## THE JOURNAL

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Volume 7

1984

Number 2

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## Kokan Shiren and Musō Soseki: "Chineseness" vs. "Japaneseness" in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Japan

by David Pollack

The establishment in Kamakura in the early thirteenth century of the large Zen temples and monasteries built on the Chinese model and headed by emigré Chinese monks is usually interpreted as inaugurating a very Chinese organization on Japanese soil. Indeed, we tend to think of the entire Zen institution in Japan-more specifically, the Rinzai-dominated gozan that began in the Kamakura temples—as a monolithic entity whose content and form were entirely Chinese, enforced by stern Chinese masters upon their Sinicized Japanese students. This is, however, a picture of the Zen establishment that does not stand up well under closer scrutiny. Even among the emigré Chinese monks themselves there were some who, like Ming-chi Ch'u-chün (1261–1336, arrived in Japan in 1330 with Chu-hsien Fan-hsien) during his short six-year stay in Japan until his death, appear to have become quite Japanese in their thinking. I-shan I-ning (1247-1317, arrived in Japan 1299) even wrote poetry about such Japanese personalities as Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai) and Shōtoku Taishi. The other extreme is represented by the Chinese monk Wu-an P'u-ning (d. 1276), who returned embittered after only five years in Japan to the China he felt he should never have left.

We also can distinguish between the Japanese monks who made the difficult voyage to China to study, often remaining there a decade or more before returning, and those who, for various reasons, never left Japan. The Zen monk Jakushitsu Genkō (1290–1367), for example, spent the years 1321–1326 in China. Born a Fujiwara, Jakushitsu was sent to study at Nan-

zenji in Kyoto under I-shan from 1317 until his departure for China. One mode of his "Zen" poetry is authentically grouchy, the equivalent in verse of a master's shout or a rap on the pupil's head; his "Poem to show to my pupils" offers a good example of this tone:

To do Zen you've got to be so tough That body and mind become tempered like forged steel! Look at all the Patriarchs who came before you— Which of them ever fooled around like this?!

And yet, this same monk, widely admired for his "Chinese" qualities, was capable of writing poetry in Chinese that reads for all the world like contemporary Japanese verse rather than Chinese:

A monk comes knocking at my brushwood gate Wanting to discuss weighty matters of great Zen import; Excuse this mountain priest, too lazy to open his mouth, But warblers are singing all over the blossom-strewn village.<sup>2</sup>

Except for the fact the Jakushitsu's warbler is an uguisu rather than a hototogisu ("cuckoo"), the final trope might have been based on Ōtomo no Tabito's poem in the Man'yōshū (1437):

Tachibana no
Hanachiruzato no
Hototogisu
Kataomoshitsutsu
Naku hi shi zo ōku

The days are many When I, like the cuckoo In the village Strewn with orange blossoms Cry over unrequited love.

I intend to explore further in this essay the significant differences in the "Chineseness" and "Japaneseness" of two well-known Japanese Zen monks, Kokan Shiren and Musō Soseki, who are among the large group of Japanese Zen monks that never went to China.

Perhaps no other Japanese Zen monk of the fourteenth century was as familiar with Sung Chinese neo-Confucian philosophy as Kokan Shiren (1278–1346). While his mentor Enni Ben'en (1202–1280) is thought to have been the first to bring the study of neo-Confucianism from China to Japan, it was

Kokan, following in Enni's line to become abbot of Tōfukuji in the south of Kyoto in 1332, who studied most closely and tellingly the implications of neo-Confucian thought for Japanese Buddhism.

Few either in Japan or China embodied as did Kokan the dictum of the Chinese philosopher Ch'eng I (1033-1107) that "a student must first of all learn to doubt." Kokan was widely read not only in Buddhism but also in Chinese classics and poetry, and the broad range of commentary on these. His collected works, the Saihokushū, contains his opinions on poetry and poets, as well as on the anecdotal body of critical opinion concerning the practice and theory of poetry that is known in Chinese as shih-hua (J. shiwa).4 In his comments, Kokan adopted from the very outset the rational scepticism of the early Chinese philosopher Wang Ch'ung (27-100?), whose Lun Heng, or "Opinions Weighed in the Balance," Kokan adopted as the model for his own T'ung Heng (Tsūkō, "Received Opinion Weighed in the Balance"). Kokan began his very first essay in poetic criticism with a direct attack upon Chinese received wisdom:

It has long been held that the Duke of Chou wrote only two poems, "Ch'i-hsiao" and "Ch'i-yüeh"; that Confucius did not compose any of the *Book of Odes*, but merely compiled the poems; and that people after the Han and Wei dynasties wrote so much poetry because they were frivolous. These things are not true.<sup>5</sup>

Kokan gave as his reasons for these opinions that it was highly unlikely anyone would have written only two poems in his lifetime, so that the Duke of Chou clearly had to have written more; that no one could have edited the Odes so well had he not himself been a poet; and that while there may indeed have been frivolous poets after the Han and Wei, certainly not all the poets during that long span were frivolous. These may not seem like terribly weighty arguments to us today, but to anyone familiar with the terms of Chinese literary criticism, his comments reveal a habit of thinking plainly and sensibly about subjects that often occasioned a great deal of silly hair-splitting in China. When it came to suggesting just what could have happened to all those poems by the Duke of Chou and Confucius,

Kokan's suggestion that they perished in the infamous bookburnings conducted by the first Ch'in emperor, Shih-huang-ti, seems at once lame and likely.

Having set this tone of rational scepticism—a stance that no Japanese had adopted so clearly toward China before, it should be noted—Kokan turned to his most important point insofar as poetic theory is concerned: the primacy of li, or "innate principle," as a critical concept to which all other critical considerations were subordinate:

Sung dynasty critical theories of poetry are not exhaustive in emphasizing such terms as "plain" (p'u), a "antique" (ku), b "even" (p'ing) and "bland"  $(tan)^d$  while belittling such terms as "unusual" (ch'i), e "artificial" (kung), dynamic"  $(hao)^g$  and "beautiful" (li). Poetry need not be "antique" or "bland" in its diction any more than it need be "unusual" or "artificial"—it need only accord with innate principle (li). Ancient poetry is generally of a pure nature, and so is closer to being "plain" and "antique." From the Middle Period on [i.e., the Six Dynasties], however, poetry came to contain emotions that the poets were not actually feeling when they wrote, so that their works are closer to being "unusual" and "artificial." From time to time, a Sage has given voice to feelings of protest in poetry, and in so doing has given new life to true emotions. How then are we to be constrained by such terms as these? Such men merely wrote in accordance with li, and so there are ancient poems that are "plain" without being true, and true poems today that are not "plain." How could we evaluate everything on the basis of terms like these?6

Rather than rehearse here separately each of Kokan's attacks on what he clearly considered to be the critical deficiencies of his mainland mentors, I shall turn to the very last of these essays in poetic criticism, in which Kokan expressed his own ideas concerning the composition of poetry. Rather than beginning with rules and regulations, Kokan advocated rather what he called the "purity" and "wholesomeness" of the young child, innate qualities that, once developed, could later be polished, with practice, to maturity:

I have some pupils (Ch. t'ung; J. warabe) who fool about, joke, chaff, and won't recite their lessons. When I prod and

scold them to write poetry, they say "but we don't know the rules of tone and meter." When I tell them to forget the rules and just write out lines with the correct number of syllables, they grumble and complain. But I do not become upset, and, in spite of themselves, they present me with some lines. Their poems may be halting, uneven, doltish and clumsy, and sometimes make no sense at all; but still, they are often filled with a self-possessed purity and wholesomeness that make me marvel.

Again, when I would have them study calligraphy, they complain, saying "But we don't know the techniques or styles." So I tell them to forget about techniques and styles, and simply try to make their characters look like the models. As usual, they grumble and complain, but I do not get upset and, in spite of themselves, they present me with a few sheets of calligraphy. Their characters may look like twisted worms or like crows flapping wildly about, and sometimes don't even resemble characters at all; but still, the strokes often have a purity and a wholesomeness that astonish me.

For these reasons, I can only sigh that those who would study such arts as poetry or calligraphy only do themselves harm by concentrating on such notions as "artifice" or "unusualness." They never attain to the realm of actual creation this way, and only end by making empty distinctions. That these children can be so frightfully untutored and yet have something essentially pure and wholesome within them results from their simple natures. Thus, I have come to the conclusion that if a student of poetry does not have the purity of a child, he cannot speak of "poetry"; and if one who studies calligraphy does not know the purity of a child's brushstrokes, he cannot speak of "calligraphy." And this applies not only to these two arts: the very Way [Tao] is no different. In studying anything, one must first establish a pure and wholesome mind and then improve it with practice. Only in this way will he easily achieve his goal.<sup>7</sup>

Kokan's priorities are clearly original, and would probably have seemed wrong-headed from the point of view of contemporary Chinese criticism, if not actually eccentric. His preference for the state of untutored, childlike innocence is a familiar Taoist one, of course, found in the ancient philosophical texts of the *Lao Tzu* and the *Chuang Tzu*. It also seems, oddly enough, to echo certain tendencies in contemporary Japanese critical attitudes, of the sort that had earlier led Kamo no Chōmei, in

explaining the new "yūgen style" of waka poetry, to comment that he "would like to compare this style to the speech of a lovely child, awkward and without any clear perception, but lovable in all its helplessness and worth listening to." While it is not clear that such a sentiment ought necessarily to be credited to any particularly Japanese mode of thought, we might recall that even Murasaki's Genji had found it desirable to train childish innocence to a state of maturity rather than attempt to impose impossible standards upon the already mature.

At any rate, the clear preference in Sung dynasty critical texts for the "awkward" or "clumsy" (cho) over clever contrivance, related or not to Taoist thought, or for the "bland" or "withered" over the "beautiful," is rejected in Kokan's view as irrelevant: poetry must simply accord with li or "innate principle." Nor was Kokan content merely to theorize about such things, for we find him putting his theory into practice in the form of hundreds of small poems that focus sharply on individual objects. These poems follow a Chinese genre, popular during the Sung, known as yung-wu shih (eibutsushi, or "poems about objects"). As was the case with many Sung poets who wrote in this genre, Kokan seems to have been attempting through these poems to arrive at a more profound insight into the operation of *li* by attending as closely as possible to its individual manifestations in "objects" or "things" (wu). Consider, for example, the minute focus in "Evening Stroll in a Summer Garden":

My room so miserable with heat and mosquitoes I can't do zazen,

I kill the time pacing the gravel paths, hands behind my back;

Nothing in the inner garden—something catches my eye—I look more closely: a single strand of spider web stretches across the path...<sup>9</sup>

Again and again in these poems, Kokan insists on the second look, the closer attention that provides the basis for new and more profound perceptions. Thus, Kokan's concentration in "Beginning of Autumn" is actually a form of meditation that provides him with novel insight into the nature of the season in aural terms:

The heat's full intensity hasn't abated one whit, So whence comes this feeling of coolness? Taking my time, I concentrate and listen—there it is again: Falling paulownia leaves and chirping crickets join in a new sound.<sup>10</sup>

It is very Japanese to fret, as Kokan does, over the failure of the Chinese agricultural calendar to accord properly with the Japanese seasonal markers; again and again, we are confronted by autumns that begin without cool weather, springs that start without plum blossoms. In order to account for these discrepancies (which, we should note, are essentially gaps between Chinese norms and Japanese realities), the poet must discover some less superficial, more essential indication of the new season. In this case, it lies not in the weather, or even in the fact that leaves are falling or crickets chirping-presumably they have been doing so since late summer. Rather, it is in the new way that these sounds have combined that the poet senses the deepest meaning of the arrival of an otherwise imperceptible autumn. To Kokan, such perceptions were always the result of the state of deep concentration (samādhi) that came from zazen meditation:

To escape the heat I sleep upstairs
Where a slight coolness grows in the night:
A frog's croak echoes in a stone basin,
Moonlight casts patterns through bamboo blinds;
Accepting every sight and sound that's offered,
The more detached, the more I see and hear:
This time of night is so truly still
I no longer notice the mosquitoes buzzing round my
ears.<sup>11</sup>

Kokan's practice of Zen meditation set in these terms is very like the neo-Confucian meditation practice of ko-wu, known most popularly to Westerners in the story of the Ming philosopher Wang Yang-ming's attempt to arrive at a more profound understanding of the nature of bamboo by sitting in meditation before a clump for several days. Wang eventually became ill from exhaustion. His failure in this attempt finally led him to reject such a practice in favor of another formula-

tion, and illustrates the nature of the difference between neo-Confucian and Zen meditation. Kokan's poetry reflects his understanding of the neo-Confucian reinterpretation of the Buddhist dialectic of Void and Phenomenal Reality, which is represented by the complementary technical terms  $k\bar{u}^m$  and  $shi-ki^n$  as this dialectic was integrated into the revised framework of a supreme moral universal organizing principle, li, and its manifold expression in "things," wu.

Kokan's philosophical and literary priorities, eccentric as they may appear from the Chinese point of view, often come as a breath of fresh air to anyone familiar with the loosely and often unquestioningly used terms of traditional Chinese literary criticism. His Chinese scholarship seems all the more remarkable when we consider that he never went to China. In 1300, at the age of twenty-two, Kokan began to make initial preparations for "the journey south," as travel to China was often called, prompted by an acute sense of shame that "only the most mediocre Japanese monks were going to China" and determined "to let them know that there are men in Japan."12 Kokan had been constitutionally weak since birth, however. and given the rigors of the voyage across the sea, decided at the last moment to stay in Japan to look after his aged mother—an unusually Chinese sort of filial piety, and curious especially in a Zen monk. Several of Kokan's disciples would later make the voyage, however. Shōkai Reiken (1315-1386), one of the best known, returned from a stay of twelve years, having studied under the most famous Chinese Zen masters of the day, to report that in all those years, he had never found a Chinese master the equal of Kokan.<sup>13</sup> Shōkai's evaluation may be discounted as loyal exaggeration, and there is no question that loyalty to one's Zen master in Japan (as contrasted, for example, with filial piety toward a parent) was a matter of supreme importance in the Japanese temple world.14 Still, Shōkai's assertion is only an early example of numerous statements to come from Japanese monks who, in increasing numbers, were failing to find what they had gone to China to seek. To be sure, the omission of the expected pilgrimage to China was less common in Kokan's day than it was to be from the middle of the fourteenth century onward.

It comes as no surprise to learn that the Japanese monks

who did go to China and stay there for any length of time appear relatively less eccentric in their acquired tastes, and more conventionally "Chinese." For example, those immediate or near contemporaries of Kokan who lived in China for a significant length of time—one thinks especially of monks like Sesson Yūbai, Betsugen Enshi, Ryūzan Tokken, Chūgan Engetsu and Zekkai Chūshin as only the most famous examples among many—wrote poetry that was more consistently "Chinese" than that written by monks who never left Japan. The Chinese scholarship of Japanese monks who had studied in China was generally held in high esteem by their Japanese colleagues. For all their attainments, however, even these more Sinified monks were viewed with something less than complete enthusiasm by the Chinese, as witness, for example, the Chinese Ch'an monk Ju-lan's astonished and somewhat backhanded admiration, in a colophon dated 1403 written for the collected poems of Zekkai Chūshin, that his very talented Japanese colleague's poetry should "bear no trace of Japanese." 15 The Chinese were undoubtedly flattered that "barbarians" could learn to ape Chinese culture with a fair degree of success, and the Japanese back home were always gratified by whatever compliments they could prevail upon the Chinese literati to write for them. But to the degree that such Japanese monks were able to appear Chinese, they interest us here less than the Zen monks who remained in Japan and never attempted to conceal their essential Japaneseness. That even their colleagues in Japan seemed to feel that Japanese should act like Japanese is suggested in a humorous poem by Gidō Shūshin (1325–88), entitled "Watching a Crow Bathe" (we should keep in mind here that the Zen monk, in his shapeless black robe, was often likened both in poetry and in painting to a black crow):

I've watched you bathe for quite some time, old crow, And it's going to take some doing to get you white as a gull; Why not just stay your usual pitch-black self And avoid giving other birds grounds for suspicion?<sup>16</sup>

If we want to understand the role that the Zen monks played within the broader cultural context of the relationship of the Zen establishment to the rest of Japan, rather than merely the degree to which they were familiar with Chinese theory and practice, then it is to these Japanese monks who never went to China that we must turn.

Kokan Shiren became famous as a scholar of Buddhist history, and is still best known for his history of the religion in Japan, the *Genkō Shakushō* of 1322. Kokan stated in his introduction to the work that he was shamed into writing it by the surprise expressed by the Chinese emigré monk I-shan I-ning that there was still no such history in Japan. Kokan began study with this Chinese monk soon after the latter's arrival in Japan in 1299, sent to Japan as an official envoy by the Yüan government, which was aware, on the evidence of the large numbers of monks flocking to China, that Japan thought of itself as a Buddhist country.

Kokan and I-shan appear to have gotten on well, and it was Kokan who eventually composed the best-known biographical account of I-shan's life. From this account, the world was to learn that I-shan was at least as devoted to literary pursuits as he was to the practice of Zen:

The Master was of an infinitely gentle and compassionate nature. Other Zen masters in our time have tended to be severe and strict, as befits their religious duties, and did not spare the rod. The Master, however, sat alone in his chair and did not permit visits. Newly arrived from abroad, his comings and goings were irregular. If others insisted on coming to him for instruction, it was not his style of Zen to probe for hidden meanings, but merely to keep them busy about the temple ("garden," en). There are many who often toy with secular writings to the detriment of the Zen life. The Master, however, desired to promote logical principles (li) in order to set doubts aside. Since his spoken Japanese was poor, he spent his days and nights poring over the most minute aspects of temple correspondence, dashing off replies in his harmonious and graceful style. He was widely versed not only in the texts of the Buddhist canon, but also in the writings of the Confucian and Taoist philosophers, classical and vernacular fiction, and even the sorts of tales told by story-tellers. 17

At about the same time that Kokan began his studies with Ishan, another young monk, Musō Soseki (1275-1351), also made his way to Engakuji Temple in Kamakura, attracted by reports of the fame of the newly-arrived Chinese Zen master.

Like Kokan, Musō was born into the aristocracy, an important indication of the religious atmosphere in the Kyoto Zen temples of their day, for the children of the aristocracy were usually exposed to Tendai and Shingon Buddhism long before they embarked upon the study of Zen. 18 Five years before Musō came to Kamakura, his teacher, a great favorite of the young man's, suffered a stroke that left him, as Musō was to write later, "unable to write even a single character," a perception that speaks for the strength of Musō's early literary orientation. The shock of this event drove Musō into a period of asceticism that finally ended in the Zen monasteries of Kamakura, where he became one of approximately forty Japanese that I-shan accepted as students after weeding out the numerous candidates by means of an examination in Chinese versification.

The ability to write Chinese well was undoubtedly a requisite for study with the emigré Chinese Zen masters, for the common written language had to serve as the sole medium of communication between the master and his pupils. The custom of what was called hitsuwa, or "brush talk," had already long been in use between Chinese and Japanese, the usual verbal give-and-take of Zen training carried out in writing instead. As the Ch'an monk Ming-chi Ch'u-chün wrote in a poem to his Japanese patron Ōtomo Sadamune,

I came ten thousand leagues across the sea to these shores Knowing nothing of the language that you speak; All I could make out as a babble of "ba-ba-ba," Couldn't catch more than a lot of "ri-ri-ri!" 19

With brush and ink as a substitute for the spoken word, Mingchi continued,

To communicate my feelings, I took up a brush to say what was on the tip of my tongue,

And you caught my ideas by listening to my words with your eyes.

I-shan's method of selecting his students is the first known example of a Chinese monk's actually setting would-be students examinations in Chinese poetry, a practice long established in the Chinese civil-service examinations. Musō was one of only two candidates that I-shan placed in what he called his "top

grade" of students, for his facility in Chinese poetry one can only presume. It was not long, however, before Musō began to evince difficulties with his practice of Zen, and by 1303 he was in serious distress over what he took to be I-shan's stern and inhumane insistence on maintaining the unyielding style of Zen, often called the "pure Sung style," preferred in the Kamakura Zen monasteries, all of which were founded by Chinese masters. The Zen practiced in those monasteries could scarcely be called "pure" any more than Ch'an Buddhism as it was practiced in China was free of elements from T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land Buddhism. In comparison with the styles of Zen that were developing within the Kyoto temples patronized by the court nobility, however, the Zen of Kamakura did probably seem harshly alien to the Japanese of Muso's day, so that "Chinese" would seem a more appropriate label for it than "Sung." In view of Kokan's later evaluation of I-shan's "gentle and compassionate" nature, it may be that the Chinese monk had simply not yet lived in Japan long enough to have had the sharp corners of his alienness smoothed down, and so seemed needlessly abrasive.

Whatever the case, when Musō eventually came to I-shan for encouragement and answers to his questions, the Chinese monk only responded, in the best Ch'an manner, "There is no word, no Law, that I can give you." Musō begged for "compassion, some expedient," but I-shan only responded "No compassion! No expedients!" This dramatic episode reveals a side of I-shan we do not find in Kokan's biography, but is supported in other anecdotal material. On one occasion of the traditional lecture to the assembled monks of the temple on the festival of the Ninth Day of the Ninth Month, for example, I-shan, as was the custom, prefaced his talk with a poem suited to the occasion, full of traditional Chinese imagery. After I-shan had recited his poem

There suddenly appeared a monk who objected, "You aren't talking about Zen Buddhism! You're only talking about literary matters!"

"Blind fool," retorted I-shan, "It is you who do not see the Way! I recite my poetry for those who can understand it!"21

Musō was never to resort to the traditional Zen style of

refusal, paradox, shouts and blows. Rather, his own Zen was affable, chatty, simple and accommodating, qualities that would help draw Japan's new Ashikaga rulers to him. These were provincial warriors, without much sophistication in matters of Buddhism, but with great aspirations to aristocratic culture, and ready to learn.<sup>22</sup> The distinction Kokan drew between the demeanor of I-shan and the sterner Zen monks of his day would have applied as well to Musō, the many extant statues and portraits of whom reveal a gentle-looking man of extremely courtly bearing, almost comical with his long face and pointed dome, and looking as though he could not harm a fly, in contrast to the serious, awesome, and even ferocious faces that so often glower on such likenesses.

In no mood for blows or riddles from I-shan, Musō turned in his distress to the more congenial Zen style of the Japanese monk Kōhō Kennichi (1241–1316), who was then in residence at Kamakura. Kōhō, as we might have expected, was also born into the aristocracy—in fact, he is thought to have been a son of Emperor Go-Daigo. Like Musō, too, Kōhō had never been to China. Perhaps it was because of their similar backgrounds that they to seem to have gotten along well; whatever the case, in 1306 Musō was given Kōhō's seal in confirmation of his enlightenment.

Tamamura Takeji has interpreted Musō's failure under the tutelage of I-shan as an inability to deal with Zen in its "Chinese" form. 28 We have already seen, however, that I-shan's style, as abrasively alien as it may have seemed to Musō, was scarcely free of all sorts of admixtures, from esoteric Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism. In fact, I-shan's style was eventually to prove congenial enough to courtly Japanese sensibilities that in 1313 he became the first Chinese monk invited to head any of the Kyoto Zen temples patronized by the aristocracy, in this case, Nanzenji. Nor did I-shan's style, apparently quite traditionally "Zen" according to the following anecdote, appear to frighten Musō's teacher Kōhō, whose encounter with I-shan in 1299 is recorded in the Japanese monk's biography:

I-shan was placed in charge of Kenchōji [in Kamakura]. One day Kōhō went to pay him a visit. I-shan asked him, "What sort of instruction do you usually give your pupils?" Kōhō replied, "In my cave the colors of the mountains are beautiful in any season. The sounds of all the creeks be-

yond the clouds are cold!" I-shan asked, "Doesn't that sort of thing dazzle people these days?" Kōhō replied, "It increases the value of the Treasury of the Eye of the True Law [Shōbōgenzō]!" I-shan shouted "Chieh!" [katsu, a traditional Zen shout, here indicating approval]; Kōhō shouted back. After they had drunk some tea, I-shan asked, "Is the grass sweet to the water-buffalo?" Kōhō replied, "It's slept its fill, the sun is setting, but I can't get it to go back home." I-shan said, "It just needs a sharp whipping!" Thereupon, Kōhō roared, put his head down and butted I-shan, bowling him over. I-shan laughed uproariously.<sup>24</sup>

For all of this very Zen-like behavior—shouts, enigmatic statements and the like—we have seen that Kokan's description of I-shan lingers—approvingly, we might imagine—on I-shan's familiarity with the practice of a broad range of literature. Yet, even with his penchant for setting his pupils to meditating on poems instead of kōans, I-shan was far from being the most literary of the Chinese masters in Japan. Kōhō Kennichi's own master, for example, Wu-hsüeh Tsu-yüan, who came to Japan in 1279, is reported to have attained enlightenment when he was twelve years old upon hearing lines of poetry, a fitting start for the man usually considered the founder of the most literary Zen line in all Japan.<sup>25</sup>

Kōhō was well trained in the native literary arts as a young man, and left a number of waka poems still known today because of their inclusion in such imperial anthologies as the Fū-gashū and Shinzoku Kokin Wakashū. His waka poems were also compiled in a private collection by the well-known fifteenth-century waka poet Kazan'in Nagachika (Kōun). His poems, far from monkish, follow in the tradition of earlier non-Zen poetmonks like Saigyō, Nōin, Jakuren and the like, thoroughly of their time in diction and allusion. Some of his poems, such as the following, express an un-courtier-like familiarity with meditation in isolated mountain retreats:

Ware dani mo Sebashi to omou Kusa no io ni Nakaba sashiiru Mine no shiragumo The white clouds
On the mountain-tops
Poke halfway into this thatched hut
I had thought too cramped

Even for myself.26

Other poems, however, seem quite at home within the established modes of court poetry:

Yo mo sugara

Kokoro no yukue

Tazunereba

If you would inquire
Where my heart goes
In the depth of night:

Kinō no sora ni Where are the traces of bird's flight

Tobu tori no ato Through yesterday's sky?27

This poem belongs to what Fujiwara Teika had called the soku, or "distantly related," style, in which the last two lines do not seem easily related to or to follow logically from the first three. Kōhō instilled a taste for this kind of poetry in his pupil Musō Soseki. Like Kōhō, Musō wrote—perhaps more significantly, did not care that others knew that he wrote—waka poetry. Like his teacher's, Muso's poetry was also collected in the Fūgashū and in a private collection. Both men were so well known as renga (linked-verse) poets that the famous renga theorist Nijō Yoshimoto, who included several of Muso's renga stanzas in his Tsukubashū of 1356, wrote of them as "composing renga night and day,"28 Such proclivities for the native literary arts were undoubtedly instrumental in commending Muso to Emperors Go-Daigo, Kōgon and Kōmyō, to influential courtiers like Reizei Tamesuke and Nijō Yoshimoto, and to powerful military leaders like the Ashikaga brothers, Taka'uji and Tadayoshi.

This point has been overlooked by scholars who have tried to account for Musō's eventual success, after a few false starts, as the single most important figure in the political history of the gozan establishment. He devoted himself to the task of making Zen accessible and meaningful to the ascendant Ashikagas, at the same time guaranteeing the perpetuation of the established temple system under his own line during the difficult transitional period after the split of the court into northern and southern factions in 1331. One doubts that the Ashikagas, going out frequently to meet with Musō at Saihōji in the western outskirts of Kyoto to exchange waka poems with him and be pleasantly instructed in a not terribly rigorous Zen, would have bothered to spend as much time with any monk who persisted in bewildering them with alien and uncongenial Chinese poetry

and thorny, uncomfortable Zen riddles. Of course, it seems equally unlikely that any Zen monk who wrote *only waka* and *renga* poetry could ever have cut much of a figure within the Zen temple world of the time, as many were in fact to do in the fifteenth century.

When we consider his background, it is not surprising that Musō's waka poetry should seem more polished and erudite than his poems in Chinese, and in fact appear more in touch with tradition, with their up-to-date language and frequent allusion to earlier waka poems. Even his Chinese poems often seem to reflect waka traditions rather than Chinese. In the headnote to one waka poem, for instance, Musō noted that "For some years [1320–23], I lived in a retreat I built at Yokosuka, on the Miura Peninsula in Sagami Province where the sea meets the land":

Hikishio no
Ura tōzakaru
Oto wa shite
Higata mo miezu
Tatsugasumi kana
There is a sound
As the tide draws far out
Into the bay,
But I cannot see the tidal flats—
Mist has covered them.<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to compare this waka poem with lines of a Chinese poem that Musō wrote at about this time, for the Chinese poem seems to follow less from any Chinese tradition than from the one within which a waka like this could have been composed:

I thought that with a hide tough as bark I could live beyond the waves of the world,

But busy mouths that could melt iron followed me everywhere,

And just when I had muted my emotions to the hues of pale mist,

My sweet, dark dreams were shattered by the sound of the evening tide going out . . . <sup>30</sup>

Musō appears to have been referring in both poems to a period of political danger in his career following his resignation as abbot of Nanzenji—a position delicately balanced between the two feuding Imperial factions—and his return to the Kama-

kura area. While keeping himself as distant as possible from the sort of political involvement that might prove fatal to his career, however, Musō was not exactly living in isolation. Among several other important guests Musō received at his Yokosuka retreat Hakusen-an ("Moored Boat Retreat") in the summer of 1321 was Reizei Tamesuke (1263–1328), Teika's great-grandson and, after the success in 1291 of the famous lawsuit brought before the Kamakura authorities by his mother, the nun Abutsu, the literary heir of Teika's legacy. Musō wrote the following rather conventional poem upon seeing Tamesuke to his boat:

Kari ni sumu
Iori tazunete
Tou hito o
Arujigao nite
Mata okurinuru
Putting on the face
Of someone who owns the place,
Again I see off
A visitor who has come calling
At this temporary dwelling.<sup>31</sup>

Tamesuke's reply is, if anything, even more conventional than Musō's poem, with its stale image of tears and the play on the name of Musō's retreat:

TōkaranuAlthough the pathsKyō no funaji noOur boats take at today's partingWakare ni moAre not so very distant,Ukabiyasuki waIt is because of our tearsNamida narikeriThat they float so readily.

In spite of his earlier troubles with I-shan and a well-known episode of "false enlightenment" in 1304 at the age of 30, Musō seems to have become a focal point for students attracted by his particular style of Zen, much to his dismay. In 1311, Musō built a retreat called Ryūsan-an; hounded by would-be students, however, he abandoned it in 1312 to live at Jōkyoji, at the time headed by Kōhō. Musō left there for Mino province the following year to lodge at Eihōji (the "mountain designation" of which was Kokeizan, "Tiger Valley Mountain"), again in order to escape the hordes of students who had arrived to seek him out. "I hid myself at the Keizan Temple in Mino, and even though it was so deep in the mountains that there was not even a real road of any sort to the spot, much to my annoyance people kept calling to study Zen with me":

Yo no usa niIt would be merciful of peopleKaetaru yama noNot to come calling and disturbSabishisa oThe loneliness of these mountainsTowanu zo hito noTo which I have returnedNasakenarikeruFrom the sorrows of this world.32

This poem is an allusive variation (honkadori) on a famous poem by the poet-priest Saigyō:

Tou hito mo
Omoitaetaru
Of this mountain village
Yamazato no
Sabishisa nakuba
Sumiukaramashi
It would probably be
Wretched to live here.

Musō here follows the long native poetic tradition of the hermit-priest, for whom any dwelling at all merely reflects the impermanence of life on earth; the true significance of life lies rather in something other than these structures, built on one's journey only to be abandoned without attachment. As Musō wrote in a Chinese poem on the same topic,

A drifter my whole life, I never saved a thing: The clouds in the mountains and moon in the creeks have been my carpets;

East to West, I trod along this narrow path in vain—It wasn't in the dwellings along the way.<sup>33</sup>

The waka poem he wrote subsequently "upon abandoning the hermitage I had built in Shimizu in Mino province" reflects even more accurately than this Chinese poem the traditional language of the waka tradition that was Musō's source for such a subject:

Ikutabi kaHow many timesKakusumi suteteHave I left abandoned,IdetsuramuLiving hidden away like this,Sadamenaki yo niA temporary dwelling builtMusubu kariioIn an uncertain world?34

In the imagery of Muso's poetry, as in Saigyo's, it is the "path"

of Buddhism that one followed as one "returned home" to one's original nature that was important, and not the temporary stopping places along the Way. In a waka poem that takes its title from the Zen saying "To put one foot after the other is to follow the Way," Musō makes clear that the "road home" is not to be interpreted as taking any particular topographical direction:

Furusato to Sadamuru kata no Naki toki wa Izuku ni yuku mo Ieji narikeri At those times When I cannot decide the way Back where I came from Anywhere I go Becomes the road home.<sup>35</sup>

The sharp contrast between these conventional poetic attitudes of other-worldliness and noninvolvement in the affairs of this world on the one hand, and on the other of Muso's extraordinary gregariousness, so well attested in the historical records as well as in poems to and from important people like Reizei Tamesuke, requires that we ask how Musō was able to reconcile the contradiction. As with many other problems of apparent contradictions in Buddhist theory and practice, one possible approach to this problem lies in the province of what was known as "expedient measures" (hōben), a technical term used especially in Tendai Buddhism. Musō always claimed that he was only unwillingly involved in the writing of poetry, as had been so many Zen monks before him, especially Chinese masters like I-shan and Wu-hsüeh. This pursuit, which had been condemned in Buddhist texts centuries earlier as "wild words and ornate speech," Muso thought of as only one "expedient" among many that served to lure others toward the practice of religion. Perhaps the best-known rationalization for the use of "expedient measures" to this end is found in the "parable of the burning house" of the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka; Myōhō Renge  $Ky\bar{v}$ ), in which a man resorts to promises of rich gifts in order to lure unconcerned children from a burning house and so save their lives. The use of expedient means thus implies an awareness of different levels of audience; someone mature enough to fully realize his perilous situation does not require the lures required by the still immature. In this sense, Muso's poetry speaks directly to the needs of his as-yet-benighted secular counterparts among the warrior and noble classes. To his own Zen students, however, Musō delivered stern warnings to forebear from such parlous distractions and to stick to their meditation mats. In his most famous statement on the subject, Musō divided his pupils into three grades:

Those who have zealously cast off all worldly ties and singlemindedly pursue enlightenment to the exclusion of all else—these are my first grade. Those whose Zen practice is not pure and who cultivate a taste for scholarship—these are my middle grade. Those who are blind to their own spirituality and are fond of any drivel of the Patriarchs—these are my lowest grade. Then there are those who, besotted with poetry, conceive of their vocation as a literary one—these are shaven-headed laymen, not worthy of inclusion in even the lowest grade. Nay, they are stuffed with food and stupid with sleep, vagrant time-passers I call frocked bums! The ancients had another name for them: "robed ricebags." They are not monks, and are certainly no disciples of mine!<sup>36</sup>

This division into three grades seems to reflect I-shan's own division of his students into three groups depending, apparently, upon their aptitude for Chinese poetry. But this system of ranking had even earlier precedent in China. The Ch'an monk Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089–1163), for example, wrote in 1127 that the monk Fa-hsiu "divided students into three grades" according to the following test:

On a snowy day, the top grade are found seated in meditation; the middle grade are grinding ink and wetting brushes to write poems about the snow; and the third grade are sitting around the fire eating and talking.<sup>37</sup>

Musō also borrowed Ta-hui's unusual term, "the technique of calling to the maid," for the poems he used as "expedient measures" to attract others' attention. The Chinese expression referred to a poem about a woman who frequently called out to her maid to do this or do that, not because she actually required attention, but because she wanted some means of indicating her presence to her lover.

Musō was inevitably the target of frequent criticism from contemporaries. Shūho Myōchō (1282–1328), founder of the

important non-gozan "Ōtokan" (Daitokuji-Myōshinji) line of Zen, for example, complained that Musō seemed to have more in common with Tendai and Shingon Buddhism than he did with Zen.<sup>39</sup> And indeed, Musō's experience with I-shan suggests that his inability to deal with the stark contradictions of the more traditional Zen style brought from China is the crux, with his ascendency to power in the gozan, of an important change in the Japanese interpretation of Zen. The problem of "styles" is particularly vexing insofar as it tends to be dependent on personalities; and yet, it is from the inevitable occasional, if blurred, vision of human personalities that emerge from behind the anonymity of dry historical record that we often seem to find our best understanding of the shifting directions of human institutions.

Muso's response seems to represent the truly native Japanese pattern reasserting itself in the historical process of assimilation and adaptation of what was felt instinctively to be alien. Muso's style can be summed up by the word "mediation," or, more specifically, the reduction of the tensions created by the clash of cultural values. Perhaps we might locate the deepest function of ancient wakan dialectic in the wa element's native Japanese reading of yawarageru, "to soften, mollify," the bringing of two things into "harmony," the reduction of tension by accommodation. 40 On the surface, this problem appeared to Muso's contemporaries, and so to later historians, as the contradiction of an unacceptably "Japanese" devotion to verbiage, especially to poetry, in the person of someone theoretically committed to the ancient Zen formula of "no reliance upon the written word." But it seems more sensible to locate the truly Japanese pattern precisely in the equation of that which was ineffably profound (kokoro), whether in religion or poetry, with its expression in words (kotoba), whether those of religion (i.e., dhāranī, mystical incantation) or of waka poetry. That this equation is fundamental to the Japanese pattern can be seen in Mujū Ichien's Shasekishū of 1283.41 Mujū, who represents the very different style of a different time, was someone of whom less "Chineseness" was expected, and so his loquacious anecdotes and gossip, told in the manner of a born storyteller, were not regarded as a failing, even though he was a Zen monk of the gozan Jufukuji in Kamakura and Tōfukuji in Kyoto. The

Shasekishū incorporates, from its preface on, a strong attempt to provide a theoretical basis in earlier Chinese works, already well-accepted in Japan, for a reconciliation between a stark and very un-Japanese silence on the one hand, and the poetry and story-telling that Buddhist doctrine had labelled "sins of the mouth" on the other. Mujū found this theoretical basis precisely where earlier poets and monks had for over four centuries, in the T'ang poet Po Chū-i's fervent defense of "wild words and ornate speech to serve the cause of praising the Buddha's Law in worlds to come with the effect of turning the Wheel of the Law."

When Musō wrote waka in what the Tendai monk Shinkei was to call a century later the Zen-like soku mode of "distantly related verse" that came into fashion around 1200, we find that he was as adept at bleaching the phenomenal landscape of illusory "color" and reducing it to its essential "void" as any Shinkokinshū poet:

Kurenu yori

Yūbe no iro wa

Sakidachite

Kikage suzushiki

Tanikawa no mizu

The colors of the evening

Were gone, before the darkening sky

Could be touched with crimson,

In the waters of a mountain stream,

In the cool shade of trees.<sup>42</sup>

Yet he did not seem to have been particularly pleased that, as a Zen monk, he was, if only by the exigencies of form alone, expected to equate this congenial aesthetic vision with the Zen mode of viewing reality, as we see in the following poem in Chinese:

Autumn's colors drop from the branches in masses of falling leaves

As cold clouds bring rain into the crannies of the mountains...

Everyone was born with the same sort of eyes:

Why must mine see this as a Zen kōan?43

Musō clearly felt it more congenial to explore the implications of this metaphysic—one he seems to have felt to be very Japanese—in native rather than in alien terms.

Kokan Shiren, appearing to reach out toward China,

found it somehow lacking and insufficiently "rational"; the more we read of his explorations in Chinese thought and letters, the more we feel his fundamental ambivalence toward China. The same ambivalence can be sensed when we read his biography of the Chinese monk I-shan; we are never really sure whether Kokan is praising or condemning I-shan's gentleness where there ought to have been sternness, his silence where there should have been guidance, his poetasting where others usually insisted upon koans. There may, in fact, be some argument as to the integrity of the text, the original of which disappeared in a fire at Tofukuii in 1393, according to a colophon dated 1407. But this very ambiguity accords so well with Kokan's general view of everything else Chinese that we sense in the end that this warping of his portrait's perspective can be attributed to the superimposition of Chinese spectacles upon Iapanese vision. Kokan was, in fact, much less ambiguous with those among his Japanese colleagues who did not seem to him to act sufficiently like Zen monks. We feel the chill of his scorn, for example, for what he cleverly derided as "kana monks," a fine three-level pun that can be translated as "false name" monks while implying also that Zen monks like Muso had abandoned the proper world of Chinese learning for frivolous fame in the courts of Japanese cursive (kana) writing.44 The word also carries heavy implications of Tendai Buddhism, for the term Kokan uses is the technical word used in the Tendai sandai dialectic to mean "provisional reality," and so implies a willingness to accept the superficial world of phenomenal illusion as absolute Reality, and an unwillingness to see it, as Zen insists, as Void. Kokan aimed his attack at monks who, like Musō, he thought were more involved in Tendai and Shingon than in Zen.

Musō, to the contrary, found the Chinese master I-shan altogether too alien: his Chinese poem cited above seems to be saying, Why must he insist on seeing everything as Zen riddles when I see a beautiful Japanese sunset? Musō's attitude is reflected, by and large, in his entire line, the largest and most important in the gozan in the century that followed. But even a Japanese as Sinicized as Musō's younger contemporary Chūgan Engetsu (1300–75) could feel the uncomfortable tug between the outward "Chinese" forms of his life and something undeni-

ably Japanese within. A poem by Chūgan sums up the problem as it must have appeared to many a Japanese Zen monk:

The older I get, the more I detest affectation— In fact, every now and then, I like the pretty things of the world!

Giving in to my true nature, I open the window onto the small pond,

And, chin on fist, gaze into the infinity beyond:

Blown by the breeze, butterflies flit through sweet-smelling grasses,

Dragonflies everywhere rest on open lotus flowers— If the "cold and tasteless" in these seem so sweet to me, What am I doing living in a Zen temple!<sup>45</sup>

#### NOTES

- 1. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō (Tokyo: 1969), vol. 81, p. 104b.
- 2. Ibid., p. 105b.
- 3. Erh-Ch'eng Ch'üan-shu (Ssu-pu Ts'ung-k'an), Wai-shu, 11:2b.
- 4. Uemura Kankō, Gozan Bungaku Zenshū (GBZS) (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1980 reprint), vol. 1, pp. 228-241.
  - 5. Ibid., p. 228.
  - 6. Ibid.
  - 7. Ibid., p. 241.
- 8. Mumyōshō (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei [NKBT], 1965), vol. 65, p. 87.
  - 9. GBZS, vol. 1, p. 95.
  - 10. Ibid., p. 96.
  - 11. Ibid., p. 74.
- 12. Zoku Gunsho Ruijū (Tokyo: Kangeikai, 1926), 9b: 463a. See also Makita Tairyō, "Zekkai Chūshin to Minsō to no kōshō," Zengaku Kenkyū, LVII (1970), p. 167.
  - 13. GBZS, vol. 2, pp. 1237–1238.
- 14. As it apparently was not in China. Japanese have periodically raised the question of the alien quality of Chinese thought that emphasized hsiao or "filial piety" over what the Japanese prized as chū (chung, loyalty to one's superior), never terribly important in neo-Confucian thought. For example, the eccentric kokugakusha scholar Masugi Kaidō, in the second novel of Yukio Mishima's tetrology The Sea of Fertility, Homba (Runaway Horses), makes precisely this distinction between alien Chinese Buddhist and Confucian thought and native Japanese.

Chūgan Engetsu (1300-1375) offers a fine object lesson in what might happen to a gozan monk who was perceived as disloyal to his own line. Chūgan had studied in Kamakura for several years with the Chinese Sōtō monk

Tung-ming Hui-Jih (of the only Sōtō line besides that of Dōgen, one that became part of the Rinzai-dominated gozan). Leaving for China in 1325, Chūgan spent a year, from 1330–1331, studying with the famous Chinese Ch'an master Tung-yang Te-hui. Upon returning to Kamakura in 1339, Chūgan had a falling-out with Tung-ming and announced that he intended to follow Tung-yang's line instead. As a result, he was immediately ostracized by the Kamakura monks, one of whom even set upon Chūgan with a sword. As long afterward as 1362 a monk fired an arrow at Chūgan, causing him to suffer a nervous breakdown so severe that he had to resign his post as abbot of Kenninji. See Tamamura Takeji's biography of Chūgan in Gozan Bungaku Shinshū (hereafter GBSS) (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1971), vol. 4, pp. 1205ff; and his interesting article on Chūgan as "heretic," "Zenshū ni okeru itan no mondai," in his Nihon Zenshūshi Henshū (Kyoto, Shibunkaku, 1981), vol. 2 (part 1), pp. 373–745.

- 15. Makita Tairyō, "Zekkai Chūshin to Minsō to no kōshō...," pp. 175 and 178. For Sung Lien's equally backhanded compliment to Jorin Ryōsa, who accompanied Zekkai to China in 1368, see Itō Shō, Rinkō Chōsho, (Kyoto: Sōgo Shiryōkan, 1838) 2/1:34a-35a.
  - 16. GBZS, vol. 2, p. 1351.
- 17. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 80, pp. 332b-c; GBZS, vol. 1, pp. 221-22.
- 18. See Tamamura Takeji, *Musō Kokushi* (Kyoto, Sara Shobō, 1977), pp. 6–10, 14, 16ff. See also *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, vol. 80, p. 498b–c on Musō's Tendai and Shingon background.
  - 19. GBZS, vol. 3, p. 2026.
  - 20. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 80, p. 498c.
- 21. Dai Nippon Bukkyō Zensho (Tokyo: Nippon Bukkyō Zensho Kankōkai, 1956), vol. 95, p. 429.
- 22. Tamamura, Musō Kokushi, pp. 121ff. The question of Musō's dilution of Zen practice, and of his competency in general, is summarized in English in Akamatsu Toshihide and Philip Yampolsky, "Muromachi Zen and the gozan system," in Hall and Toyoda, eds., Japan in the Muromachi Age (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 322–329.
  - 23. Tamamura, Musō Kokushi, pp. 20ff.
  - 24. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 80, p. 283a.
- 25. *Ibid.*, p. 244a, and *Dai Nippon Bukkyō Zensho*, vol. 95, p. 388, contain these lines of poetry. For Wu-hsüeh's position in the history of *gozan* literature, see Tamamura Takeji, *Gozan Shisō* (Nihon no Zen Goroku, vol. 8) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978); a glance at chart F3 at the end of the book will serve to illustrate the size of Wu-hsüeh's faction in Japan.
  - 26. Fügashū, 1747.
  - 27. Ibid., 2065.
- 28. Tsukuba Mondō (NKBT), vol. 66, p. 82; Yoshimoto was explaining in this section the affinity between renga and Buddhism.
  - 29. Gunsho Ruiju, 15:360b.
  - 30. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 80, p. 477a.
  - 31. Gunsho Ruijō, 15:362b.
  - 32. Ibid.

- 33. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 80, p. 456c.
- 34. Fūgashū, 1783.
- 35. Ibid., 2053.
- 36. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 80, p. 503c. See also Tamamura, Musō Kokushi, p. 19 and p. 23, note 3.
  - 37. Ibid., p. 108.
  - 38. Ibid., p. 102; Zoku Gunsho Ruijū, 96:529a.
  - 39. Akamatsu and Yampolsky, "Muromachi Zen . . .", pp. 322-24.
- 40. See, for example, Haga Kōshirō, Higashiyama Bunka (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1962), p. 201, for a discussion of the chanoyu (tea ceremony) as an "artistically softened" (geijutsuteki ni yawarageta) derivative of the sarei tea ceremony practiced within the Zen temples. It is clear from the headings of this section—"The nature of the chanoyu as a 'wa' art," "The 'wa' of the concept of the chanoyu"—that Haga means more by 'wa' than merely "Japanese."
- 41. Shasekishū (NKBT, vol. 85), p. 58, note 9 and p. 509, n. 3; also pp. 218–220. The equation of waka with Shingon dhāranī can be found on pp. 222–225 and p. 513, n. 42.
  - 42. Gunsho Ruijū, 15:361b.
  - 43. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 80, p. 480c.
  - 44. GBZS, vol. 1, p. 235.
  - 45. GBZS, vol. 2, p. 902.

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a 朴
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ь 古

c 平

d 淡

e 奇

f I.

y 寮

6

h 艠

i 理

j 拙!

k 物

1 格物

m空

n 色

ο 假名僧