

## ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

This translation of the *Record of the Transmission of Illumination* (*Denkōroku* 傳光錄) by Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1264–1325) is a product of the Sōtō Zen Text Project (Sōtōshū Shūten, Kyōten Hon'yaku Jigyō 曹洞宗宗典・經典翻譯事業). Founded in 1995 under the auspices of the International Department (Kokusaika 國際課) of the Administrative Headquarters of Sōtō Zen Buddhism (Sōtōshū Shūmuchiō 曹洞宗事務庁), the Sōtō Zen Text Project brings together a team of scholars with doctorates in the field of East Asian Buddhist studies to produce carefully researched and fully annotated English translations of texts that are important to the Sōtō Zen tradition.

A word about the principles of translation and annotation that the Sōtō Zen Text Project employs in the present work is in order. In the first place, our translation of the *Denkōroku* strives to mirror the syntax and vocabulary of the original Japanese and Chinese as closely as possible. That is to say, the translation is as literal as it can be without violating the norms of English grammar or becoming incomprehensible to readers who cannot access the two original languages of the text as points of reference.

Moreover, our English translation faithfully follows the Japanese (or Chinese) text given in the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku* at all times, even in those few instances where that text is almost certainly corrupt. In such cases, we duly translate what the text actually says, not what we believe the originally intended meaning to be. We then use notes to explain what the problem and its possible resolution are: how the text of the Shūmuchiō edition disagrees with other recensions of the *Denkōroku* and/or deviates from known Chinese sources on which it is based; how the text of the Shūmuchiō edition might be corrected; and what a more comprehensible English translation would be if it were to follow an original text emended in that way.

The work of the Sōtō Zen Text Project is guided by the fundamental principle that any good translation must be based on a solid comprehension of the original text. That is to say, the first and indispensable task of the

translator is to *understand* the Japanese or Chinese text that he or she is to render into English. It is not permissible to translate in a mechanical manner, as computer programs do, transposing vocabulary items into one of their predetermined equivalents in the target language and treating grammatical markers in the original language as if they were some sort of algorithm to be automatically applied. Such a translation method, while it may lay claim to a certain kind of consistency and objectivity, is sure to produce gibberish much of the time. To repeat: the comprehending mind of a human being is the only agent that can achieve good translation. However, because the human process of understanding is never free from the possibility of misunderstanding, of seeing what one is predisposed to see and reading in meanings that the author of a text never intended, the translator's comprehension of the original text must be informed and held in check by careful attention to precisely the kind of linguistic mechanics — the vocabulary and grammar — that machine translation relies on. It is not acceptable to merely intuit the meaning of the original text based on a set of linguistic cues that one is unable to parse definitively, even if such a loose approach does allow one to produce English prose that is elegant and seemingly profound.

The upshot of these guidelines is that, when confronted by a sentence or passage in the original Japanese or Chinese that is difficult to comprehend, the translator cannot give up on understanding it and just mechanically convert the words into English; nor can he or she simply guess at the likely meaning and proceed to render that into English. When those two avenues are cut off, as they are by the principles of the Sōtō Zen Text Project, the translator is at an impasse. To proceed, he or she has no choice but to launch into rigorous philological research, in an attempt to figure out what the text in question means.

That research has several basic tools at its disposal, all of which have been frequently utilized in the present translation of the *Denkōroku*. In the first place, there are the research findings of other scholars, most of them Sōtō Zen monks writing in Japanese, who have striven to understand and interpret the text. Secondly, there are several existing translations of the *Denkōroku* into modern Japanese and English, more or less well annotated, that also show how other scholars have understood the text. Thirdly, when all such previous scholarship leaves the translator still in doubt about the meaning of a particular phrase or passage, there are a number of excellent Japanese and Chinese reference materials that one may consult, including dictionaries of Chan and Zen terms and sayings, dictionaries of East Asian

Buddhism, and dictionaries of the classical Japanese and classical Chinese languages. Finally, and of crucial importance when all else fails, there is the single most powerful and useful tool of all: the digital search of East Asian Buddhist canons, as those have been input and rendered accessible by the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA), the SAT Daizōkyō Database, and a few other less extensive digitizing projects.

The Sōtō Zen Text Project has, from its very inception, embraced and promoted the use of searchable digital text as a research tool. One key member of our team of scholars, Urs App, was a pioneer of efforts to digitize Chan and Zen texts that began back in the mid-1980s. His work in that area, assisted by Christian Wittern and others, eventually led to the formation of the CBETA project in Taiwan and the digitizing of a number of entire Buddhist canons written in Chinese. Although he is highly qualified to do so, App has not served the Sōtō Zen Text Project as a translator, but rather as our computer consultant. His contributions include the digital page layout of various publications, and the design and maintenance of an online database for the shared use of all our translators. That database now contains more than 16,000 technical terms that appear in Sōtō Zen texts, with suggested English translations for each term. It also embodies a wealth of research findings, facilitated by digital search, on the attested usages and meanings of many of those terms in Chan and Zen texts and in East Asian Buddhist literature at large.

The impact that digital search of Chinese Buddhist canons has had on the present translation of the *Denkōroku* is immense. Much of the difficulty that previous interpreters and translators of the *Denkōroku* have had in understanding the text stems from the fact that it is full of quotations of other works — mostly Chinese Chan records — that go unmarked as such. Prior to the advent of the digital age, Japanese scholars succeeded in identifying many such quotations, but many others eluded them, with the result that they mistook various sayings of Chinese Chan masters that Keizan was quoting as Keizan's own words. Imagine the confusion that would result if the quotation marks were missing from an English sentence that speaks of "to be, or not to be" and "o say can you see?" The loss of the quotation marks would be no small thing, for along with them would disappear the clear allusions to Hamlet's soliloquy (in Shakespeare's play by that name) and the "Star-Spangled Banner" (the American national anthem), the grammatical integrity of the sentence, and the likelihood of the average reader making any sense of it. Comparable problems have arisen in the interpretation and translation of the *Denkōroku*, for when quotations of

external texts go unrecognized as such, the reader is confronted with garbled grammar and statements that defy all logical interpretation. Digital search has enabled us to solve many such problems in the *Denkōroku*, by finding source texts in Chinese Buddhist canons and clearly distinguishing between Keizan's own words and those of other people that he is quoting.

Every chapter of the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku* begins with a short section, entitled Root Case (*honsoku* 本則), that is written in Chinese and presented as a quotation of some authoritative (albeit unnamed) source on the history of the Zen Lineage in India, China, and Japan. Every chapter of the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku* also ends with an even shorter section, entitled Verse on the Old Case (*juko* 頌古), that consists of a Chinese language poem attributed to Keizan as his own original composition. The bulk of every chapter, however, consists of two sections that are written largely in classical Japanese, albeit with an occasional quote in Chinese. One section, entitled Pivotal Circumstances (*kien* 機縁), is essentially the biography of an ancestral teacher in the Zen Lineage, with a detailed account of the verbal interactions with his own teacher that led to his awakening and recognition as a dharma heir. The other section, entitled Investigation (*nentei* 拈提), or Commentary (*teishō* 提唱) in one instance, contains Keizan's explanations of and comments on the Root Case and Pivotal Circumstances, as well as exhortations to his own students to study and follow the examples set by the ancestral teachers.

A naive reader of the *Denkōroku* might assume that whatever material appears in classical Japanese represents Keizan's own words, spoken when he addressed his followers at Daijō Monastery where he was abbot. However, our digital search of the Chinese Buddhist canon has revealed that large chunks of Japanese text, especially text that appears in the Pivotal Circumstances section of each chapter, are actually Japanese transcriptions (*yomikudashi* 読み下し) of material that appears in Chinese sources. It is as if Keizan, when quoting those sources as historical background, translated them verbatim into Japanese to make them more accessible to his Japanese audience. The fact that the material in question appears in Japanese, however, has sometimes prevented scholars in the past from recognizing it as a transcription from Chinese. And even when they suspected that to be the case, there was no easy way for them to determine exactly what the Chinese source text was. Our own digital search has had to rely on a kind of guesswork, where we took a Japanese phrase, rearranged the glyphs into Chinese word order, and then searched the Chinese canons for matches. Whenever that search produced a "hit," the next step was to ascertain that

the surrounding Chinese text matched the Japanese word for word, thus proving that we had found the actual Chinese source text. Then we had to figure out where in the Japanese text that particular quotation of a Chinese source started and stopped, and mark it off (by indentation) accordingly in our English translation. Such an approach was not impossible before the advent of digital text, but the sheer size of the canons, even if one limited one's search to Chan records, made it largely impractical.

For all of the aforementioned advances facilitated by digital search, the *Denkōroku* remains a very difficult text to understand, and hence to translate. It is a huge step forward to realize that the text is filled with hitherto unrecognized quotations, often in Japanese transcription, of Chinese Chan texts. Nevertheless, even after making those discoveries, we as translators were still faced with making sense of the Chinese originals that are quoted, and figuring out what Keizan meant when he utilized them. Often we succeeded, but at times we did not. There remain passages where even the most assiduous research, exhausting all of the tools and methods mentioned above, left us with a set of possible meanings (and possible translations), but no way of determining which was correct. In such cases, we were forced to choose one of the translations, but we always state in a note that we are not sure of the meaning, and we explain what the alternative readings might be. Another basic principle of translation embraced by the Sōtō Zen Text Project is that, if we are forced to guess what something means, we lay bare that fact and invite other scholars to help solve the problem. We do not gloss over problems of interpretation; we use the critical apparatus of notes and Glossary entries to highlight, explain, and wrestle with those problems.

The literature of Chan and Zen, including the writings of the Sōtō School ancestors Dōgen and Keizan, is rightly famous for its witty, paradoxical, and often confounding use of language. Zen masters employ such linguistic devices, it could be said, to make us realize the inherent limitations and pitfalls of language itself, especially when we use it to try to grasp what is "ultimately real" (a notion that itself is just another linguistic construct). There is a profound difference, however, between the rhetoric of Zen that plays with language in a clever and calculated way to induce insight, and language that is merely confused and nonsensical. Unfortunately, because readers of Chan and Zen texts are accustomed to sage remarks that appear to be *non sequiturs*, when they are confronted by the garden variety of nonsense — e.g. the gibberish that results when mechanical translation is employed or quotation marks go missing — they are all too likely to chalk

that up as normal for the language of Zen, which (they imagine) is not supposed to be comprehensible in the first place. Such a mode of reading, Zen Master Keizan tells us in the *Denkōroku*, is a serious mistake. He repeatedly exhorts his followers to strive “meticulously” to fully understand the Zen stories and sayings that he raises for their consideration. Implicit in that exhortation is the idea that they do, in fact, make sense.

Contributions to the work of translating Keizan’s *Denkōroku* were made by Carl Bielefeldt, William M. Bodiford, T. Griffith Foulk, Sarah J. Horton, and the late John R. McRae. The scholarly research that informs the notes (and the Glossary found in *Volume 2*) was conducted by Bodiford and Foulk. The editorial task of checking the translation and notes for errors of substance and orthography was carried out by Bielefeldt, Bodiford, Foulk, Horton, Itō Yūji, Nambara Ikki, and others. The final copyediting was performed by Horton, and the complicated multilingual page layout was done by Urs App.

As Editor-in-Chief of this annotated translation of the *Denkōroku*, I give my heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to its successful completion. Whatever errors and infelicities remain in the final product are, at the end of the day, my responsibility.

T. Griffith Foulk

## CONVENTIONS

(1) To facilitate comparison of the Japanese and Chinese text of the Shūmuchi edition of the *Denkōroku* with its annotated English translation, the translators have broken the former into sections of a manageable length. Each section of original text is followed immediately by its English translation. The chapter headings and section headings that appear in the original text of the Shūmuchi edition of the *Denkōroku* are used as natural points of division. However, the translators have also seen fit to further divide the longer Pivotal Circumstances and Investigation sections into a number of subsections. The latter divisions have no precedent in the Shūmuchi edition of the *Denkōroku* or in any other edition or translation of the text. The division of the original text into subsections is thus essentially arbitrary. It has, however, been carried out with an eye to maintaining some uniformity in length of the subsections, and not doing violence to the flow of the argument as it appears in English translation.

(2) In the English translation of the *Denkōroku* and the notes that accompany it, all of the words printed in *slightly slanted regular typeface* (as opposed to *true italics*) are Buddhist technical terms, Zen sayings, and the like that are explained in the Glossary (Part One: Terms and Phrases) in *Volume 2* of this work.

(3) All proper nouns that appear in the English translation of the *Denkōroku* and the notes that accompany it are capitalized and explained in the Glossary (Part Two: Names of People, Places, and Texts) in *Volume 2* of this work.

(4) All names of people and places that appear in the English translation are given in their “original” languages, in romanized Sanskrit for Indian names, romanized Chinese (Pinyin) for Chinese names, and romanized Japanese (Hepburn) for Japanese names.

(5) Some of the Indian names that appear in the *Denkōroku* in Chinese translation or transliteration are attested in Indian (Sanskrit, Pāli, etc.) sources, which are followed when romanizing the names in the English translation. Other Indian names that appear in the *Denkōroku* have no known precedents in Indian texts and are likely to have been made up in China. The romanization of the latter involves a reconstruction of the Sanskrit that takes into account known patterns in the Chinese transliter-

ation of Indian Buddhist names, but it remains inherently speculative, for there is no basis on which to establish historical accuracy.

(6) Pinyin is used to romanize all Chinese words in the notes.

(7) The Hepburn system that is standard in modern scholarship is used to romanize all Japanese words in the notes.

(8) Indian Buddhist terms that appear in the *Denkōroku* in Chinese transliteration are not translated into English, but rather restored to the original Sanskrit. The principle followed here is that, if Chinese Buddhists chose not to translate an Indian word, but rather to represent it phonetically, then the same should be done in English.

(9) Most Indian Buddhist terms that appear in the *Denkōroku* in Chinese translation are translated from Chinese into English. However, there are a few cases in which the English “translation” from Chinese employs words of Sanskrit origin that have entered the English language.

(10) Sanskrit words that appear in the list of Roger Jackson, “Terms of Sanskrit and Pāli Origin Acceptable as English Words,” in *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5:2 (1982): 141–142, are treated as English words, which means they are not italicized. However, for purposes of scholarly reference, the diacritic marks used in romanized Sanskrit are retained.

(11) All foreign words that appear in the English translation and notes are italicized, with the exception of the names of people and places when those appear in English sentences. All Sanskrit words are explained in the Glossary (Part One: Terms and Phrases) in *Volume 2* of this work.

(12) The Japanese pronunciations of Chinese glyphs that appear in romanized Japanese names in the text of the translation, and in the romanization of entire passages of Japanese that are quoted in the notes, follow the readings given (by *furigana* 振り仮名) in the Shūmuchō edition of the *Denkōroku*. In cases where the Shūmuchō edition does not indicate a preferred pronunciation for Chinese glyphs that have multiple *on* 音 and *kun* 訓 readings, scholars affiliated with the Administrative Headquarters of Sōtō Zen Buddhism were consulted and pronunciations generally favored within the world of Japanese Sōtō Zen today were used.

(13) The Shūmuchō edition of the *Denkōroku* employs the set of simplified Chinese glyphs known as “regular use Chinese characters” (*jōyō kanji* 常用漢字) that was established by the Japanese Ministry of Education in 1981. The Japanese and Chinese language text of the *Denkōroku* reproduced in this book, however, substitutes traditional (unsimplified) Chinese glyphs



whenever those are available in Unicode. That is to facilitate the search of digital databases of Buddhist scriptures in Chinese, all of which use traditional glyphs.

(14) Terms, sayings, and names that are treated in the Glossary in *Volume 2* of this work are, as a general rule, not explained in notes to the translation. Notes, in principle, are limited to explaining matters crucial to an understanding of the text immediately at hand.

(15) In the notes to the translation, the arrow symbol → followed by a term, phrase, or name printed in *slightly slanted regular typeface* (see above, #2) means that the reader should consult the Glossary under that heading for more detailed information concerning the topic treated in the note.

(16) Full bibliographic data for secondary scholarship that is cited by the authors' names in the notes to the translation is given in the Bibliography in *Volume 2* of this work.

(17) All sentences and longer passages in the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku* that have been positively identified by the translators as quotations deriving from external sources are, in the English translation, marked as such by the use of indented text. That procedure is followed whether or not the sentences and passages in question are marked within the *Denkōroku* itself as quotations (most often they are not), and regardless of whether the quoted material appears in the *Denkōroku* in the original Chinese or Japanese, or in Japanese transcription of a Chinese source.

(18) Indented text (at the primary level) in the English translation is used exclusively to indicate that the words so marked are not Keizan's own, but have been positively identified by the translators to be a quotation of some external text, as documented in a note.

(19) Within a block of indented text, a secondary level of indentation is occasionally used in the conventional way: to signify long quotes (of individuals speaking, or poetic verses) in lieu of quotation marks.

(20) When text in the English translation is not indented, it means that the translators are treating those words as Keizan's own. All words are treated as Keizan's own unless they have been positively identified by the translators as coming from an external source. The fact that no such identification has been made, however, does not guarantee an absence of quotation on Keizan's part.

(21) Brief quotes of other people or texts that appear within a discourse that is largely in Keizan's own words are indicated by quotation marks, in keeping with conventional English usage. When the external source of a

quotation is known, it is given in a note or (in the case of Zen sayings) a Glossary entry.

(22) Multi-sentence passages that are presented in the original Japanese text as Keizan's quotations of someone else, but have not been positively identified by the translators as actual quotations of an external source, are marked in the English by quotation marks that follow a colon, instead of the usual comma. In ordinary typesetting, such passages would be given as indented quotes, but in the present translation indentation at the primary level is reserved for a somewhat different, more specialized function; see conventions #17 and #18 above.

(23) When sentences and longer passages that appear in Chinese in the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku* have been identified as quotes of external sources, the Chinese source in question is named in a note. The source is not quoted in the note because that would entail a replication of the same Chinese text already found in the *Denkōroku*.

(24) When sentences and longer passages that appear in Japanese transcription (*yomikudashi* 読み下し) in the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku* have been identified as quotes of external sources, the Chinese source in question is named in a note. The Chinese original is also quoted in the note, so that readers can compare it to the Japanese transcription, which occasionally contains errors or questionable readings.

(25) The English translation is always based on the text of the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku*, not a Chinese source that it quotes in Japanese transcription (*yomikudashi* 読み下し), even if direct translation of the source would make the meaning clearer in English. Such clarification, when needed, is handled in notes to the translation.

## ABBREVIATIONS

**BGDJ** = *Bukkyōgo daijiten* 佛教語大辭典. Edited by Nakamura Hajime 中村元. 3 vols. Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1975.

**C.** = Chinese

**CBETA** = CBReader, v. 5.3. Copyright Heaven Chou. Taipei: Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, 2001–2016.

**DDB** = *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*. A. Charles Muller, ed. <<http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb>>. Edition of 2017/01/31.

**DKJ** = *Dai kanwa jiten* 大漢和辭典. Edited by Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次. Second Revised Edition. Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1989–1990.

**d.u.** = dates unknown

**DZZ** = Kawamura Kōdō 河村孝道, et al., ed. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* 道元禪師全集. 7 vols. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988–1993.

**HYDCD** = *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典. Edited by Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風. 12 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 1987.

**J.** = Japanese

**P.** = Pāli

**S.** = Sanskrit

**T** = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次朗 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡邊海旭, eds. 100 vols. Tokyo: Daizōkyōkai, 1924–1935.

**ZGDJ** = *Zengaku daijiten* 禪學大辭典. Edited by Zengaku Daijiten Hensanjo 禪學大辭典編纂所. 1978. New printing (*shinpan* 新版). Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1985.