has always been regarded in this way. Before the Tokugawa reforms championed by Menzan, however, Dōgen held nothing like the all-important position he now occupies. The Sōtō reformers were following a widespread trend of intellectual life at this time in Japan which sought new sources of authority by seeking out old texts and reading them anew, as if for the first time. The process by which Dōgen came to occupy his prominent position was one case of these general trends which are discussed briefly below.

By the end of the Tokugawa reforms, Dōgen had come to occupy center stage as both the founder of the lineage in Japan and the source of Sōtō orthodox thinking and practice, but in the medieval period his role was much more limited. His writings, especially the collection of essays which is now called the *Shōbō genzō* 正法眼藏 (hereafter *Genzō*), were treated as secret treasures, but there was no commonly accepted version and no commentaries were written from about 1300 until the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Although Sōtō monks traced their lineage to Dōgen, the content of Sōtō practice and doctrine was determined by what was passed down from teacher to disciple. In the medieval era, religious authority (and indeed authority in general) relied on the relationship of master and student. Texts and other paraphernalia were used to certify this handing down of authority. In the case of Sōtō Zen, the possession of a Dōgen text, rather than the understanding of the contents of that text, authenticated the religious practices and teachings of the possessor.

In the medieval period, the possession of a text may have been enough, but with the increasing importance of a different standard of learning in the early Tokugawa, Sōtō Zen needed something more respectable than secret oral lore for its doctrinal underpinnings. Some of Dōgen's more conventional works had long been available, but it was only in the seventeenth century that the *Genzō* and his writings about monastic practice became more widely circulated in manuscript form and were printed for the first time. It gradually became apparent that there was a discrepancy between the contents of the *Genzō* and contemporary Sōtō customs. Even before Menzan's time there had been attempts to reform customary practices to bring them more into line with the texts of Dōgen. These attempts used the slogan of *fukko* 復古, which means to return to the old [ways], but with the implication that the old ways were the only correct ways. The most prominent attempt was led by Manzan Dōhaku 卍山道白 (1636-1741), who succeeded in his attempt to reform dharma transmission, the ceremonial authentication of the status of a Zen teacher.<sup>3</sup> Dōhaku, as I will refer to him henceforth to avoid confusion with Menzan, made a creative leap by reinterpreting a 1615 government decree which specified that the house rules of Eiheiiji 永平寺, the temple founded by Dōgen, should also be the rules for all temples of the lineage. Dōhaku made the startling claim that this rather specific legalistic decree meant that the writings of Dōgen (not just the current Eiheiiji house rules), as the founder of Eiheiiji, should be the source of authority for the entire Sōtō school. He then used this claim to make use of one chapter of the *Genzō* to justify his campaign to reform Sōtō practices of dharma transmission. His case for a sweeping transformation was thus based on a text by Dōgen that had been ignored for hundreds of years. Whether or not it was the intent of the 1615 government ruling, Dōhaku's interpretation carried the day and resulted in an enormous expansion of interest in the writings of Dōgen. He succeeded in publishing his own version of the *Genzō* in 1686, but because of the problems arising from disputes about the *Genzō*, in 1722 the Sōtō hierarchy requested that the government prohibit its publication, a prohibition that was not lifted until 1796, though manuscript copies continued to be available.<sup>4</sup> Thus Menzan's

entire research project on the *Genzō* (described below) was carried out under the constraint of this prohibition.

From Dōhaku's beginning, Menzan worked to push the reform movement far beyond the original topic of dharma transmission and its focus on just one chapter of the *Genzō*. Menzan sought out different manuscript versions of the chapters of the *Genzō* and investigated the various traditions of organizing these chapters into a single collection. He also worked on Dōgen's other writings, such as his separate essays (in Chinese) about monastic regulations and a variety of independent pieces. He used these texts as his basis for authority, but he also read very widely in the sources that Dōgen himself relied upon and used these to fill in questions that Dōgen had not addressed. On this broader basis, he advocated a much more radical overhaul of Sōtō affairs, including the rollback of some of Dōhaku's reforms that were not sufficiently close to Dōgen. For example, Dōhaku had also created a set of monastic regulations that he claimed were based on Dōgen and earlier Chinese ways. Menzan exposed this rule as being based on contemporary Chinese practices as seen the Ōbaku 黄檗 temples that had become very popular in Japan.

These temples traced their lineage to a series of Chinese masters who came to Japan starting in the seventeenth century. As trade with China grew in the early part of the seventeenth century, Chinese traders in the port city of Nagasaki established temples and brought in Chinese monks to run them. Although the temples were set up for the Chinese merchant community, many Japanese monks came to Nagasaki to see for themselves this contemporary Chinese Buddhism, which came to be referred to as Ōbaku, after the mountain name of the main temple Manpukuji 萬福寺.<sup>5</sup> Menzan's position was that the only true sources of authority were the writings of Dōgen and the texts on which Dōgen drew, and he strenuously objected to taking contemporary practice (either Chinese or Japanese) as a model. Menzan emphasized that the old texts were to be read directly, making use only of texts which were contemporaneous or of course prior texts for contextualization. He did not rely on the views of living teachers and avoided commentaries. Of course Menzan studied with a variety of teachers and revered his own lineage master Sonnō Shūeki 損翁宗益 (1649-1705). Nonetheless, when Menzan attempted to establish authority he relied neither on customary practice nor on orally transmitted knowledge. Although they insisted that they were merely transmitting the teachings of Dōgen, Menzan and the other reformers can be seen as the founders of a new tradition which derived its authority from textual commentary and scholarship, not from long established customs and rituals. Although tradition can be thought of as a gradual accumulation of teachings or an organically developing system of practices, it can also be a deliberate construct which is used to bring about change to long established customary practices.<sup>6</sup> Thanks in great part to the textual work of Menzan, the Edo reform of Sōtō Zen is an example of a well-crafted tradition, that is to say a tradition that presents a surface of great authority and antiquity and skillfully conceals the seams and supports used to construct that surface.

Menzan was profoundly influenced by the works of Dōgen, but he was also very

much a man of his times in that he used the textual tools and promoted the values of the contemporary trend of returning to the earliest texts.<sup>7</sup> For example, in literature and Chinese studies of this period, in many circles there was a new interest in the unmediated use of ancient texts, much like the approach used by Menzan. These groups advocated the wholesale discarding of centuries of oral and written secret commentary and turning instead to root texts of unimpeachable authenticity. In the Ancient Learning school of Confucian studies, contemporary teachers and their Neo-Confucianism were rejected in favor of reading the texts of Confucius directly.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the study of Japanese poetry, after centuries of being treated as secret family lore, became the topic of public lectures, and texts of the ancient poems were freely available for the first time.<sup>9</sup> Although there was an opposing trend that developed secret lineages for many trades and skills, one of the most important intellectual developments in Japan at the time was this emphasis on open discussion (within prescribed boundaries of permissible topics) and increased reliance on textual analysis and commentary rather than on secret initiations.

There were others like Menzan who were even more fearlessly investigating the history of received texts, and at greater personal cost. Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲基 (1715-46) published his *Emerging from Meditation*, a critique of Buddhism that was remarkable for its time.<sup>10</sup> Tominaga made good use of the new edition of the Buddhist canon produced by the Ōbaku school to show that Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtras could not possibly date from the time of the Buddha and furthermore, judging from all the contradictions they contained, Tominaga decided that they were mostly just the words of competing teachers trying to outdo each other. A similar critique of Confucian texts got him thrown out of his home and his academy. The Sōtō reforms have been depicted in sectarian histories as simply a purging of impurities acquired during centuries of degenerate practice, but they can also be seen as a creative application of this new trend in Japanese thought towards emphasizing original texts, adapted to the specificity of contemporary Sōtō Zen politics and doctrine.

There can be no doubt that Menzan's work promoted a Sōtō Zen that had its own distinct teachings and practices, and one might expect to find that he also practiced the same kind of rigorous separation between Rinzai and Sōtō Zen that is so often noted in modern Japan. In fact however, as is described below, Menzan often studied with teachers from outside his Sōtō lineage and wrote long commentaries on *koan* texts that are not now considered part of the Sōtō sphere of interest. He spent much of his later years as a guest at Rinzai temples and received at least one Shingon lineage ordination. It is true that he was against certain kinds of Zen practice (as discussed below), but there is nothing to suggest a general rejection of Rinzai Zen and much evidence of frequent and intimate contact throughout his life with his brother monks of the Rinzai lineage.

Menzan is certainly not alone in his enthusiasm for Dōgen and reforms, but his output is so large and varied that he can hardly be compared to other Sōtō writers. There are over a hundred titles to his credit, including several very large collections of detailed scholarship and philology. One work on monastic rules is over three hundred pages in

the modern typeset edition. He had fifty-five of these titles printed during his lifetime and the number of his titles included in the standard modern Sōtō Zen collections is greater than all other prominent Sōtō authors combined. Menzan argued his case for what he characterized as authentic Dōgen Zen with painstaking attention to textual detail and a comprehensive use of materials that set a new level of scholarship.

### EARLY YEARS IN KYUSHU

The outline of Menzan's life can be found in the year-by-year list of events of his life, the *Chronology of the Life of Teacher Menzan, Founder of Eifuku [Temple]*, which constitutes fascicle twenty-six of his *Extended Record*.<sup>11</sup> It was compiled by Kōda Soryō 衡田祖量 (1702-1779), one of his most important disciples, and as is usual for this genre, it mainly consists of a list of bare facts of where Menzan was, whom he met, what ceremonies he participated in, and what he wrote.<sup>12</sup> Since much of Menzan's life is occupied with the texts he was writing, Menzan's major works are briefly described here to give an overview of how his interests developed, and a few pieces will be discussed in some detail.

Menzan was born in 1683 in Kyushu, in what is now Kumamoto Prefecture, Kamoto County, Ueki City. In the *Chronology*, Menzan is depicted as having the precocity expected of one who would become such an illustrious writer. He read the Chinese classics and basic Buddhist texts before his teens, and by his twelfth year his father recruited him to read the petitions that he was required to take care of as government station master (*ekichō* 駅長). When he was fifteen his mother died. The following year, on the memorial day of her death, Menzan went to her grave site and shaved his own head to symbolize his desire to become a monk. His father was furious that his son did not first seek permission, especially when Menzan's support was most needed by the family. His father soon relented, however, and in 1698 Menzan was ordained by Ryōun Kohō 遼雲古峰, the abbot of a local temple, the Ryūchōin 流長院. Menzan was given the Buddhist ordination name of Zuihō, which he kept unchanged throughout his career.

Menzan's home town of Ueki is on the plain to the west of the large bay (Ariake Sea) that is behind the peninsula of Nagasaki, and is therefore not far from very active areas of foreign influence. Both Western and Chinese commerce was tightly controlled and confined to Nagasaki, and there was a steady stream of Japanese visitors to the area. It was not possible to travel to China, but the Chinese community set up its own temples in Nagasaki and many Japanese monks came to see Chinese Buddhism at first hand. Although it was far from the political and cultural capitals, this area was at the forefront of the changes in Buddhist thinking. Menzan's youth occurred at a time of changes in other aspects of Japanese culture. He grew up during the Genroku era (1688-1704), when Japanese society was at peace and had settled into the strict rules of the now well established military government. This period is known for the flourishing of the popular arts.

The illustrious poet Bashō was developing new styles and Saikaku had created a new kind of comic writing that described the pleasure quarters and lampooned figures of the establishment, including Buddhist monks.

As mentioned above, this was also the period of the flowering of the study of Chinese thought and a new interest in philological studies, which Menzan drew upon in his own work. Along with this explosion of literary and scholarly activity came the transformation of book manufacturing and trade into a smooth working system that could quickly and inexpensively bring out woodblock printed copies of a work in the same year it was written.<sup>13</sup> Japan had experimented with moveable type, but woodblocks were quicker to produce because of the enormous number of different characters of type that were required and the desire for Japanese style reading marks (*kunten* 訓点) in the margins of Chinese texts. Unlike expensive type, which was taken out of the printing frames and reused for other texts, the woodblocks could simply be stored. If and when the initial print run sold out, more copies could be produced with very little additional expense. Buddhist books were a major part of this trade in earlier parts of the Tokugawa period; judging from colophons to Menzan's works, it was a simple matter for a lay disciple who had the money to take a short text to Kyoto and have it published almost immediately. This new availability of print was probably one of the most important factors in Menzan's long-term success. I know of no survey of how many copies of his works were actually distributed, but I have found that when I visit temples, even small country temples, upon learning that I am interested in Menzan, the abbot frequently produces well-worn copies of Menzan woodblock texts that have been in the temple's possession for generations. Menzan was not part of the power structure of Sōtō and it was only after his death that his most important reforms were implemented. The key to his success was his texts, not his personality or his connections. Without cheap printing, his reforms would probably not have met with the success they did.

After his ordination, Menzan practiced under the direction of Ryōun and also studied with other teachers. For example, he read the *Record of Lin-Chi*, an important early Chinese Zen text, with a teacher of the Myōshinji 妙心寺 line of Rinzai Zen. He also read the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra*, one source of the precepts most commonly taken in Japan, with a teacher specializing in precepts. These two texts appear repeatedly as lecture topics later in his life. Neither his ordination teacher nor the temple are well known, and Ryōun seldom appears in Menzan's writings, but there are a few paragraphs about him in Menzan's *Tribute to the Life of Zen Master Tōsui*.<sup>14</sup> This work is a biographical sketch consisting largely of popular stories about the eccentric monk Tōsui 桃水 (d. 1683), with a preface by Menzan explaining why he came to compose such a piece. Menzan relates in his preface that his teacher Ryōun was the blood nephew of the famous Tōsui, and was also connected to him through ordination: Ryōun's ordination teacher was Sengan 船岩 (n.d) who had been ordained by the same teacher as Tōsui. Menzan relates that he had often heard how important Tōsui had been to Ryōun, and that Ryōun had always wanted to prepare an account of the life of Tōsui so that others could benefit from his teaching.



Nearly fifty years later Menzan took up the task and composed this account as a token of his gratitude to his own teacher Ryōun. Of greater interest here than the story of Tōsui and the text itself, which has been ably translated by Peter Haskel, is what we can gather about Menzan and his early relationship to the Ōbaku Zen lineage.<sup>15</sup>

Menzan tells us in his introduction that Ryōun and another student had been sent by their teacher to Manpukuji, the main training temple of Ōbaku, and had spent ten years there. The other student stayed on and eventually became abbot of an Ōbaku temple, but Ryōun returned to Kyushu to take care of Zenjōji 禪定寺, and later became the next abbot of Ryūchōin, his teacher's temple. Tōsui was not sent to Manpukuji, but Tōsui himself sent his most promising students to Manpukuji, where they stayed and became Ōbaku abbots in their own right. So Menzan's own ordination master was actually trained as an Ōbaku monk and he was surrounded by teachers who had sent their best students off to study with the Ōbaku lineage masters. He reported this in passing, without further comment. Yet throughout his other writings Menzan displayed an implacable opposition to the influence of the Manpukuji training on Sōtō monks. He sought to bring the school back to the writings of Dōgen, which for him included getting rid of later influences, both from the Chinese Zen of Manpukuji and from the medieval Japanese customs. Perhaps this early experience of seeing Sōtō monks go to Manpukuji for Ōbaku training and not return was part of the reason that Menzan was especially critical of Ōbaku teachings and practices.

Just before his twentieth year, Menzan was informed by Ryōun that he was soon going to retire from his teaching position. Ryōun seems to have offered Menzan neither a position nor advice about what to do next, so Menzan went to Kinpōsan, the local mountain overlooking the bay, and did a week-long solitary retreat to contemplate his future course of practice. As he later wrote in the *Record of the Teachings of the Hōei Era*, before he went up the mountain he slipped a piece of paper with a prayer for guidance written on it into the enclosed altar of a shrine at the foot of the mountain.<sup>16</sup> When he returned from his retreat, during which he stayed up each night reciting the *Diamond Sūtra*, a snake appeared from the same opening where he had placed the paper. Menzan interpreted this as an auspicious omen for travel, and Ryōun encouraged him to go immediately, rather than waiting for his formal retirement.

## FINDING A TEACHER IN EDO

Menzan went to Edo that spring (1703), and met several of the major figures of the Sōtō world, including Dōhaku, who had just completed his successful bid to force a reform of dharma transmission practice. Towards the end of 1703 he met the relatively unknown teacher Sonnō Sōeki, and soon after he left the famous teachers of Edo behind and followed Sonnō back to Taishiniji 泰心寺, his small temple in Sendai. Sonnō was a native of Yomezawa, some fifty miles to the southwest of Sendai in the central mountains

of present-day Yamagata Prefecture. Sonnō had received transmission from an obscure abbot in the Ketsudō Nōsho 傑堂能勝 faction (one of the Sōjiji 總持寺 factions), and had been abbot since 1697. Menzan had left the powerful figures of the capital behind, but he was joining a faction that was far more numerous and powerful than the Meihō faction to which Dōhaku belonged.<sup>17</sup> Although Menzan is frequently linked to Dōhaku, and in one popular text even described as being in his dharma lineage, in fact he was in a separate Sōtō dharma line and had a different reform agenda, as is discussed below.<sup>18</sup> Menzan was soon to receive dharma transmission in this faction, which controlled a large number of temples, and later became abbot of his own temple. Sonnō's emphasis on strict practice and respect for Dōgen were lasting influences on Menzan, in stark contrast to his ordination teacher, who was heavily involved in the Ōbaku movement. Sonnō once expelled a student for the casual mistake of placing an ordinary text on top of one of Dōgen's texts on a bookshelf. The student underwent seventeen days of repentance before Sonnō relented and readmitted him. Menzan received a set of precepts (*daikai* 大戒) from Sonnō during his first winter retreat. Presumably this set was some form of the Bodhisattva precepts and giving them to a new student was an indication of the importance of precepts for Sonnō, but no further discussion is given in the *Chronology*.

Sonnō is of interest here due to his influence on Menzan's thought, but Sonnō's own life is worthy of a separate study, as he was one of the earliest teachers to emphasize strictly following Dōgen. Sonnō was well known for his compassion for all creatures, even for convicted criminals and for birds which were the target of boys throwing rocks. He routinely asked to be informed when a criminal was to be beheaded and would then give that person a dharma name, inscribe it on a plaque, have the *Diamond Sūtra* chanted for seventeen days after the decapitation, and hold a memorial service.<sup>19</sup> Sonnō was known for accepting all requests to give talks, whether at famous temples or lay gatherings. Menzan went everywhere with him, and described this as a far better way to learn than just going to hear various famous teachers lecture.

In early 1705, Sonnō decided it was time to send Menzan out to visit other Zen teachers of all lineages throughout eastern Japan. Despite his youth, he was asked to lecture at villages during his travels. He spent an entire week lecturing on *Advice on Studying the Way*, a short text Dōgen composed soon after his return from China. It emphasizes the importance of Zen's unique vision of practice and of study under a qualified teacher. Menzan lectured on this text repeatedly over the next sixty years, but it was not until just before his death that he had his commentary on the text printed. He spent three evenings teaching about the precepts of the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra*, and he lectured on a case from the *Checkpoint of Wu-men*, a popular collection of old cases of encounters between Zen masters and students. When Menzan returned after six weeks of traveling to lecture and to meet other teachers, Sonnō expressed his satisfaction. This was the crucial point in Menzan's acceptance by Sonnō.

In the privacy of the abbot's room, they had the following exchange. Sonnō said, "If a person asks you, 'What is this?', what will you reply?" Menzan replied, "What is this?"

Sonnō continued, “Silver mountain, iron wall.” Menzan responded, “Iron mountain, silver wall.” Sonnō bowed and Menzan did obeisance.<sup>20</sup> After this exchange Sonnō said that he was ill and unlikely to recover. He urged Menzan to preserve what was most important: to look upon the face of Dōgen, and not the face of others. Sonnō regarded this as his greatest legacy to Menzan. Although Menzan does not comment, this was also presumably a direct order not to follow the lineage of the Ōbaku teachers who had been so influential in his life just three years earlier.

The phrase “silver mountain, iron wall” is a stock metaphor for something that cannot be grasped, as the truth of Zen cannot be grasped by the intellect. Dōgen uses it once, in his *Extended Record*, and it occurs several times in the *Blue Cliff Record kōan* 公案 collection, including once at the end of case fifty-six, where it appears with the same inversion that Menzan used in his reply.<sup>21</sup> The question of *kōan* study and how it was used in Sōtō Zen of this era is too large a topic to introduce here, but clearly some kind of *kōan* dialogue played a key role in how Menzan wished to record his relationship with Sonnō, and it is noteworthy that the phrase refers to the futility of attempting to use the intellect to penetrate the deepest matters. Dōgen used the phrase, but only once, and Menzan’s interchange with Sonnō does not seem to be linked to Dōgen. Menzan’s study and use of the classic *kōan* cases continued throughout his life, and clearly *kōan* also played a crucial role in his own Zen practice.

Despite his illness, Sonnō held the summer retreat, and out of respect for a monk of the Rinzai lineage in attendance, he devoted his lectures to the *Record of Lin-chi*. Sonnō insisted on the primacy of Dōgen’s teaching, but it is clear that he was not interested in using that view to exclude anyone from his assembly, nor to overlook a text like the *Record of Lin-chi* just because it was very important to Ōbaku teachings. Before the retreat was over, Sonnō completed the series of ceremonies for dharma transmission to Menzan. He passed away shortly thereafter. Menzan had known Sonnō for barely two years, but his influence shaped the remainder of Menzan’s life. With the dharma transmission ceremonies and written certificates from Sonnō, Menzan now had the status to ordain his own students and become the abbot of his own temple. The post of succeeding abbot at Sonnō’s temple was not offered to him, but Menzan stayed for two months of mourning. Then he left Sendai to make his way towards Edo. It was 1705, and at the age of twenty-three Menzan had received dharma transmission, but he had no position, not even a place to reside.

## YEARS OF WANDERING AND LONG RETREATS

In Edo he was allowed to stop over at the residence of Ōtomo Inaba no kami Yoshisata 大友因幡守義岡, who belonged to the family of the Lord of Bungo (in Kyushu), and became something of a patron, judging from Menzan’s subsequent visits. As was his usual habit, Menzan went to see well-known monks of various lineages, and

he also raised funds to have a portrait of Dōgen printed and distributed, presaging his later work on a popular Dōgen biography. He eventually found a congenial location in Sagami (in the western outskirts of present day Tokyo), where he lectured to large groups of people. Menzan was already beginning his lifelong efforts to popularize Dōgen in ways that went beyond textual research, but despite his focus on Dōgen, he continued to seek out teachers of other lineages.

On his deathbed Sonnō had charged Menzan to do a one thousand day retreat reading Dōgen's *Genzō* and sitting in meditation. Menzan had made a copy of the *Genzō*, in his own hand, presumably from the version Sonnō was using. Unfortunately it is not clear which of the various versions of the *Genzō* Menzan was using for his retreat. In the village of Hashima southwest of Edo (present day Kanagawa Prefecture), Menzan found the situation to fulfill his promise to Sonnō. He lectured for a week on the topic of the *Lotus Sūtra* and then presided over an assembly wherein people received the precepts of the three refuges, a fundamental set of precepts taken by all Buddhists. During these precept assemblies, which often lasted several days, people strengthened their commitment to Buddhism and formed a connection to a particular teaching lineage. This set of precepts from the *Lotus Sūtra*, one of the most popular and universally accepted texts, would have enabled Menzan to draw villagers closer to Buddhism and to his own teaching without disturbing the rigidly enforced affiliation to a particular temple and its teaching lineage. This was the first of many precept assemblies Menzan presided over throughout his life, though his later assemblies were for precepts specific to his Sōtō Zen lineage. At the end of this particular assembly, he announced that the village elder and ten people in his household had promised to support Menzan and to bring him food every day during his three year retreat in the local temple of Rōbaian 老梅庵. Before beginning the retreat he went into Edo to discuss his plans with his circle of acquaintances, including Ōtomo. During this same trip he again found the opportunity to visit with the learned figures who were in the area. This time he went to see teachers who specialized in Buddhist regulations (*vinaya*), and he also took the *samaya* esoteric precepts from a Shingon teacher who went by the name of Kisan Biku 義燦比丘. By way of reciprocating, Menzan taught Kisan the meaning of seated meditation as practiced in Sōtō Zen. The *samaya* precepts (*sanmayakai* 三昧耶戒) are taken in the initial ceremony of the *abhisheka* ritual of esoteric Buddhism. These precepts emphasize compassion and the promotion of awakening for all beings, and were to be taken in addition to the usual full precepts of the lineage.<sup>22</sup> Apparently Menzan took these precepts without going on to the later sections of the *abhisheka* ritual.

In the fourth month of 1706, Menzan returned to Rōbaian and began his three year retreat. He read and reread the *Genzō* in alternation with meditation. He soon borrowed a portable sitting platform (*jōshō* 繩床) from a nearby temple. The *jōshō* is originally a foldable rope mat spread out on the ground to sit upon, but here it probably refers to the folding seat that the abbot uses when giving formal lectures. It seems that this small temple was not well furnished, and also perhaps Menzan needed a chair to help hold his

position during the long hours of his retreat. He later regarded this period as the beginning of his lifelong study of the *Genzō*, a task that some fifty years later led to the publication of his ten fascicle work on the sources used by Dōgen, the *Source Texts Cited in the Shōbō genzō*.

Menzan was not isolated during this time. Someone came six times a month to shave his head, and he performed ordination ceremonies (*tokudo* 得度) for several people. He had visitors who came to discuss Buddhism, including a novice monk who wanted to talk to Menzan about the precepts used in his Tendai lineage. Halfway through the retreat, a monk came from Edo to be his assistant, and began doing a daily round of begging for food. Whether this was just to feed himself or because Menzan's promised food supplies were running out is not specified. At the end of 1708 Menzan performed the finger burning ceremony as described in the sixteenth of the lesser precepts of the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra*, further demonstrating his continuing emphasis on precepts and their rituals.<sup>23</sup>

Menzan ended the retreat as planned in 1709, at age twenty-seven. This year also saw the end of the exuberant Genroku 元禄 era and the beginning of the years of reform movements in government. The reforms were instigated by the new Shōgun Ienobu 家宣 and his advisor Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, and continued after 1716 by the eighth Shōgun Yoshimune 吉宗. This was a period of fiscal retrenchment and currency reform, as the government struggled to find a way to balance the military power and administration established in the previous century with the rising financial and cultural influence of the town merchants. Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, the Confucian Ancient Studies thinker, was publishing his works and was at the height of his influence in the administration of Yoshimune.

After completing his retreat in the first month of 1709, Menzan gave talks in a variety of places and continued writing and reading in many temple libraries. He began his lifelong project of reading the one hundred volume *Mahā prajñā pāramitā sūtra*.<sup>24</sup> This massive text is often used in Japan for ceremonies to make spiritual merit and a special chest containing these volumes can often be seen today in the main hall of Zen temples. In this ritualized reading, a few words from each volume are recited while turning the remainder of the pages from the volume (*tendoku* 轉讀). Each volume is read in this way, often with several priests chanting and turning simultaneously. Menzan, however, actually studied the entire text, and late in his life he finished his commentary, in which he summarized the gist of each of the six hundred chapters with a Chinese verse. He saw Dōhaku several times, and at his urging Menzan wrote his first work of scholarship, the *Record of the Activities of the Founder of Eihei*. This spare text is a compendium of the events of Dōgen's life based first and foremost on what can be gleaned from Dōgen's own writings. Material from other sources is also considered, but Menzan attempted to check everything against Dōgen's own words. The *Record* was printed in 1710 with a long colophon by Dōhaku, and remains to this day a useful and reliable guide to Dōgen's words about his own life. Menzan's commitment to emphasizing original sources shows

clearly in this first work. Thus he began his publishing career at age twenty-seven in his characteristic style and continued to write and publish for the next fifty-nine years.

In 1711 Menzan spent the summer retreat at Kūinji 空印寺, in the town of Obama in present day Fukui Prefecture, north of Kyoto on the Japan Sea. Later in life, Kūinji became his main temple, but this time he was merely the assistant to the preceptor for the retreat. After this he made his first visit to Eiheiiji and then returned to his retreat site of Rōbaian to begin his study of the *Eiheikōroku* 永平廣錄, the Chinese language collection which records Dōgen's formal talks. His itinerant lifestyle continued with his return to Kyushu to take care of his sick father. After his father's death, he returned to the Kansai region and was an officiant at the funeral of Dōhaku in 1715. The next year, in obedience to his father's dying wish, Menzan made another retreat at Rōbaian. During this one year retreat he made a stūpa of rocks, each rock representing one character of the *Lotus Sūtra*. He finished the stūpa in the first few months and spent the remainder of the retreat reading other sūtras and meditating. Menzan's early experience of solitary meditation combined with textual study may seem a little surprising. Apparently the Zen practice of meditation in the monks hall (where reading was strictly prohibited) was not a norm of training when Menzan was young. The sources do not mention what Menzan's contemporaries thought of his retreat practices, and it is not clear whether or not this kind of solitary retreat combined with textual study was an unusual event for a Zen monk.

### ABBOT OF ZENJŌJI AND KŪINJI

In late 1717, at age thirty-five, Menzan received letters of invitation from Zenjōji in his home district in Kyushu to become the next abbot. It had been some twelve years of study and practice since the death of Sonnō, and except for his retreats at Rōbaian, Menzan had had no fixed location and apparently lacked a steady patron who was able and willing to provide him with a temple of his own. Even though Zenjōji was a small temple, it must have been a welcome offer. This is apparently the same Zenjōji that was associated with Menzan's ordination teacher Ryōun.<sup>25</sup> After raising the necessary funds, Menzan went to Eiheiiji for the required honorary abbot ceremony (*zuise* 瑞世), he made his way and then to Kyoto for the ceremony at the imperial court. Thus he arrived at his first post of abbot with credentials from Eiheiiji and the Court, but this was apparently not enough to ensure his acceptance. Due to some problem which is not further described he was obliged to spend the winter in a nearby temple, apparently without any duties, waiting for some resolution to the impasse. In the spring, he went to the Kyoto area, and was persuaded to return only when an assistant arrived with letters of support from the current abbot and the two prior abbots of Zenjōji. He took up the post and became the eleventh abbot of Zenjōji, this time without incident, perhaps an indication that local support and local politics were more important than the special robes and cer-

tificates from Eiheiji and the Court.

Menzan was abbot for twelve years, teaching and restoring temples throughout the region. During this period, he lectured on a wide variety of topics and texts including the *Record of Lin-chi* and the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*. In a number of cases, the lectures and drafts he constructed during this time were used in his later publications, though some texts recorded in the *Chronology* have been lost. Menzan drew audiences from across the spectrum of Buddhist lineages, not just Sōtō followers. In 1720 for example, he lectured for six weeks on the *Record of Lin-chi* to monks of the Rinzaï and Ōbaku lineages as well as Sōtō. The contemporary interest in the *Record of Lin-chi* reflects the influence of the Ōbaku lineage, which was responsible for a new emphasis on the text, and it is unfortunate that Menzan never committed a commentary to paper. That same year he gave lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra* to Pure Land lineage devotees. He also presided over lay precept ceremonies, and wrote several works on precepts and basic monastic procedure, including a piece on the chants at mealtime. During this time he also wrote the *Buddha Samādhi*, a relatively informal piece in praise of Dōgen's way of meditation. According to the colophon, a lay follower found this text years later when Menzan was a well established teacher, and received permission to have it printed in Kyoto and distributed. This work has been popular ever since, and copies in original woodblock form of this and several of Menzan's other short works can still be purchased at the Baiyō 貝葉 bookstore in Kyoto.<sup>26</sup>

The *Buddha Samādhi* also contains two disparaging comments about *kanna* practice, which is one of the characteristic features of modern Rinzaï Zen and is typically opposed by contemporary mainstream Sōtō Zen teachers.<sup>27</sup> This practice focuses great effort on breaking through to the understanding of a single phrase culled from the *kōan*, which is referred to as observing the critical phrase [of the *kōan*] (*kanna* 看話). Menzan recognizes that *kanna* has its roots in China, but he regards it as an unorthodox offshoot and writes that *kanna* practice is a misguided attempt to force the attainment of a dramatic breakthrough. His comments consist of just a few sentences, yet the entry on the *Buddha Samādhi* in the encyclopedia *Zengaku daijiten* 禪學大辭典 claims that Menzan's text is an attack on the Rinzaï Zen practice of *kanna*.<sup>28</sup> In fact Menzan never mentions Rinzaï here, and it seems much more likely that he was criticizing monks in his own school for their unruly behavior, which Menzan saw as the outcome of *kanna* practice. It is important to note that the *Zengaku daijiten* is a publication of Komazawa University, which has extremely strong ties to the modern Sōtō school, and is both the training school for Sōtō priests and a center for textual Buddhist scholarship. This small example highlights the strong tendency to read back the contemporary linkage of *kanna* and Rinzaï Zen into earlier texts, and to assume that the Rinzaï and Sōtō were as strictly separated in the past as they are now.

Being so close to Nagasaki and the Chinese enclave, it is not surprising to learn that Menzan had considerable contact with the Ōbaku Zen community, apparently continuing the friendly relations he inherited from his ordination teacher, whose circle was close

to the Ōbaku community. In 1725 he made a trip of several months to Nagasaki for the explicit purpose of learning more about the customs of the Chinese monks. Despite this interest, which Menzan shared with many others, the official status of the Chinese during this period was declining. Beginning in 1715, new regulations drafted by the government advisor Hakuseki severely limited the number of Chinese ships allowed to trade, and treated the Chinese at the lowest level of diplomatic relations.<sup>29</sup> Ironically this was also the time of the greatest level of influence of Sorai who championed ancient Chinese texts and thought.

In 1728, representatives came to invite Menzan to become abbot of Kūinji, the temple where he had spent one retreat some seventeen years before. Although Menzan had two years earlier refused an offer to be abbot of a temple not far away on the southern tip on Honshu, he accepted the offer from Kūinji, which was to be his home base until his death. It was an opportune time to leave Kyushu, for it would be hard hit by the great famine of 1732, while the area around Kūinji was relatively unaffected.<sup>30</sup> Except for this famine, Menzan lived during a period that enjoyed near freedom from major famine and civil disturbances, both of which began to be increasingly frequent after his death.

Menzan was in his forty-sixth year and he had published nothing of his own since the work on the life of Dōgen eighteen years earlier. He had written a short piece on the ritual procedure chants at mealtime, and finished his first major research project, the meaning and history of the ordination precepts. This detailed work in three volumes was not published for twenty years. His time in Kyushu had been largely spent raising funds and managing the revival of temples. In this new phase of his life he was settled in one location, and was much more focused on writing and research. Menzan was now in charge of a monastery that enjoyed a more active retreat schedule and was geographically much closer to Eiheiji and to Kyoto, the traditional capital and printing center. Before leaving Kyushu to officially take up this new post, he spent the next retreat as the head monk at the nearby Eikeiji 永慶寺, lecturing again on the *Record of Lin-chi*. He arranged for a new abbot to take over at Zenjōji, and shortly after the new year, departed for Kūinji, taking five of his own students with him. After his installation ceremony as abbot of Kūinji, which was attended by representatives of some forty temples of the region, he presented himself to the temple sponsors and began the summer retreat. For the first time there is a notice of his lecturing on a chapter of Dōgen's *Genzō*, the "Ango 安居" chapter, which is concerned with the meaning of the training session. In the fall Menzan held another precepts assembly and made the trip to Eiheiji to receive his robe of advancement in rank and to meet the new abbot, Taikyo Katsugen 大虚喝玄 (d. 1736), who was to be Menzan's major supporter during the next few years.

Menzan continued to travel when he could take time away from his duties in order to find manuscripts of Dōgen as well as of other Sōtō authors. Most of his effort, however, seems to have been directed to his work on monastic rules and to his teaching during the retreats at Kūinji. Katsugen praised his research and brought Menzan to Eiheiji for a three-week visit to look at the manuscripts there and to edit Katsugen's own work on the



precepts. Beginning in 1736, he served a one-year term as abbot in rotation (*rinjū* 輪住) for Ryūkeiin 龍溪院 in present-day Nagoya. He knew that this temple had a monks hall still standing, though it was being used as a meditation hall, and he had hoped to try out his new rules. Menzan advocated implementing the monks hall practice (as opposed to the meditation hall practice followed by Ōbaku monks), which he called “returning to Dōgen’s way.” In this system, which Dōgen had observed during his visit to Sung China, the monks ate, slept, and meditated in the monks hall. The practice of contemporary Ming China was to use separate buildings for different activities, and Ōbaku temples followed that system, as described in the rule composed for their use in Japan, the *Ōbaku shingi* 黄檗清規.<sup>31</sup> Menzan wrote that, of all the important urban temples, only Tōfukuji 東福寺 still had the old style monks hall, and even the rural temples that still had the building were using them in the new style, for which they were not really suited.<sup>32</sup>

He was not able to put into effect his reformed rules during his one-year stay at Ryūkeiin, but he traveled during that time to find examples of old monks halls in the area to study their construction. Upon the completion of his one year term, he returned to Kūinji and immediately set about converting its hall to the monks hall style. In 1737, he held the retreat using the reformed style of practice, which Menzan continued to emphasize was the way that Dōgen had done the practice. The popular view within Sōtō communities accepts that assertion, but it needs to be emphasized that Menzan had himself reconstructed the practice, based on his own reading of Dōgen, creatively imagining Dōgen’s intent where necessary, drawing on texts that Dōgen was familiar with. Menzan was not following the style of monastic practice that his teachers had taught him and certainly Dōgen’s writings do not provide for a systematic and detailed description of monastic routine. Menzan had high hopes of implementing the same reforms at Eiheiiji, but Katsugen had passed away and his successor at Eiheiiji did not seem interested in monastic reform. Menzan’s dream of changing Eiheiiji practice, which would have been a major step towards changing the standard for Sōtō practice generally, was not realized during his lifetime. It took years of discussion culminating in a bitter dispute that nearly paralyzed major monastic centers before Menzan’s vision of the reformed rules became the official standard in 1804.<sup>33</sup>

Menzan turned down offers to be abbot of Kasuisai 可睡齋 and of Kōshōji 興聖寺, which were major temples with powerful political connections, and instead began arrangements to build a small retirement place. Up to this point, his work was largely concerned with monastic rules. In 1741 he finished the writing of his research and entitled it *Selections for Ceremonial Procedures from the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō*, and its companion the *Additional Record of Historical Research Concerning the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō*, though they were not to be published for another twelve years. During this time, he published other works about monastic practice, including two smaller pieces about seated and walking meditation, the *Buddha Samādhi* and the *Standards for Walking Meditation*, both of which have been very widely read guides right up to the present.

Some of his most important work during this time was to defend the earlier reforms. After Dōhaku's death, the prominent Sōtō monk Tenkei Denson 天桂傳尊 (1648-1753) continued his attacks on the reforms even though they had become official government-approved Sōtō policy.<sup>34</sup> Arguments about dharma transmission between what has come to be called the Manzan and the Tenkei factions continued through the end of the Tokugawa period, and it is still a sensitive topic.<sup>35</sup> Menzan, both here and in other works, was picking up the torch for the deceased Dōhaku, fighting a rear guard action against Tenkei's attempt to turn back the reform of temple transmission.

For example, in his *Fireside Chat on a Snowy Eve*, Menzan defended Dōhaku's reforms, using his exegetical skills to justify his reading of an admittedly obscure and difficult passage in Dōgen.<sup>36</sup> As is frequently seen in his writings, much of Menzan's argument here turned on very narrow questions of philology. In the central passage, Menzan launched into a detailed analysis of the passage in question from the "Menju 面授" chapter of the *Genzō*. He showed how Dōgen is actually setting up an absurd example, expressed as a contrary-to-fact conditional, which Tenkei had taken literally. In this way Menzan defended Dōhaku's reading as one which follows the meaning, even though it was the opposite of the literal reading. Menzan brings into the argument examples of similar usage, and provides definitions of key terms. He is also at pains to base his reading on a full and accurate text, something that his opponents were not doing.

A key part of the old style of dharma transmission were the secret documents, called *kirikami* 切紙, that described the ceremonial details and claimed to come directly from the earliest days and were often attributed to Dōgen himself. To Menzan these were obviously forgeries that were being used to justify the old practices he was trying to eliminate. To expose these documents for what they were, Menzan wrote the *Personal Record of the Rejection of the Kirikami of the Sōtō Abbot's Room* in which he debunked as many of these documents as he could find, describing their anachronisms and other egregious mistakes as an embarrassment to the school. Neither this nor the other works he wrote on the same theme were published until the modern collections, but they were circulated in manuscript form and led to a general discrediting of this kind of secret document. Menzan followed this approach in all his areas of research and in publications in which he attempted to demonstrate the authenticity of his proposed reforms. As is discussed below, in other areas he demonstrated his ability to write for a wider audience and also a willingness to be more free with textual details.

## RETIREMENT TO FULL TIME WRITING

In 1741, Kūinji was turned over to Katsudō Fukun 瞎堂普觀 (n.d.). Menzan retired, at age fifty-nine, to his newly constructed Eifukuan 永福庵, devoting himself in earnest to writing. He had been abbot for twelve years, but apparently Menzan did not have the political connections to place his own dharma heirs at either Kūinji or his former temple

Zenjōji in Kyushu. He was largely finished with his work of defending Dōhaku's dharma transmission reforms that had been approved back in 1703, and he had completed his major works on monastic practice rules that very year. He did continue to write shorter works about specific aspects of monastic life, but he gave up on the effort to bring his ideas into practice at Eiheiiji and in Sōtō monasteries more widely.

He returned to his earlier project about the life of Dōgen, which culminated in the 1754 publication of the *Revised and Expanded Record of Kenzei*, his popular rendition of the life of Dōgen. Menzan used the *Kenzeiki* 建擲記, a rather rare earlier biography by Kenzei (1415-1474), the fourteenth abbot of Eiheiiji, as his basic text, but in fact his revisions and additions are quite substantial, something which was overlooked until quite recently. This biography gave the Sōtō community an accessible story of the life of its founder for the first time. Menzan's earlier publication had cleared away the almost complete darkness about Dōgen's life with a dry collection of key facts, but this new work was to receive a very wide readership. The *Revised and Expanded Record of Kenzei* was frequently reprinted, including a 1806 printing which was part of the official celebration of the Dōgen memorial year. The foreword to this edition describes how a series of fundraising efforts throughout the country made it possible to have illustrations made for the new edition and for copies to be distributed throughout Japan. Thus the *Revised and Expanded Record of Kenzei* became the main source of popular knowledge of Dōgen, and until recently, was accepted in the scholarly community as well. Because it quickly became the standard, texts that Menzan used as sources were no longer copied and were nearly lost.

In 1975 Kawamura Kōdō 河村孝道 published a comparative edition of newly discovered manuscripts of the *Kenzeiki* and the extent of Menzan's changes have become apparent, throwing into doubt some long accepted ideas about the life of Dōgen, including most of the well known and dramatic elements in his life. For example, Menzan inserts a paragraph about Dōgen's activities at age fifteen.<sup>37</sup> In all of the oldest manuscripts of the *Kenzeiki* for this year there is the simple statement that Dōgen entered the room of the founder of Kenninji 建仁寺 and first heard of the way of the Rinzai school. Kenninji was founded in 1202 by Eisai 榮西, after his return from China with certification as a fully qualified Zen teacher, but by the time Dōgen was fifteen Eisai had already died. In Menzan's expanded version, Dōgen is depicted as assiduously studying the sūtras and commentaries, and having doubts about the doctrine of intrinsic awakening which was at the core of contemporaneous Japanese Buddhism, especially in the Tendai lineage that Dōgen first followed. After first seeking local guidance, he was referred to Eisai of Kenninji for a solution to this difficult problem. All this is lacking in the manuscripts, and yet this is the core of the popular image of Dōgen's youthful doubts, and his dissatisfaction with Tendai teaching. Menzan's version then adds a long note about the contents of the interview between Dōgen and Eisai, a mysterious *kōan* dialogue about original nature for which Menzan gives no source, and for which no source has ever been found.

The 1806 illustrated version, which was distributed throughout the country, has a

print which shows this meeting, and another print for the prior event when Dōgen was being sent to Kenninji for guidance. Thus the popular illustrated text highlighted events that are absent or unclear in the original *Kenzeiki*, and makes it all that much easier to ignore the distinction, already blurry at any rate, between Menzan's additions and the original *Kenzeiki*. These problems have caused some diminution of Menzan's reputation as a careful scholar, but it should be pointed out that this was a text explicitly written for a popular audience and crafted to paint a portrait of the founder whom Menzan was promoting as an inspiration to all. He makes this hagiographic purpose clear in the preface, yet such was Menzan's reputation that his story was taken as the definitive biography for many years.

During this period, Menzan also wrote the *Record of the Activities of Zen Teacher T'ien-t'ung Ju-ching*, a biography of Dōgen's teacher Ju-ching 如淨 (1163-1228), and published an edition of the *Record of the Hōkyō Era*, Dōgen's record of his time in China with Ju-ching. Menzan continued his major research efforts on the *Genzō* and began to publish commentaries on Dōgen's shorter works which are not included in the *Genzō*. As mentioned earlier, there had been a ban on printing of the *Genzō* itself since 1722, so Menzan did not have the opportunity to publish his own edition. He printed his *Fukan zazengi monge*, and *Zazenshin monge*, commentaries on Dōgen's texts about seated meditation. The word *monge* 聞解 in these titles is appended to the name of the text to which it is a commentary. Menzan used *monge* to mean an explanation in response to a question and it became a standard tag phrase which he used for his Japanese language commentaries. Despite his many earlier lectures on the precepts in general, he had not published anything on the particular precepts appropriate to Dōgen's lineage. His major work on this topic, *The Teaching of the Correctly Transmitted Great Precepts of the Buddhas and Ancestors*, had been finished in 1724, but only now in 1748 did he publish it. During the following fifteen years, he published four more pieces on precepts. The research materials contained in these works are the foundation of Sōtō understanding of Dōgen's views on precepts. Some of Menzan's own ideas however, which tended to emphasize a more mainstream interpretation of precepts, were not well received by most Sōtō abbots. Eventually Menzan's position lost out to the more radical interpretation of Banjin Dōtan 萬仞道坦 (1698-1775) who stressed the uniqueness of precepts in Zen and their radical power to transform the recipient at the moment they are received.

In addition to all these projects he managed to find time to finish his *Verses for the Chapters of the Mahā prajñā pāramitā sūtra*. He had written verses on each of the first fifty chapters when he was only twenty-six, but in the preface he says that work on monastic rules had kept him from returning to the text. Now at the age of seventy-three he completed the task for the remaining 550 chapters and had it printed in 1756. This work is not collected in the Sōtō compendiums (*Sōtōshū zensho* 曹洞宗全書 and *Zoku Sōtōshū zensho* 續曹洞宗全書) but it is included in the Wisdom Sūtra section of the *Nihon daizōkyō* 日本大藏經.<sup>38</sup> Only three other commentaries on this Sūtra are included in this comprehensive collection, and Menzan's commentary is as long as the other three com-

bined. Nonetheless, this seems to have been a minor sideline for Menzan during moments away from his major effort, which was tracking down and commenting on the source texts quoted in the *Genzō*, a project which he says began in 1706 at the start of his three year retreat. By 1758, the writing was finished and the printing of his massive *Source Texts Cited in the Shōbō genzō* began the next year. This work has remained the essential companion to the reading of the *Genzō* right up through the present.

## NEW TOPICS IN MENZAN'S LAST YEARS

The completion of this project marked a turning point for Menzan. He had entered the seventy-seventh year of his life, and he had finished the work on Dōgen that had been his goal ever since he was a young monk. His work on monastic regulations had been well received at first, but had later been effectively shelved, and his interpretations of proper precepts for Sōtō Zen were not accepted. Although his work on the *Genzō* eventually came to be highly regarded, it was scarcely a popular work, and anyway its usefulness was limited until the prohibition against printing the *Genzō* itself was lifted in 1796. Despite the volume of his printed output, at this point he must have been quite uncertain about the extent of his influence.

It is especially ironic that he did not write a comprehensive commentary on the *Genzō*. It is true, however, that a set of commentaries exists, each chapter of which ends with his tag line *monge*. These became a popular introduction to reading the *Genzō*, and were thought to be by Menzan. They were not. The mistaken attribution dates to 1891, when the collection was first published, and the pieces were attributed to Menzan by the editors. They were later incorporated into the standard collection of commentaries, and Menzan came to be identified with the rather pedestrian quality of these pieces.<sup>39</sup> Nagakuta Taira 永久岳水 has examined the manuscripts upon which he determined the first printed version was based, and concluded that only three of the ninety-five essays are by Menzan.<sup>40</sup> Nagakuta thinks that the remaining essays are probably from talks given during 1775 and 1776 by Fuzan Gentotsu 斧山玄鑄 (d. 1789), a dharma heir to Kōda Soryō, one of Menzan's main disciples. Apparently they were attributed to Menzan simply on the strength of the word *monge* in the title. Partly because of the rather simple but kindly and detailed quality of the lectures that really should be credited to other monks, Menzan came to be called Baba Menzan 婆婆面山, which can be translated as Grandma Menzan.

From the late 1750s, Menzan spent much of his time as a guest at various places in Kyoto, most often in sub-temples of the great Rinzai temple Kenninji. He continued to publish short pieces about the Zen precepts and ordinations, now in rejoinder to attacks on his previously published pieces, and commentaries on independent works by Dōgen like the *Gakudō yōjinshū monge*, and the *Tenzo kyōkun monge*. He presided over precept assemblies nearly every year in either Edo or Kyoto, giving precepts to several hundred

people at a time. None were so well attended, however, as the 1752 assembly held in his adopted home town of Obama in which six hundred people received the precepts.

Whether because he felt he was finished with his work on Dōgen and the rules and procedures specific to Sōtō, or because he felt he had failed to achieve proper recognition and wanted to turn to something different is unclear, but at this time, a new focus appears in his research. He began to work on the classic Chinese Zen texts, and especially on the great collections of commentaries about *kōan*, the encounter dialogues between master and disciple. In 1758 he composed and put into print his *Explanations of the Old Cases Presented by the Old Buddha of Hsi Province*, a commentary on the great classic collection of one hundred old cases by Hung-chih Cheng-chueh 宏智正覺 (1091-1157), which is excerpted from Hung-chih's record.<sup>41</sup> Hung-chih was the teacher of the Sōtō lineage in China who was crucial for the revival of the lineage and has been held in the highest regard by the lineage in Japan. These cases of Hung-chih form the core of the famous compendium of *kōan* cases and commentary, the *Book of Serenity*, published in 1224.<sup>42</sup> There are a number of commentaries on this work, but Menzan's is apparently the only one to be printed in pre-modern times.

He wrote other pieces in connection with Hung-chih about the same time, and in 1763, at age eighty-one, he was invited to come from Kyoto to the major Edo temple of Seishōji 青松寺 to give a six-week series of lectures about Hung-chih and this *kōan* collection. According to the entry in the *Chronology* it was attended by six hundred people, including fifty abbots of Edo area temples. This was apparently the one and only time that Menzan was in the spotlight of the Sōtō institution in Edo. He was the guest of more than one abbot of Eiheiji, and he often lectured in Kyoto, but the center of power was in Edo, and this is the only time that he was the speaker at such an illustrious event. Considering that he had already printed some forty-five works (including the multi-volume works on pure rules and on the *Genzō*), it is probably significant that he was not more often invited to give lectures in this kind of setting. His work on pure rules and on matters more directly related to Dōgen were still controversial for such a setting, and perhaps he wanted to avoid controversy that would threaten the unity of Sōtō Zen. He implied this when he wrote in his 1755 preface to the *Additional Record of Historical Research Concerning the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō*, "These rules for the head temple are also in effect rules for all the Sōtō temples of the entire country. There may be some opposition, and if there is, then a widespread debate between me and other Sōtō monks cannot be avoided."<sup>43</sup> In contrast, Hung-chih was a much safer topic. He was a universally respected figure and his *kōan* were far removed from contentious details of ceremony or the specifics of monastic life.

Despite the prestigious setting for these lectures, the *Explanations of the Old Cases* is not included in the modern Sōtō collections. The following year, Menzan wrote a similar commentary on the one hundred *kōan* cases of Hsüeh-tou Ch'ung-hsien 雪竇重顯 (980-1052), the *Hsüeh-tou po-tse sung-ku* 雪竇百則頌古, which became the basic text for the *Blue Cliff Record* commentary printed in 1128.<sup>44</sup> Hsüeh-tou was one of the most cele-

brated poets of Chinese Zen, and the *Blue Cliff Record* is regarded as perhaps the greatest of the elaborate works of literary *kōan* commentaries. This work was the model for Hung-chih's later work, which Menzan had just written about. The *Blue Cliff Record* has tended, in Japan at least, to be identified more closely with the Rinzai lineage of its authors. Nevertheless, he composed the *Explanations of the One Hundred Old Cases of Zen Teacher Hsüeh-tou Hsien*, which was printed in 1788, reprinted in 1833, 1859, and several times in the late nineteenth century by the Baiyō bookstore in Kyoto. This text is not in the Sōtō collections either, and due to the obscurity of the references in both Menzan's *Chronology* and the *Zengaku daijiten* it is very easy to overlook the fact that this text exists at all. Nonetheless, it seems to be the most-often reprinted commentary on the *kōan* of Hsüeh-tou. This kind of work on the *kōan* collections was clearly much in demand, and apparently there was no expectation that Menzan would confine himself to Dōgen or even to the *kōan* collection more closely linked to Sōtō. The modern editors who decided not to include these major works in their collections of Sōtō writings apparently were influenced by contemporary sectarian thinking that makes a much sharper divide between Rinzai and Sōtō Zen than was seen in the Tokugawa era even by Menzan, the champion of Dōgen.

Menzan continued to write and publish until the end of his life. Just a few months before his death he wrote the *On the Donations of the Faithful* a brief work about the importance of the monk's appreciation of the gifts offered by the laity. He spent most of his time in Kyoto, sometimes at illustrious Rinzai temples like Nanzenji 南禪寺, and sometimes at more obscure Sōtō temples. Menzan's health began to fail in the ninth month of his eighty-seventh year (1769), while staying in Kyoto at Seira'in 西來院, a sub-temple of Kenninji where he had resided many times when he was giving lectures and leading precept assemblies. His last public activity was to preach a sermon on causation to the animals which were being used in the ceremony of *hōjōe* 放生會 in which fish and birds are released from captivity. He wrote out his final testament, and when his students realized that death was near, they asked him for his final words, but he refused to say more. He died peacefully lying on his right side, the posture of repose that is attributed to the historical Buddha. He was cremated in Kyoto and his ashes were interred at Eifukuan, with portions going to nearby Kūinji and Zenjōji in Kyushu.

He had completed formal recognition of dharma transmission for twenty-seven of his students, enabling them to ordain their own students and advance to the position of abbot. About half of these heirs predeceased him, a comment perhaps on Menzan's stamina and long life. Judging from the standard lineage charts, only Dōhaku had more recognized heirs, and only a handful of other Sōtō teachers recognized even half as many heirs.<sup>45</sup> None of his direct heirs wrote anything of note, but Fuzan Gentotsu in the next generation is credited with nine titles. Despite the lineage order, when one considers the dates of their lives, it is clear that Fuzan studied directly with Menzan himself. As explained earlier, it has become established in recent years that Fuzan's lectures on the *Genzō* were mistakenly attributed to Menzan due to the presence of the tag word *monge*

in their titles, and that these should be added to the other nine titles of Fuzan's output. Fuzan's commentaries were clearly based on Menzan's work, so it seems that no one of his close disciples followed Menzan's habits of original research and publishing.

At the end of the *Chronology*, amidst the usual laudatory formulas, the writer comments that in spite of the number of pieces Menzan published during his lifetime, it was only a drop compared to the ocean of what he had written, and which his students were just beginning to assemble. It must not have been easy to be the assistant to such a prolific writer. Nonetheless, they did assemble his twenty-six volume *Extended Record* and had it printed beginning in 1773, only four years after his death.

### MENZAN COMPARED TO HIS PEERS

Menzan is important because of the quality of his writing and his meticulous attention to textual research. His influence is also due to the quantity and range of his output. Menzan did fundamental work on nearly every aspect of Sōtō Zen teaching and practice. I have found one hundred and three titles, ten of which, mostly travel records, are not extant.<sup>46</sup> Of the remainder, only three titles have never been printed, either in modern collections or during Menzan's lifetime. Included in the total are eight works that were independently circulated but later included in the *Extended Record*. Fifty-five titles were printed during his lifetime, and four more within a few years of his death. Six more titles were printed before the modern Sōtō collections, for a total of sixty-five printed works, ranging in size from the 525 pages (in the modern edition) of the *Extended Record* and 250 pages of the *Source Texts* to the two pages of the *Standards for Walking Meditation*. He had managed to see most of his work into print while he was still alive. The other materials were to remain mostly unpublished until inclusion in the modern Sōtō Zen collections. The only large work to first see print in these collections was the 316-page *Unpublished Record of Menzan Zuihō*, which is a collection of miscellaneous material that was preserved in manuscript form at Eifukuan. If we include the six major edited works (for example his own unpublished version of the *Genzō*), there are 109 titles in 281 traditional volumes (*maki* 卷).

The sheer bulk seems astonishing, but one must ask how unusual was the quantity of Menzan's written output for his times? For a rough comparison with other Sōtō monks, one can look at the works which were selected for inclusion in modern Sōtō Zen collections. Menzan has sixty-six titles in the *Sōtōshū zensho* and the *Zoku Sōtōshū Zensho*, which span 2700 pages. Leaving aside the writings of Dōgen and Keizan 瑩山 (1268-1325) and the nearly contemporaneous commentaries by Senne 詮慧 (n.d.) and Kyōgō 經豪 (n.d.), Menzan's work constitutes about fifteen percent of the entire collection. To this must be added his works on the *Genzō* collected in the *Eiheī shōbō genzō shūsho taisai* which come to another 315 pages, and his seventy-five pages of verses on the *Mahā prajñā pāramitā sūtra* collected in the *Dainihon daizōkyō*, for a total of over 3100 pages in



modern collected editions.

The other Sōtō Zen monk who is sometimes offered as a comparison to Menzan is Dōhaku, whose *Extended Record* is by far the largest of any Sōtō monk. Indeed the 720 pages of his *Extended Record* is easily the largest single item in the two modern Sōtō Zen collections of concern here. However, Dōhaku has only six other works included in these, for a total of 928 pages, about one-third of Menzan's output. Dōhaku's works reflect his life as a public figure, constantly giving talks, writing letters to followers, leading his large monastery, and of course engaging in the very public process of reform of dharma transmission. In comparison, Menzan spent nearly all his life in small temples far away from the seat of secular and religious authority, working on fundamental research and mostly writing technical works that were not intended for a popular audience.

Another rough indicator of output is the number of titles collected. Most monks who are included in the Sōtō collections had one or two works to their credit.<sup>47</sup> After Dōgen and Keizan, and before the Edo period, there is only one case of more than three titles attributed to one author. This exception is the six titles of Nan'ei Kenshū 南英謙宗 (1383-1459), who happened to be three generations earlier in Menzan's direct dharma lineage. In the Edo period, there are several prolific writers: Shigetsu Ein 指月慧印 (1689-1764) has twenty-five titles, and his student Katsudō Honkō 活動本興 (1710-1773) has eleven titles. Banjin Dōtan has sixteen titles, Tenkei and Dōhaku have seven and six titles respectively. These major authors have sixty-five titles among them, compared to the sixty-six that Menzan has by himself. From these admittedly rough indicators, it is clear that Menzan has by far the largest quantity. Furthermore, as is universally recognized, his works touch on almost every aspect of Sōtō Zen, and there are other areas of major work, such as the extended commentaries on the massive *kōan* collections, that are not even commonly acknowledged. No one wrote as much as Menzan, and in the Sōtō lineage there is no one who equaled Menzan's meticulous approach and breadth of coverage. As Kagamishima 鏡島 has noted, Menzan's work is the beginning doctrinal studies (*shūgaku* 宗學) in Sōtō Zen, and it is his framework that has continued, for better or worse, to define the field.<sup>48</sup>

Menzan was unparalleled in ranks of Sōtō Zen, but he was not the only Japanese Zen monk to work in such a comprehensive way. There is one other, perhaps even more accomplished Zen monk and scholar in pre-modern Japan to whom he can be compared: Mujaku Dōchū 無著道忠 (1653-1745).<sup>49</sup> Mujaku was in the Rinzai lineage and spent a seven year stint as abbot of Myōshinji, one of the most important Rinzai Zen lineage temples in Kyoto, but like Menzan, he devoted most of his long and very energetic life to scholarly pursuits. There seems to be no evidence of direct contact between these two, but it would be incredible if the younger Menzan did not at least know of Mujaku. Menzan had contacts throughout the Buddhist world, not just within Sōtō Zen, and he had passed through Kyoto during Mujaku's tenure as abbot of Myōshinji.

Besides Mujaku's work on Zen, which ranged from monastic rules and Zen historical

records to several major dictionaries of Zen terms, he commented on other Buddhist texts and edited and commented on many non-Buddhist Chinese texts. He gained a very unusual facility in vernacular and slang from reading Chinese novels, which helped him to interpret the unconventional language of Zen texts. This also gave him the confidence to write a scathing attack of Dōgen's ungrammatical reading of Chinese texts.<sup>50</sup> There are some 374 works to his credit, including his editions of both Buddhist and secular Chinese texts. Urs App emphasizes the importance of Mujaku's research methods, and goes on to claim that Mujaku was unique in Japanese Zen.<sup>51</sup>

Mujaku's approach was to first establish a text based on comparisons of the oldest copies available. Only then did he attempt to interpret difficult passages using other examples of similar usage found in a wide range of texts. He used this kind of evidence rather than his own or his teachers' intuition or awakening, and he kept working and revising important works until they were ready for publication. In all these areas Menzan and Mujaku are much closer to each other than to other monks of their respective lineages, even other learned monks. Mujaku also shared Menzan's rejection of Ōbaku Zen, although he based his disapproval on what he saw as lax morals, haughty demeanor, and intimacy with secular powers.<sup>52</sup> He had nothing to say about the corruption (as Menzan would have it) of the Sung era monastic practices, and it is noteworthy that Rinzai monastic practices have continued to be closer to the style of Ming practice imported by Ōbaku teachers. Mujaku's rejection of Ōbaku must be understood, of course, in light of his position at Myōshinji, where one faction had pressed to have Yin-yüan 隱元 (1592-1673) become the abbot. Yin-yüan was the most important Chinese monk to come to Japan in this era, and this proposal led to bitter disputes and the finally to the rejection of Yin-yüan, who was eventually given his own temple of Manpukuji and established his own lineage.<sup>53</sup>

Menzan did not have Mujaku's familiarity with Chinese vernacular, nor does his count of 103 titles compare to Mujaku's 374. The number of pages of original writing, as opposed to edited texts, that Mujaku produced is harder to determine, due to the almost complete lack of modern printed editions of his work. However, Mujaku may not have such a large lead in total number of pages, because of the presence of more multi-volume collections in Menzan's output. Both of them concentrated on Zen materials, but Menzan's scope was focused on Dōgen and the materials that Dōgen used. Furthermore, Menzan wrote nothing about Chinese secular literature. Within his more confined sphere of work, however, Menzan's methods are very similar to Mujaku's. In his emphasis on establishing texts and explanations based on historical usage, Menzan was Mujaku's peer.

Despite this similarity, their publication record could hardly be in greater contrast. Mujaku published only one title during his lifetime, and even in the twentieth century only three more titles were typeset and a handful more were circulated in various forms of photographic reproduction. This may explain why Menzan does not (as far as I can determine) make use of Mujaku's work. In sharp contrast, Menzan printed fifty-five titles

during his lifetime, more than half of his total output. Another difference is that unlike Mujaku, who wrote almost exclusively in Chinese, Menzan wrote extensively in relatively accessible Japanese in addition to his Chinese works.

## MENZAN'S IMPACT

Menzan's influence came mostly from his published works, but in addition to his vast written output, he delivered a stream of public lectures, presided over sixteen major precept assemblies, counseled lay people who came to discuss Buddhist life with him, and led monastic retreats for decades. He was not an intimate of those in power, nor was he an attraction at countless public events like Dōhaku, but he left an indelible mark on the school with his framework of Sōtō doctrinal studies and masterful textual research that is valuable even today. As the *Chronology* says in the concluding encomium, Menzan was a master of both exoteric and esoteric Buddhism and a great teacher of both Rinzai Zen and Sōtō Zen.

I suggested at the beginning that it is important to ask why it is that Dōgen is so important to Sōtō Zen. The reader might wonder if I am suggesting that the correct reply is "Because of Menzan." That, however, would be an unwarranted exaggeration, and indeed a disservice to Menzan himself. Dōgen's writings are themselves sufficient reason for Menzan's lifelong mission to understand them, not just the fact that Dōgen was the first Japanese member of the lineage and useful to Menzan's agenda. Interest in what Dōgen wrote continues to grow stronger and more widespread year by year, even though it is over three hundred years since these reform efforts began. It is true, however, that Dōgen is not now, and probably never was very approachable. His powers of language and his ability to inspire are not in question, but it is a daunting challenge to grasp what those inspiring words actually mean, much less put into practice the path he indicated. Menzan's work helped enormously to make it possible to understand Dōgen's writings, and his approach has set a tone for Sōtō Zen studies that has continued to the present.

Menzan brought learning and philological method to his study of Dōgen and presented his findings in print so that they were available to all lineages and all factions. With this flood of new material, the secret documents and rituals upon which rival Sōtō lineages based their power lost their luster, and in many cases were revealed by Menzan to be little more than unlearned forgeries completely lacking the pedigree of any connection to Dōgen. In this new light, the claim to authority based on Dōgen became something that could be tested against the scholarship of Menzan and others, not something that had to be accepted on trust. In other words, it was no longer enough to possess some precious chapters of the *Genzō* and use that as a basis for claiming that one's own teaching and practice represented Dōgen's teachings. The learning that Menzan championed gave him the tools to construct a new tradition based upon old documents. He interpreted those texts in the light of contemporary values and adapted his readings to social conditions which were very different from those of Dōgen's time. With this inter-

pretation, Dōgen became a powerful daily presence in Sōtō Zen, not just a revered but distant founder.

Menzan contributed to all aspects of the doctrinal discussion in Sōtō Zen, and even in an area such as precepts where his views did not prevail, his work brought together the resources and texts that defined the parameters of the arguments. It was probably his writing on monastic rules that had the greatest effect on the practical life of Sōtō monks in training. He demonstrated convincingly that Dōgen's monastic directions required a different building and a different routine than the rules widely in effect in early eighteenth-century Sōtō, which had been heavily influenced by Ōbaku Zen. His work led to procedures of monastic practice that were new to everyone, but were clearly based on practices that could, in most cases at least, be dated to Dōgen's time. These practices are now a major component of the self-identity of the school, and Eihei-ji is one of the best known of all Buddhist monasteries in the country. Dōgen and Eihei-ji are so central to contemporary Sōtō Zen that it is hard to remember that in Menzan's time it was not even clear who Dōgen was or what he had really written, much less what his texts meant.

Menzan's biography of Dōgen is perhaps where his effect is most strongly felt in the Sōtō community of both monks and laity. It is now clear that this work is closer to a hagiography than was previously thought, but the stories that Menzan presented, and the pictures that were soon attached to them, depicted a troubled youth who courageously overcame great obstacles in his quest for the dharma. Those images helped to hold together Sōtō Zen over the years and continue to inspire members of the community whether or not they read Dōgen's writings or engage in monastic practice. This life story, along with the more philosophical pieces from the *Genzō*, are what is behind the popularity of Dōgen in Japan and in the West.

Despite his lifelong focus on Dōgen, Menzan studied and wrote about other Zen texts and spent much of his later life as an honored guest of major Rinzai Zen temples in Kyoto. Yet this aspect of his life is little noted, and it is striking that his major works of commentary on *kōan* collections are left out of the standard anthologies and generally overlooked, despite the fact that they enjoyed over a hundred years of reprintings in pre-modern times. In addition, he has been held up, on very insufficient grounds, as an early opponent of Rinzai *kanna* Zen, a position that is very important to the modern Sōtō school. Menzan is perhaps the beginning of the modern understanding of Dōgen, but it is not correct to attribute the opposition between Rinzai and Sōtō Zen schools to him, and a proper evaluation of his work must carefully bracket modern assumptions about this opposition.

The extent to which Sōtō Zen reflected and absorbed the values of Tokugawa society can hardly be exaggerated. Kagamishima expresses this very aptly when he asks himself whether or not we can accept the claim of Dōhaku and Menzan to have truly revived the old way of Dōgen. His answer is categorically no, because they were clearly men of their time, which was a very different time from the late medieval period in which Dōgen lived.<sup>54</sup> Most importantly, Dōhaku and Menzan were willing to make compromises in

order to keep the lineage going, to adapt to the stringent government controls and social demands. Furthermore, a return to Dōgen's way may not be possible because it may never have existed except as his own ideal. Dōgen died only ten years after moving away from Kyoto to begin building his own Zen monastery, properly constructed from the beginning according to his ideals. Eihei-ji was not yet a fully functional monastery upon his early death. The spread of the lineage in the middle ages was possible because of the adaptation of Dōgen's message and introduction of new elements to fit the needs of the people.<sup>55</sup> In this sense Menzan was not so much returning to the old ways as he was reading Dōgen for inspiration and for raw materials and then writing for his own time.

Menzan needs to be seen in this light as both more creative and perhaps less literally accurate than has been previously thought. Menzan's reforms led to the present situation wherein Dōgen's preeminence is so central to the self-understanding of the school that contemporary writers usually speak of Dōgen Zen rather than Sōtō Zen. Such an exclusive focus on Dōgen constitutes nothing less than the creation of a new tradition of Zen within the old boundaries of the temples and people of the Sōtō lineage. As a better understanding of his accomplishments takes shape, Menzan may emerge from his chosen position in the shadow of Dōgen to take his rightful place as one of the major creative thinkers of Sōtō Zen.

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- E Dai Honzan Eiheijinai Eihei Shōbō Genzō Shūsho Taisei Kankōkai 大本山永平寺内永平正法眼藏菟書大成刊行会, ed. *Eihei shōbō genzō shūsho taisai* 永平正法眼藏菟書大成. 25 vols. Taishukan Shoten, 1974-82.
- S Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai 曹洞宗全書成刊行会, ed. *Sōtōshū zensho* 曹洞宗全書. Rev. and enlarged ed. 18 vols. Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1970-73.
- ZS Zoku Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai 續曹洞宗全書, ed. *Zoku Sōtōshū zensho* 續曹洞宗全書. 10 vols. Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1974-77.
- NZ Nihon Daizōkyō Hensankai 日本大藏經編纂会, ed. *Nihon daizōkyō* 日本大藏經. 51 vols. Nihon Daizōkyō Hensankai, 1914-19..

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*Fireside Chat on a Snowy Eve.* Setsuya rodan. 雪夜炉談. ZS-Shitchū.

*Fukan zazengi monge.* Fukan zazengi monge. 普勸坐禪儀聞解. S-Chūkai 3.

*Gakudō yōjinshū monge.* Gakudō yōjinshū monge. 學道用心集聞解. S-Chūkai 3.

*On the Donations of the Faithful.* Shinse ron. 信施論. Komazawa Library mss. 133-W96.

*Personal Record of the Rejection of the Kirikami of the Sōtō Abbot's Room.* Tōjō shitsunai danshi kenpi shiki. 洞上室内斷紙揀非私記. S-Shitchū.



- Record of the Activities of the Founder of Eihei.* Eihei Kaisan Oshō jitsu roku. 永平開山和尚實錄. S-Shiden 2.
- Record of the Activities of Zen Teacher T'ien-t'ung Ju-ching.* Tendō Nyojō Zenji anroku. 天童如淨禪師行錄. S-Shiden 2.
- Record of the Hōkyō Era.* Hōkyōki. 寶慶記. S-Shūgen 2.
- Record of the Teachings of the Hōei Era.* Kenmon hōei ki. 見聞寶永記. ZS-Hōgo.
- Selections for Ceremonial Procedures from the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō.* Tōjō sōdō shingi gyōhō shō. 洞上僧堂清規行法鈔. S-Shingi.
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- Standards for Walking Meditation.* Kinhinki. 經行軌. S-Chūkai 4.
- Teaching of the Correctly Transmitted Great Precepts of the Buddhas and Patriarchs.* Busso shōden daikai ketsu. 佛祖正傳大戒訣. S-Zenkai.
- Tenzo kyōkun monge.* Tenzo kyōkun monge. 典座教訓聞解. Komazawa Library mss. 162-11.
- Tribute to the Life of Zen Master Tōsui.* Tōsui Oshō densan. 桃水和尚傳贊. S-Shiden 2.
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- Verses for the Chapters of the Mahāprajñā Pāramitā Sūtra.* Daihannyakyō chikukan keisan. 大般若經逐卷係贊. NDZ 10.
- Zazenshin monge.* Zazenshin monge. 坐禪箴聞解. S-Chūkai 3.

## NOTES

(For abbreviations used in the notes see the Menzan Bibliography)

- <sup>1</sup> Bielefeldt 1985, pp. 21-24.
- <sup>2</sup> Bodiford 1993, pp. 44-50.
- <sup>3</sup> Bodiford 1991; Gross 1998.
- <sup>4</sup> Kawamura 1987, pp. 396-397.
- <sup>5</sup> Baroni 2000. Wu 2002.
- <sup>6</sup> Hobsbawm 1983.
- <sup>7</sup> For a general discussion of the Sōtō reforms and the contemporary context, see my Ph. D. dissertation, Riggs 2002.
- <sup>8</sup> Maruyama 1974, pp. 39-51.
- <sup>9</sup> Nosco 1986.
- <sup>10</sup> Tominaga 1990.
- <sup>11</sup> See the bibliography for the Japanese titles of Menzan's writings, and the abbreviations used in the notes.
- <sup>12</sup> Unless another text is explicitly cited for details of Menzan's life, the *Chronology* is the source in the following narrative. To the dry details of the *Chronology*, I have added the much more lively stories found scattered in prefaces to Menzan's works, and occasional asides in the texts wherever I have happened upon them. I have also consulted the compendium of details taken from the *Chronology* and other sources by Satō Hidekō, a brief critical summary of his life by Kagamishima Genryū, and a

more traditional presentation by Suzuki Kakuzen. For the two years he spent with his main teacher, Sonnō, the best source is Menzan's own record of Sonnō's life during that time, the *Record of the Teachings of the Hōei Era*. When Menzan's age is mentioned, it is given in Japanese style: he was two years old after the first New Years day following his birth. Kagamishima 1988, pp. 47-59; Satō 1988; Suzuki 1993.

- <sup>13</sup> Kornicki 2000, pp. 136-158.
- <sup>14</sup> S-Shiden 328-329.
- <sup>15</sup> Haskel, 2001.
- <sup>16</sup> ZS-Hōgo 444.
- <sup>17</sup> Bodiford 1993, p. 132.
- <sup>18</sup> Dumoulin 1990, 462.
- <sup>19</sup> ZS-Hōgo 418.
- <sup>20</sup> ZS-Hōgo 3:821.
- <sup>21</sup> Ōkubo 1969, 2:189; T 48#2003:190c27.
- <sup>22</sup> Abe 1999, pp. 43-44, pp. 53-55.
- <sup>23</sup> T 24#1484.1006a; Benn 2001.
- <sup>24</sup> T 5-7 #220.
- <sup>25</sup> There are some sixteen temples of this name in Japan, and Menzan's temple should not be confused with the famous temple of the same name in Uji.
- <sup>26</sup> Nakagyō-ku, Nijō Dōri, Kiyachō Sainyū.
- <sup>27</sup> ZS-Hōgo p. 463, p. 465.
- <sup>28</sup> *Zengaku daijiten*, p. 434.
- <sup>29</sup> Toby 1984, pp. 197-202.
- <sup>30</sup> Totman 1993, pp. 236-238.
- <sup>31</sup> T 82#2607:775-778.
- <sup>32</sup> S-Shingi 210.
- <sup>33</sup> Ōkubo 1987, p. 284; Riggs 2002, p. 92.
- <sup>34</sup> Kagamishima 1980; Shibe 1993.
- <sup>35</sup> Kagamishima 1980, pp. 172-73.
- <sup>36</sup> ZS-Shitchū 669-680.
- <sup>37</sup> Kawamura 1975, p. 7.
- <sup>38</sup> Naka 1914-1919, 10:79-153.
- <sup>39</sup> Jinbo 1956.
- <sup>40</sup> E 17:697-708.
- <sup>41</sup> T 48#2001.
- <sup>42</sup> T 48#2004.
- <sup>43</sup> S-Shingi 209b.
- <sup>44</sup> T 48#2003.
- <sup>45</sup> *Zengaku daijiten*, pp. 26-36.
- <sup>46</sup> For a complete annotated bibliography see Riggs 2002, pp. 236-274.
- <sup>47</sup> These two collections scatter the works of individual authors into many different categories, making direct comparison difficult. There is, however, a convenient list of authors and the titles collected in