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Introduction

John R. McRae

Upon its initial publication in 1988, the English translation of Heinrich Dumoulin's *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China,* instantly became an indispensable resource for both specialists and the audience of general readers interested in Zen Buddhism. A number of laudable features ensured the book's immediate success. First, especially in tandem with the second volume in the set treating Zen in Japan, the book's coverage was rewardingly comprehensive. For the first time English readers could trace the history of the school from its earliest conceptual and practical beginnings in India, through its formation and evolution as an innovative religious movement in China, and on to its efflorescence in Japan. The comprehensive nature of Dumoulin's coverage derived from his own intellectual vision, his determination to address all aspects of his chosen subject matter, from beginning to end.

Second, within this comprehensive sweep was embodied a most thorough devotion to critical scholarship, with the primary and secondary sources for every issue sifted carefully and evaluated on the basis of relevance, historical implication, and religious meaning. A brief glance at the annotation was enough to convince even the most skeptical reader that the author wrote, not only on the basis of his own scholarship, but after having made an extensive examination of the best secondary scholarship available in Japanese and European languages. Although the author claimed no experiential or sectarian identity as a Zen Buddhist—he remained a committed Christian all his life—this was clearly a book with a certain authority, one that could be trusted to offer the best interpretations possible at the time.

Third, rather than foregrounding the decades of research that went into making his book possible, Father Dumoulin presented the fruits of his analysis in a very accessible narrative. Using a style that, while never flashy, was always readable and workmanlike, Dumoulin outlined the evolution of Zen Buddhism in straightforward and easily comprehensible terms. There was nothing here of the intentionally obfuscatory tone taken in some of D. T. Suzuki's (1870–1966) works on Zen, for example, in which the author's goal was as much to mystify as to explain his subject matter.

Fourth, although Dumoulin did not write in order to inspire the achievement of some state of Buddhist enlightenment in his readers, as a Jesuit he was deeply sensitive to the spiritual dimensions of his subject matter. He was writing history, but at the same time he was clearly deeply moved by the religious insights achieved by different members of the Zen tradition. Indeed, judging by the pages of *Zen*

Buddhism: A History, India and China it would seem that placing these insights within an easily comprehensible framework and bringing them to the attentions of his readers was the primary goal of his many decades of scholarship.

In the background of his *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China* was a lengthy spiritual and intellectual path.[1] Expected by his family to study law, Dumoulin instead decided to enter the Jesuit novitiate at the age of nineteen. He became interested in matters Japanese during his novitiate years, but was also well educated in western philosophy and world religions. After a doctoral degree in 1929 from the Gregorian University in Rome, he began the formal study of Japanese in a one-year program at the University of Berlin. After this brief introduction he began his theological studies for the priesthood, in Holland; in 1933 he was ordained a priest in the Society of Jesus and in 1934 he completed his Licentiate in Theology. He was then sent to England for his tertiate, allowing him to learn spoken English, and then set off via the trans-Siberian railway to Japan in 1935.

When Dumoulin was able to complete his formal study of Japanese in only one year, his intellectual gifts prompted the regional superior, Father Hugo Lassalle (later renowned for promoting Zen meditation among westerners and in particular for Catholics), to select the young Dumoulin for higher studies. Although law was suggested to him, this was a course of study he had already rejected earlier in his life, and he asked to be allowed to study oriental religions. This unique request was accepted, and in 1936 Dumoulin enrolled at Tokyo Imperial University, the only foreign student in the Department of Religious Studies. In contrast to the Department of Indian and Buddhist Philosophy and the Department of Shintō Studies, the broad coverage and (as we would say now) multidisciplinary style of this Department provided a congenial home for the extremely well-educated young German scholar. His mentor was an Old Testament scholar and fluent German speaker named Ishibashi Tomonobu (Chishin) 石橋智信 (1886–1947), who always referred to Dumoulin as "Herr Doktor" and recommended that he study Kamo no Mabuchi 加茂真渕 (1697–1769), an important Shintō revivalist. After some difficulty learning to comprehend the formal language of Japanese professorial lectures, Dumoulin immersed himself in his studies and in 1943 produced a doctoral dissertation on Mabuchi. (The dissertation was defended in 1946.) During this period Dumoulin published a couple of articles and several reviews on subjects relating to Shintō, and beginning in 1942 he taught western philosophy at Sophia University and the Catholic seminary in Tokyo until wartime conditions made this impossible in 1944. He taught at Sophia until his retirement in 1976, and he continued to publish extensively on Shintō, Buddhism in the modern world, and the Buddhist-Christian encounter from the early 1940s until his death.

In 1940 Dumoulin wrote a review of Daisetz Teirarō Suzuki's *Zen Buddhism*

1. The following review of Dumoulin's scholarly life is indebted to Heisig 1985 and Watanabe 1985. Note that the latter is selective and does not include any works after 1985.

and Its Influence on Japanese Culture, which he begins with an impressive rehearsal of Suzuki's already very significant contributions to the field. Suggesting that the apparently disconnected essays in the volume actually constitute an integrated thesis, Dumoulin proceeds to refute several of Suzuki's most cherished points. Thus Dumoulin noted that the fondness for simplicity in Japanese art predated the advent of Zen, writing that "The profound influence of Zen on Japanese art is undeniable. However, other equally important factors must not be left out of account" (324). Although Dumoulin allows that Suzuki's work "makes inspiring reading," he "cannot approve of such simplification of facts and developments" (325).

By the erudition of the review, it is clear that Dumoulin had already made substantial studies of the Japanese Zen tradition. In the years that followed his interest in Zen Buddhism was further piqued by two young Zen priests who were fellow-students of his. With them he translated the *Mumonkan* 無門関 into German (1953, revised and republished in 1975), and at the same time he published his first historical account of Chinese Zen. This latter work was *The Development of Chinese Zen After the Sixth Patriarch in the Light of Mumonkan* (1953). In 1959 he finished his history of Zen Buddhism in German, which was published in English four years later as *A History of Zen Buddhism*. The present volume was first published in 1985 in German and in 1988 in English translation, then re-issued in a revised and expanded English version in 1994. It thus represents the fruits of over four decades of in-depth study, if we count from the date of publication of Dumoulin's review of D. T. Suzuki's book.

Before reviewing the different versions of Dumoulin's history of Zen Buddhism, it will be instructive to consider the implications of his other writings on Buddhism and Christianity. For the present purposes, the most salutary impression one gains from *Christianity Meets Buddhism* (1974) is the earnest and equitable fashion in which Dumoulin describes his goals:

> The relation between Buddhism and Christianity is regarded here in the light of their encounter and their dialogue, seeking to deepen mutual understanding. This dialogue has been carried on in openness and respect, and has created an atmosphere of mutual interest and growth. And since the plurality of religions is assumed as a fact, committed Buddhists and committed Christians can meet together in dialogue as equitable partners, and seek to understand and to learn from each other. (p. 2)

A few lines below, Dumoulin might well be describing his own attitude toward Buddhism:

> The Westerner often finds himself of two minds about Asia and Asian culture: he experiences a strong leaning, and at the same time an inner resistance toward Eastern matters. Far Eastern spirituality enchants him, but appears enigmatic in many respects. The religion of the Buddha seems particularly paradoxical, not so much with regard to its complicated doctrines as to the many faces of its living practice. (pp. 3–4)

And, finally, on the goals of the Buddhist-Christian dialogue itself:

> Unity is not the goal of the dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism, neither syncretistically as an integration of one religion into another, nor as a sublimation of both religions into a higher unity. The goals of the dialogue, to put it simply, are to gain and deepen mutual understanding and cooperation, on the personal level, for the common welfare of mankind. (p. 35)

This fairly captures, I believe, the nobiliy of Dumoulin's scholarly and personal quest. As a committed Catholic, there was never any question of his becoming Buddhist. (He attempted the practice of zazen for a time later in life, but stopped because of the physical strain.) Nor was there any sense that he wrote of Buddhism, and in particular Zen Buddhism, in order either to undercut it or to promote it. Instead, he stood as a wonder-struck outsider to Buddhism, simultaneously baffled and awed by what he saw to be the deep spiritual truths its participants experienced. For Dumoulin the benefits of this deepened personal understanding of Buddhism by Christians and of Christianity by Buddhists were self-evident, and in his *Understanding Buddhism* (1994) he underlines this by writing, "Dialogue has become a necessity not only for harmonious coexistence and cooperation between people of different religious cultures, but for the more basic reason that the questions that haunt people of all cultures cannot be satisfactorily addressed if the interreligious horizon is closed off." (p. 11)

Dumoulin begins his *Understanding Buddhism* with an enumeration of some of the misconceptions Westerners (by which he means Western Christians) have about Buddhism, then defines the goal of his book as "to provide an antidote for these misunderstandings" (p. 1). He writes:

> My hope is that the discussion of the selected key themes will help remove stumbling blocks that have prevented Western and especially Christian inquirers from participating as fully as they might in what I consider to be one of the greatest spiritual and intellectual adventures of our time. (p. 3)

One buddhologist who has reviewed *Understanding Buddhism,* Jan Nattier, was particularly harsh in her assessment of the accuracy of Dumoulin's descriptions of Buddhism. She points out that in working to remove the stumbling blocks just mentioned, Dumoulin "does not hesitate to remake Buddhism itself in order to do so" (Nattier 1996). In declaring such practices as *asubha-bhāvanā* (meditation on the impure, using such objects as human corpses) to be a "sick obsession," in asserting that in Abhidharma scholasticism the sense of *dukkha* or suffering had become "distorted," in relying on discredited scholarship to assert that Buddhism did not deny the reality of a "true self," in favoring knowledge over the defeat of desire as the only means to liberation, and in misrepresenting the vows of Amitābha, Dumoulin commits serious errors in his presentation of Buddhism. Nattier's final conclusion is that *Understanding Buddhism* should not be taken as an objective account of central issues in the Buddhist tradition, but "as a primary source—that is, as an autobiographical essay that reveals how

one Christian thinker, aided and abetted by a number of Westernized Japanese Buddhists, has found usable ideas and practices within the Buddhist repertoire."

Our purpose here is to evaluate Dumoulin's research on Chinese Zen Buddhism, and this critical evaluation serves as a useful warning. That is, there is an undeniable nobility in Dumoulin's professed goals; one can only be moved by the sincerity and genuine goodness of his life's mission. However, to what extent did his identity and mission as a Christian get in the way of his understanding of Buddhism? Or, given that much of of the scholarship on which he constructed his interpretation was done in the first half of the twentieth century, to what extent were his sources for the understanding of Indian and East Asian religions simply too old to support the weight of his massive project as we move forward into the twenty-first century?

It is interesting, for the historian of ideas, to see how Dumoulin's researches on Indian and Chinese Zen Buddhism progressed from *The Development of Chinese Zen* (1953), to *A History of Zen Buddhism* (1963), and finally to *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China* (1988; revised ed. 1994). The choice of the *Mumonkan* as his initial entrée to Zen studies was as understandable as it was momentous. Far more popular in Japanese Zen than it ever was in China, the *Mumonkan* is a concise yet provocative product of thirteenth-century Sung-dynasty Chinese Zen. Consisting of forty-eight *kōans* or "public cases" presenting encounters between enlightened Zen sages and their interlocutors, this text was in several ways a propitious choice.

Even though Dumoulin had twice abstained from taking up the study of law, here he studied a religious document whose basic format was derived from the legal encounters between judge and plaintiffs. He does not comment on the irony, though, and the forty-one pages of his basic exposition in *The Development of Chinese Zen* represent his first published summary of "The Golden Age of Zen during the T'ang Era," "The Five Houses," and "The Development of Koan Zen in the Sung Era." Thus we see, in his very first significant publication on the history of Chinese Zen, a core group of subjects that was to remain central to his two later volumes. When comparing these three works it becomes apparent that Dumoulin transformed his initial impressions primarily by the addition of new data and new subject matter; even though it would no doubt be a simple matter to detect areas where the *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China* of 1988 differs substantially from the works of 1953 and 1969, overall there is something of a straight-line progression from one to the other. This is particularly noticeable in the latter two volumes, in which even the language of the 1988 opus is borrowed from the 1969 work.

If anything, Dumoulin's contribution to *The Development of Chinese Zen* (49 pages, if we include the bibliography as his) was overshadowed by Ruth Fuller Sasaki's (1892–1967), given her translator's preface of twenty-two pages, primary text citations of thirty-four pages, and character glossaries of forty-five pages. As translator, editor, and publisher (through the First Zen Institute of New York, which she funded), Sasaki's contribution to *The Development of Chinese Zen* was

huge. In particular, her decision to include Chinese characters within the text made it a wonderful resource for serious students of the Zen tradition.

Beginning in 1956, well after she translated Dumoulin's treatise on the *Mumonkan,* Ruth Fuller Sasaki put together a team of scholars and practititioners that was going to transform Zen studies in a most fundamental manner. The most important Japanese scholars to participate in this team were Iriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高 (1910–1998), a specialist in Chinese literature who was interested in Chinese Zen texts because of their extensive use of colloquial language, and Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 (b. 1922), a specialist in Chinese Zen whom Dumoulin justifiably describes as "the world's foremost scholar in the history of Chinese Zen" (xii). Iriya was famous for his correspondence in Chinese with Hu Shih 胡適 (1891–1962) regarding Zen texts and terminology, and in 1967 Yanagida was to publish his magisterial *Studies in the Historical Works of Early Zen* (Yanagida 1967), which used Dunhuang documents and other sources to examine the emergence and evolution of Chinese Zen during the seventh to tenth centuries.

The most important American scholar to participate in Sasaki's team was Philip B. Yampolsky (1920–1996), whose translation of the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Yampolsky 1967) included a lengthy introduction that was certainly the best single piece of academic writing on Chinese Zen at the time. Other American participants in Sasaki's working group included Burton Watson, later to become the premier translator of Chinese historical and philosophical texts, and the poet Gary Snyder. This team produced a seminal English translation of the *Record of Linji,* the recorded sayings text depicting the great Linji Yixuan (d. 867), as well as a translation of the *Sayings of Layman Pang,* another very lively Song-dynasty text. However, the legacy of the team that Ruth Fuller Sasaki gathered at Daitokuji in Kyoto should not be measured by its immediate output, but by how it served as a catalyst for the thorough re-evaluation of Chinese Zen texts.

Working under Sasaki's autocratic and sometimes idiosyncratic supervision, the members of this team were provided by Sasaki with financial support until her death, when it emerged—very much contrary to their expectations—that her funds had been exhausted. Due to sectarian rivalries, the participants in the team soon found themselves without even access to the extensive library of note cards they had created, the beginnings of a database on Zen terminology, biography, and texts. (This situation festered for so long that, by the time the resources produced under Sasaki's support became available to scholars they were long since obsolete.) Although the situation after Sasaki's death was frustrating, Yanagida and Iriya had forged a partnership that was not to be stopped. With Yanagida at Hanazono College and Iriya at Nagoya and later Kyoto University, they began a joint seminar in Chinese Zen texts that led to a very substantial number of publications and the thorough re-interpretation of Chinese Zen.

Iriya's initial introduction to Zen texts came through his interest in the evolution of colloquial Chinese language, as already mentioned above. Gifted

with a prodigious memory and a great thirst for relevant material, he read through the entire corpus of Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang looking for new data. In this process he encountered Zen texts attributed to Bodhidharma and from the Northern, Southern, and Oxhead schools of Chinese Zen. When he consulted Japanese editions of Zen texts containing similar material, though, he realized that medieval and premodern Japanese Zen teachers had simply not recognized the colloquial Chinese expressions that abound in these texts, let alone understood their actual meaning. Instead, the Japanese Zen tradition had read Chinese texts as best they could from their knowledge of literary Chinese, and the differences between literary and colloquial language often resulted in drastic misinterpretations. To give only one example, it is common even today in Zen monastic training situations for masters to shout "Katz!" at their students. However, the word in question here did not mean "to shout 'katz' loudly," but simply a verb meaning "to shout." It was as if English readers read "he yelled" and took it to mean "he made a loud sound of 'yell'"! (The traditional misreading is given in Dumoulin 1953, 9.) This example may seem trivial, but since errors such as this were compounded the result was substantial.

Iriya and Yanagida edited a series of Chinese Zen texts, translating them into modern Japanese and providing them with substantial annotation explaining their terminology, contents, and implications. They insisted that the Japanese translations not be merely transpositions of the Chinese into formal Japanese grammar, but rather a new style of rendering the colloquial Chinese into fluent modern Japanese. The first text to receive this treatment was, once again, the *Record of Linji,* which Yanagida published in 1961. (In the course of his lengthy career Yanigida has repeatedly reworked his understanding of the *Record of Linji,* to date publishing five separate translations of the text!) The most substantial series edited by Iriya and Yanagida was *Zen no goroku* (Recorded Sayings of Zen), which included their own annotated translations and those of other scholars. Texts published in this series include the *Treatise on the Two Entrances and Four Practices* attributed to Bodhidharma; the first two "transmission of the lamp" historical texts of Zen, both associated with the Northern school; and more than a dozen other volumes. This project, which was initiated in 1969 and saw its final volume appear in 1981 (three volumes of the planned-for twenty will never appear, unfortunately), allowed at last for the study of Chinese Zen texts using sound editions and philological explanations.

At the same time Yanagida was transforming the study of Chinese Zen with his research publications, which were voluminous, insightful, and inventive. In the days before copy machines, let alone computers, he and his wife twice hand-copied the *Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall* (*Tsu-t'ang chi,* or *Sodōshū* in Japanese, a "transmission of the lamp" history from 952 that was preserved along with the printing blocks for the Korean edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon). Unraveling the secrets of the *Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall* became his life's mission, and in order to accomplish it he became the world's leading authority on Zen texts from Dunhuang. Having described his scholarship in

detail elsewhere (McRae 1993–94) here I will only point out that his writings explored many facets of Chinese Zen, from the earliest period through its most glorious efflorescence in the Song dynasty. Within this monumental oeuvre, though, it is fair to say that Yanagida considers the Hongzhou school of Mazu Daoyi (709–88) as representing the first emergence of the uniquely "Zen" style of repartée known as "encounter dialogue."[2] For Yanagida, it was with Mazu that Zen came into its maturity, that it developed its most distinctive style of encounter-based spiritual training, and that it came to be embraced most fully by and within Chinese culture.

For some reason Yanagida never had many Japanese students, but he helped train a succession of westerners. Philip Yampolsky introduced me to Yanagida in spring 1973, and I was fortunate enough to work with him for the next two years. For the first year or more of this time I visited him at his house once a week, reading texts and discussing Chinese Zen with him. Those visits are among the most cherished memories of my entire life, because of Yanagida's immense learning, his easy-going manner, and his burning desire to make Zen Buddhism better understood. He never accepted any payment, and yet he welcomed my often foolish questions and strange misreadings with a charming equanimity. Every visit included a cup or two of *matcha,* the bitter green tea used in the tea ceremony and accompanied by a small sweet or two, made either by himself or his wonderful wife. (Mrs. Yanagida became a very prominent tea teacher, and when the two traveled to the United States in 1989 Yanagida was amused that she had over two hundred students attending her classes, while only about thirty or so attended his lectures!)

Just as I was about to leave Japan, Bernard Faure arrived. Yanagida described him as a "young French student," and neither of us realized at the time what a remarkable impact Faure would have on Zen studies. (Faure and I did not meet until years later.) Urs App was the next major western figure to arrive, and this gifted Swiss scholar eventually became Yanagida's closest colleague at Hanazono and the Associate Director of the International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism (IRIZ;; iriz.hanazono.ac.jp). While Yanagida continued to write his essays, articles, and books by hand, he quickly recognized the value of computer technology in the study of such a complicated field as Chinese Zen, and he supported App's innovations in a range of activities in the creation of electronic texts and online databases. Along with Lewis Lancaster, then of the University of California, Berkeley, App and his colleague Christian Wittern (now of the Institute for Humanistic Studies, Kyoto University) played a very significant role in the development of electronic Buddhist texts. In addition to providing invaluable technical assistance to the emerging Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts Association (CBETA; www.cbeta.org), App and Wittern created an array of databases specifically related to Zen.

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2. "Encounter dialogue" was my translation of Yanagida's *kien mondō* 機縁問答, not a widely used phrase in Chinese texts but his desriptive for Chinese Zen dialogue. See Yanagida 1983.

It is not clear how much Dumoulin was influenced by these developments. Although he was obviously deeply impressed by reading Yanagida's works, and he was aware of the impact Iriya's reinterpretations of Chinese Zen texts by the rules of colloquial Chinese usage (Dumoulin 1992, 70), Dumoulin was not a regular participant in the seminars held by Iriya and Yanagida over the years. There are no references to Iriya or Yanagida in Dumoulin's *A History of Zen Buddhism* of 1963, which was written (in German in 1959) before Ruth Fuller Sasaki's team had disbanded but well before Yanagida published his *magnum opus* of 1967, and before Yampolsky published his translation and study of the *Platform Sūtra* in the same year. Nor does one see much evidence of the research on Shen-hui and early Zen by Hu Shih, for whom only two articles are listed in the bibliography.

In contrast, Dumoulin's 1963 bibliography includes eleven different citations of articles, translations, and books by D. T. Suzuki, and it is clear from reading the text that Dumoulin had very mixed views of the value of Suzuki's contributions. He wrote, for example, that Suzuki's books were

> distinguished by lively suggestiveness, abundance of material, and absorbing exposition but not by clear order and transparent logic, have contributed to conceptual confusion. Over and over Suzuki stresses the independence and incomparability of Zen as nothing other than personal experience which, in its pure subjectivity, forgoes all sub- and superstructures, appears spontaneously without cause, and is inexpressible in words. Indeed, this experience is so far beyond words that it transcends and embraces all philosophy and theology. All clear delineations vanish in Suzuki's expositions for his European-American audience. (33)

I have already suggested above that explaining Buddhism to a Western Christian audience was Dumoulin's primary intellectual and humanistic goal, and his frustration at Suzuki's impact in making his life's work all the more difficult is almost palpable. In spite of this reaction, Suzuki's influence is nevetheless evident on virtually every page of the first few chapters of Dumoulin's narration, if only in the choice of topics. Suzuki was so prolific and so compelling that his works became an inescapable resource for the Jesuit father, a scholar compelled to consider every facet of the evidence available. Suzuki had effectively set the agenda with his discussions of the perfection of wisdom, emptiness, suchness, and other theoretical issues of Indian Buddhism, and so Dumoulin provided his readers with a more balanced consideration of these same topics.

In the beginning of his treatment of Chinese Zen in his *A History of Zen Buddhism*, and at the very beginning of his *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China,* Dumoulin introduces the famous 1953 debate between Hu Shih and D. T. Suzuki over the proper way to study Chinese Zen. Although he never seriously critiques Hu Shih's position—a fact to which we will return just below—in each case he uses the occasion to criticize the inherent contradiction and confusing quality of Suzuki's approach. In *A History of Zen Buddhism* he writes:

> Suzuki emphasizes the time- and space-transcending character of the Zen experience to which no historical research can have access. But when in the course of his reply, as in all his works, he cites copiously the words and anecdotes of the early Chinese Zen masters, he nonetheless places his reader in a definite intellectual milieu. It is therefore not a matter of indifference in our interpretation of Zen to become acquainted with the Chinese heroes of the T'ang and Sung periods who figure in these anecdotes, and to gain some knowledge of their education and their view of life, together with their customs and ancestral faith. We are thus driven to historical inquiry. (52–53)

It certainly seems fair to think of Father Dumoulin himself as "driven to historical inquiry." In the present volume (see pp. ix–xx) Dumoulin is perhaps more measured in his comments, and he has the benefit of intervening decades of scholarship on mysticism and religious experience. He writes, "But even though the Zen experience forever eludes the reach of historical investigation, history has an important role to play in the study of Zen" (xix–xx). And, only an accomplished intellectual with a profound empathy for religious experience could have put so much meaning into the line, "Human understanding is not simply a matter of the intellect" (xxi).

Nevertheless, Dumoulin battles repeatedly with Suzuki in the early chapters of his book, often countering Suzuki's vague or mistaken explanations explicitly, sometimes merely presenting his own very different style of analysis. Thus Dumoulin corrects Suzuki on the dissociation of Zen and yoga (21); works to include Suzuki's views on *prajñā* and the identity of the bodhisattva (31); strives at the beginning of his chapter, "The Mahāyāna Sūtras and Zen," to counter or correct what he feels are Suzuki's misinterpretations; and critiques the internal contradiction of Suzuki's view of the ahistoricity of Zen (63; this repeats the material from *A History of Zen Buddhism,* 52–53, introduced just above). Then, suddenly, Suzuki simply disappears from the pages of Dumoulin's exposition: The only substantive references that I can find in the remainder of his book pertain to the psychological process of enlightenment as it is experienced through *kōan* training (254); a textual reference (315); and a term used for "questions about things" in early Zen texts (318–19). The other references to Suzuki are inconsequential citations in the annotation (151 n. 46, 207 n. 49, 263 n. 32 and 49, 292 n. 79 and 81, 293 n. 82, 295 n. 115, 338 n. 113, 122, and 123; 339 n., 129–31 and 136; and 340 n.150).

Dumoulin's treatment of D. T. Suzuki's ideas and contributions is in stark contrast to his response to Hu Shih's ideas. In the debate between Suzuki the experientialist and Hu Shih the historian, Dumoulin attempts to make an even-handed assessment, but he saw himself as a critical historian who focused on the spiritual dimension of mankind. Although I have not encountered any clear statement of this—one suspects Dumoulin would have been too modest to make any claims in this regard—his life mission implies that tried to be better than both Suzuki and Hu, more sensitive to spiritual issues than the former and a better

historian than the latter. At the very least, his mission was to perform the best possible historical analysis so as to explore the spiritual dimensions of mankind. In the process, he seems to have overlooked any potential bias that might have crept into his work from his acceptance of Hu Shih's scholarship.

One of the reasons writing this Introduction to Dumoulin's India and China volume has been both delightful and difficult for me individually is the dialogue in which he and I have engaged in print. Most conspicuously, in my recent *Seeing through Zen* (2003, 103–7 and 120) I used poor Father Dumoulin as a foil for trying to change the way scholars think about the Chinese Zen tradition. I criticized his view of the "Golden Age of the T'ang" as romantic, pointing out that the romantic appreciation for one aspect of human culture frequently carries with it a cynical disregard for something else. In this case, the romantic imagination of the great T'ang-dynasty masters—Ma-tsu, Chao-chou, Lin-chi, etc.—allowed the Zen of that period to be put up on a pedestal and idealized as a great efflorescence of human spontaneity and inspired religious behavior. All this would be well and good were it not for the inevitable under-appreciation of the riches of Sung-dynasty Zen in the writings of Dumoulin and others. I argued forcefully that we should look at the myriad developments of Sung-dynasty Zen not in terms of the degeneration of a once-creative tradition, but as the positive ramifications of a strong religious spirit that Zen teachers carried with them into that period. Also, when we consider that Dumoulin only devoted to the discussion of Sung-dynasty Zen about five percent (pp. 123–36 out of 290 pages) of his 1969 history (which treated Indian, China, and Japan in a single volume) and only about fifteen percent of his 1994 history (pp. 243–96 out of 340 pages, or almost double that if we count the volume on Japanese Zen), we are justified in questioning the fairness of his coverage.

Also, Dumoulin was by no means the only source of this bias, only "the most convenient example of a general style of interpretation" (McRae 2003, 120). After mentioning works by Arthur F. Wright, Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, Jacques Gernet, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, I pointed out that

> A number of different historiographical factors have concatenated to create this situation, ranging from Hu Shih's scholarship, Confucian prejudices, overemphasis of the novelty of "popular" or vernacular religious developments in the post-Song period, and the misapplication of Japanese sectarian models to the Chinese subject matter. (120)

Here I would like to focus on only one of these issues, because it will help the reader appreciate the value and limitations of the volume now under consideration: the role of Hu Shih's scholarship in Dumoulin's exposition.

Based on an extensive examination of Hu Shih's research on Shen-hui and early Chinese Zen (McRae 2001), it is now apparent that Hu Shih only studied Shen-hui in order to show how Chinese culture threw off the yoke of Indian cultural imperialism. Hu Shih was motivated by a kind of missionary impulse, to retake Chinese culture for the Chinese, and he saw in Buddhism a foreign

power not unlike the imperialist states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Projecting his love for modern China onto the past and working explicitly as an instrumentalist historian (i.e., one who creates an image of a certain past in order to move his readers into a certain understanding of the present), Hu Shih fundamentally misperceived Shen-hui as a revolutionary whose teaching of sudden enlightenment functioned as the key to the elimination of Buddhism from Chinese soil. Hu Shih saw the "Chinese Rennaissance" of the Sung dynasty as the recrudescence of Chinese culture after many centuries of Buddhist domination. My point in critiquing Dumoulin was to show how, if one accepted the idealistic notion of the T'ang-dynasty greats uncritically, one would also be inclined to accept the cynical devaluation of Sung-dynasty Buddhism as degenerate and corrupt.

In fact, as argued in *Seeing through Zen,* the vitality of the Sung-dynasty "climax paradigm" of Zen Buddhism was so apparent that this dualistic notion of T'ang spontaneity and Sung decline simply cannot be sustained. My first "Rule of Zen Studies" reads "It's not true, and therefore it's more important!" precisely in response to Hu Shih's position that Zen texts were 98% false and could therefore be rejected. This is of course not to say that everything that is important in the Chinese (or Japanese) Zen tradition is also false; to assert the converse of the rule would be to do serious violence to its heuristic intent.

Using Dumoulin's writings as a foil for criticism in this way was not in any way disrespectful. Certainly, it is not much different from his own repeated criticisms of Suzuki, a figure toward whom Dumoulin felt both admiration and frustration. My feelings toward Dumoulin are much the same: respect and gratitude toward a great pioneer in our field, but frustration at what I feel are the limitations of his work. For example, I was immensely complimented when Dumoulin relied substantially on my research in writing his *Zen Buddhism in the 20th Century* (Dumoulin 1992, 81 and 160–61), and even more so when he included a "Supplement" on "The Northern School of Chinese Zen" in the 1994 republication of *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China,* in which he drew heavily on my own work and that of Bernard Faure. Although complimented, nevertheless I cannot overlook Dumoulin's inability to comprehend the full implications of my position regarding the retrospective attribution of texts to the so-called fifth and fourth patriarchs, Hung-jen (601–674) and Tao-hsin (580–651). Where my original point was to suggest that we should not use these texts to produce a set of sequential images of Zen patriarchs, each in perfect succession like a "string of pearls," Dumoulin reduces the relevance of this interpretation to a minor question of textual authenticity (315). It is as if the historical pattern in which he works, in which his goal is to explain the spiritual life of every major Zen patriarch as fully as possible, would not allow him to recognize the full implications of the theory with which he nominally agreed.

It is also frustrating that Dumoulin knows of the proper reading of the verse attributed to Shen-hsiu in the *Platform Sūtra,* but steadfastly refused to consider its implications. In his chapter on the *Platform Sūtra,* Dumoulin quotes the verse attributed to Shen-hsiu as:

The body is the Bodhi tree,
The mind is like a clear mirror.
At all times we must strive to polish it,
And must not let the dust collect. (132)

Although many authors have made this mistake (cf. Yampolsky 1967, 130), this reading is simply incorrect: the second line clearly reads "The mind is like a bright mirror's stand." This might seem at first to make no sense, but without reading it in this fashion the second line of the reply attributed to Hui-neng makes even less sense:

Originally there is no tree of enlightenment,
Nor is there a stand with a clear mirror.
From the beginning not one thing exists;
*Where, then, is a grain of dust to cling? (*133)

The introductory and concluding chapters of my 1986 book on the Northern school, which Dumoulin uses extensively in his Supplement, are devoted to explaining the meaning of this reference to the mirror's stand and what the implications are for the understanding of the *Platform Sūtra* and the evolution of early Zen. Dumoulin even quotes the crucial passage that provides the key to the entire puzzle, a description of votive lamps in Shen-hsiu's *Treatise on the Contemplation of Mind* (*Kanjinron* in Japanese pronunciation), but he was unable to or uninterested in considering its implications so as to reevaluate his interpretation of the *Platform Sūtra* and early Zen (326).

Here, because we are both scholars dedicated to the advance of learning, I have commented on Dumoulin's failure to indicate a full appreciation of my work in his 1994 Supplement. In fact, I am told, he was fully cognizant of the broader implications involved, but recognized that he could not respond fully without completely reconceptualizing his entire project. In a sense, the gap between his exposition and the inventive insights of Bernard Faure is even wider; for example, compare the absence of any serious appreciation of Faure's seminal 1983 contribution on the hagiography of Bodhidharma in Dumoulin's Supplement with that in my Seeing through Zen (McRae 2003, 14 and 156 n.14, and 158 n.4). This sort of intellectual leap-frogging is a natural outgrowth of the scholarly process.

Based on all this, how should the reader use this book? It is certainly an excellent reference work—where else could we go to learn the dates of a Zen monk, or to verify the title of a Zen text, or to read the traditional account of an encounter between two sages. It may be many years before we have a similarly comprehensive treatment of the history of Zen Buddhism to consult in English. However, its title notwithstanding, Heinrich Dumoulin's *History of Zen Buddhism: India and China* is actually *not* a history of Zen Buddhism in India and China. It should *not* be used as a guide to the historical development of Zen Buddhism in those countries. It is *not* a reliable source for understanding Zen Buddhism in India and China.

This does not mean that Dumoulin's *History* is without uses—far from it. The reader should simply understand what sort of tool it is and for what purposes it may reasonably be put. Father Dumoulin spent decades laboring to decipher and transmit the legendary accounts of Zen Buddhism, using the best scholarship available to him. His work is a monument to the evolution of the image of Zen Buddhism within twentieth-century scholarship, principally that of Japan, as seen through the eyes of someone consciously striving to make Buddhism comprehensible to a Western Christian audience. Subsequent decades of scholarship have revealed the idealism of his interpretive eye. We have learned that the legendary accounts Dumoulin so painstakingly compiled need to be understood in terms of mythopoeic creation rather than historical narration. We have learned to see the gaps in his story, the romanticism of his perspective. We have learned at least some of the complexities of the evidence he used, and we have become aware of vast quantities of evidence that he was unable to use or in which he was not interested.

The Zen tradition makes much of the ancestors, and for Zen studies Dumoulin is one of the most important patriarchs of recent generations. If I have dismissed the value of his efforts with respect to the purpose for which they were intended, it is only through a deep sense of respect. He made it possible for us to arrive at where we are today, for which we all owe him a debt greater than Mount Sumeru, the king of mountains. We have of course not "arrived" anywhere yet in Zen studies, but Dumoulin's *History* is an appropriate tool for our self-reflection as participants in the study of Zen, and even more broadly as inheritors of the East-West cultural traditions of the twentieth century. To proceed without that self-reflection would be a variation on the "intellectual pathology" which academic students of Zen (but by definition not practititioners) may contract (see McRae 2003, 10).

It is simply that Dumoulin's *History of Zen Buddhism: India and China* can no longer be considered a piece of secondary scholarship. It is now a primary text, a source for us to examine so that we might better understand ourselves. That is, by reading this book we may be able to learn how the field of Zen studies developed over the course of the twentieth century. Rather than swatting ourselves in the head with this rather sizeable tome, we should use it as a treasure trove for the examination of our own intellectual origins.

It is with this in mind that I hold my palms together, in the gesture of respect known as *añjali-mudrā* in Sanskrit and *gasshō* in Japanese.

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