

A Daoist Immortal Among Zen Monks: Chen Tuan, Yinyuan Longqi, Emperor Reigen and the Ōbaku Text, *Tōzuihen*

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WITH THE ARRIVAL of the Chinese Ōbaku 黄檗 masters in the mid-seventeenth century, late Ming/early Qing Buddhism made its appearance in Japan.¹ Not only were Ming Buddhist models brought to Japan, but an enclave of Ming culture was established at Manpukuji 萬福寺, which provided the Japanese with a domestic simulacrum of China. Since travel to the Continent was prohibited by the bakufu authorities, Manpukuji was the local source for access to the cultural cachet of China. The Chinese cultural prestige of the Ōbaku monks was one of their greatest assets, to which they made frequent recourse throughout their history in Japan. As we will see, it is suggested that Ōbaku monks in the generation following the death in 1673 of Japanese Ōbaku founder Yinyuan Longqi 隱元隆琦 (1592–1673; Jp. Ingen Ryūki), attempted to forge a connection to the imperial house by making strategic use (or construction, as the case may be) of a text called *Tōzuihen* 桃蘂編, in which a Daoist immortal is appropriated into a Japanese context. The *Tōzuihen* tells the story of the immortal Chen 陳 who was said to have presaged Yinyuan’s arrival in Japan, and predicted that it would herald the birth of a new emperor, later understood to be Emperor Reigen 靈元 (1654–1732; r. 1663–1687) who was born during the year Yinyuan arrived in Nagasaki (1654). The immortal, who originally appears as Chen Bo 陳博 (also known as Chen Wuyan 無煙, or “No Smoke”) is reinterpreted in the

¹ Michel Mohr phrases it: “In a sense it can be said that with Yinyuan’s disembarkation on Japanese soil Ming Buddhism as a whole set foot on the islands. Yinyuan brought with him the distinctive contradictions and sectarian consciousness that had arisen in China since the Song dynasty” (Mohr 1994, p. 348).

Tōzuihen to be none other than Chen Tuan 陳搏 (n.d.–989), the well-known prophetic immortal born in the late Tang period. The background and possible reasons for this reinterpretation will be investigated below.

Owing to the nature of this text, which exists only in manuscript, is little known outside (or even inside) the Ōbaku school, and which is shrouded in mystery—perhaps much of it deliberate—we should probably make clear exactly what is true and what is myth. Of course between these two poles of established truth and probable myth will be much of which we are uncertain. It is hoped that the readers may arrive at their own conclusions based on the evidence presented.

We know that the text was compiled by Fujiwara Akimitsu 藤原韶光 (1663–1729)² and then presented to Reigen in 1705 as Reigen’s preface to the work makes clear. While it certainly seems that the emperor did have an interest in the text, the *Tōzuihen* was never published, and likely did not circulate beyond those immediately concerned. On the Ōbaku side, Yinyuan, the founding patriarch of the Japanese Ōbaku school and one of the text’s protagonists, had died thirty years before its presentation to Reigen. Although the text proclaims that it was written in response to the prognostication that Yinyuan received in 1652—two years before his arrival in Japan—it is not at all certain that Yinyuan was cognizant of, or even received, a prophetic verse from Chen Tuan. Also, Yinyuan’s relationship with the supposed immortal is unclear. An immortal with the surname Chen and the appellation “No Smoke” appears in the works of Yinyuan, although he is not identified as Chen Tuan. The deliberate identification of these two figures is one of the themes found in the *Tōzuihen*. In summary, the presentation and composition of the *Tōzuihen* can be discussed with a degree of certitude, but the text’s provenance and what it claims for itself are not readily verifiable.

The *Tōzuihen* is based on a calculated and creative interpretation of a short and cryptic verse that was said to have been pronounced by the immortal Chen while Yinyuan was still residing in Fujian. One may question what might compel a group of Ōbaku monks to present such a work to an emperor—a text that tells a story which would have occurred over fifty years prior. It is not perhaps unreasonable to consider that when Emperor

² Fujiwara was the clan name of Akimitsu, although his family name was Kadenokōji 勘解由小路. The Kadenokōji was a branch of the Hino 日野 line of the Northern Fujiwara. For more on this lineage, see Ichiko et al. 1993, vol. 1, p. 482. In the *Kokusho jinmei jiten* 国書人名辞典, the *Tōzuihen* (1705) is listed as one of Akimitsu’s works. The *Tōzuihen* has three chapters attributed to Akimitsu, including the longest, the “Chinsen kōden” 陳仙広伝.

Go-Mizunoo 後水尾 (1596–1680; r. 1611–1629) died in 1680 and the young Ōbaku school lost its staunchest imperial supporter (Tokugawa Ietsuna 徳川家綱 [1641–1680], who was a strong proponent of Ōbaku from the beginning, also died in 1680), the Ōbaku monks made an attempt to further perpetuate imperial ties by means of the *Tōzuihen* in the hopes of securing their place in an increasingly uncertain future.

Academic inquiry into the *Tōzuihen* dates back to 1990 when Terrence Russell published two articles that dealt with this heretofore little-known text.³ While Russell's work is important for bringing this text under scholarly scrutiny, he largely eschews a critical approach to the *Tōzuihen* which can be shown to have clear political agendas. In "Chen Tuan at Mount Huangbo: A Spirit-Writing Cult in Late Ming China," Russell takes the text as "a case history of spirit-writing activities among a group of high-ranking monks" and expressly states that "[M]y aim has been to recreate the manner in which these men related to a number of 'immortals' or 'transcendents.'"⁴ In addition, Russell does not address the possibility that Chen Tuan and Chen Bo are two different figures. In "Chen Tuan's Veneration of the Dharma: A Study in Hagiographic Modification," Russell does not question the text's authenticity, the ambiguous identity of the immortal, and the political exigencies of the text's production. While he delves in detail into the background of Chen and his associations with prognostication, he misses the distinction that Chen Tuan was never traditionally a spirit who communicated through the planchette (although Vincent Goossaert demonstrates that Chen Tuan had become a prominent figure for prognostication in this manner during the Republican period).⁵

Other studies, while not focusing strictly on the *Tōzuihen* per se, have instead examined it within a certain aspect of Ōbaku history. In his informative article "Leaving for the Rising Sun: The Historical Background of Yinyuan Longqi's Migration to Japan in 1654," Jiang Wu briefly considers it within the larger discussion of Yinyuan's emigration to Japan. He aptly questions the place of a Daoist immortal among the Ōbaku monks, considering their strict claims to Chan orthodoxy, but the text itself is not held up to a sustained critical scrutiny as the *Tōzuihen* is peripheral to his argument. The most thorough and measured treatment of the *Tōzuihen* in any language is Guanchao Lin's article "Ingen Ryūki to Nihon no kōshitsu: *Tōzuihen* o megutte" 隠元隆琦と日本の皇室：桃薬編をめぐって (Ingen Ryūki and the

³ See Russell 1990a, pp. 54–72; and Russell 1990b, pp. 107–40.

⁴ Russell 1990b, p. 109.

⁵ Goossaert 2007, p. 311.

Japanese Imperial House: A Look at the *Tōzuihen*). Within his investigation, Lin draws on a wide variety of sources and presents keen insights into the background and production of the text, all the while effectively fleshing out the Ōbaku connection with the imperial house. This current article, however, draws on the findings of these previous studies while also focusing on the central character of the text—the immortal Chen—and considers his identity within the issue of cultural appropriation. The late seventeenth century was a critical time for both the Ōbaku school and the imperial house as the former, within a span of eight years, lost its founder Yinyuan, and two most powerful patrons—Tokugawa Ietsuna and the emperor Go-Mizunoo, while the imperial house languished under strict bakufu suppression. In this milieu, there just happened to appear in Japan a text with the potential to redeem those situations; the text is called the *Tōzuihen*, and its main hero is the immortal Chen.

Chen Tuan: Background and Associations

What can be said with certainty is that there are a limited number of historical facts about Chen Tuan.⁶ While his historicism is not in contention, it was the legendary accounts and posthumous associations surrounding him that contributed to his lasting legacy. Those most conspicuous facts about Chen present him as an adept of *qi* 氣 (variously rendered as “pneuma,” “breath,” or “vital force”) control methods, a master of physiognomy (*xiangshu* 相術) for which he is credited with writing the classic, *Fengjian* 風鑑 (Mirror of Auras). These powers, one may suppose, were attained through his cultivation of inner alchemy, described thus in his biography: “[F]or more than twenty years he practiced absorption of cosmic energy and abstention from cereals, and only lived on several cups of wine every day.”⁷ Perhaps he is most patently associated with the formulation of the *Taiji tu* 太極圖, or Diagram of the Great Ultimate.⁸ Chen Tuan is also renowned as a fortune-teller and is said to have met with Song Taizong 宋太宗 (r. 976–997) which resulted in Chen’s being viewed as the legitimizing saint of the new dynasty.⁹ An important distinction about the nature of the fortune-telling should be drawn here. One of the major sources for Chen’s legend as a pro-

⁶ For a biography of Chen Tuan as well as his place in history and legend, Kohn 1990a, pp. 1–7, and Kohn 1990b, pp. 8–31.

⁷ Kohn 1990a, p. 2.

⁸ This is a rather complex discussion, and will not be pursued here. For a helpful summary on the origin and meaning of this diagram, see Pregadio 2008, vol. 2, pp. 934–36.

⁹ Pregadio 2008, vol. 1, pp. 257–59.

phetic immortal is Yuan period drama, where he is portrayed as an accurate prognosticator not only of individual fortunes and destinies, but also of the fortunes of the state.¹⁰ These abilities, however, are due to his knowledge of the *Yijing* 易經 or *Book of Changes*, as well as his ability to read the cosmic energy (*qi*) of the person concerned, something which requires a personal appearance. In the case of the *Tōzuihen*, however, the immortal is portrayed as making prognostications as a spirit through the planchette, or divining stick. Other legends of Chen present him as a master of sleep meditation (*shuigong* 睡功), also called ecstatic sleep.¹¹ In addition, he is linked with Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (n.d.), the late-Tang figure who became the patriarch of the Southern and Northern lineages of Daoism, and during the Ming period the patron saint of spirit writing. We see that while Chen Tuan was a historical figure, he gradually became increasingly deified, resulting in his status as a prominent Daoist immortal by the tenth and eleventh century.¹²

Chen Tuan's associations and status would have made him a natural choice as spiritual benefactor of the Ōbaku monks. During the Ming dynasty and still today, Chen is one of the most conspicuous Daoist immortals. Not only was he particularly identified with divinatory ability, but he also had patent associations with officialdom. He frequented the Song court and had close associations with figures of the government, a convenient characteristic which would not have been lost on the Chinese Ōbaku monks. It would seem, according to the *Tōzuihen*, that he also had a special connection with the Japanese imperial house.

Spirit Writing as Textual Authority, Lineage Discourse, and Cultural Asset

A séance of spirit writing (*fujū* 扶乩) consists of using a planchette as a medium through which human beings communicate with immortals or gods from the spirit world. Originally a sieve was attached to a short stick that was held by two persons as characters were traced on sand or ashes. When the *fujū* is performed incense is lit, spells are recited, and a charm intended to invite the god or spirit is burned. When the god or spirit has been invited questions are asked while the moving planchette is held over the sand. The

¹⁰ Kohn 1990b, p. 24.

¹¹ For more on what Livia Kohn translates as “ecstatic sleep” as well as a translation from Chen's biography that details this practice, see Kohn 1993, pp. 271–76. For a translation of a Ming-dynasty text that purports to portray the sleep exercises of Chen Tuan, see Teri 1990, pp. 73–94.

¹² Chen Tuan also became associated with a variety of Daoist longevity practices. For more on Chen, see Pregadio 2008, vol. 2, pp. 257–59.

spirit's answers are interpreted from the characters that are traced on the sand.¹³ In addition to being a potent spiritual tool of the enfranchised, spirit writing was also a social activity that brought people together with the shared objective of communicating with transcendental beings in order to assuage the need for some guidance in matters beyond their control.

Spirit writing was first developed in China during the Song dynasty. Originally used as a form of divination by commoners, by the eleventh century it became centered on written messages from immortals and deified cultural heroes.¹⁴ Although spirit writing in the form practiced by the Ōbaku monks is a Song development, rituals in which gods or supra-mundane beings were called down or channeled have been practiced in China since at least the Zhou dynasty (1050?–256 B.C.E.). The idea of divine inspiration as the basis for production of texts or otherworldly proclamations appeared early in the Daoist tradition and remained a prominent theme.¹⁵ By the late Ming, spirit-writing séances had become a very common practice in which many literate Chinese (including monks) participated as a way to divine the future or have their questions answered. This particularly became the trend as the civil service examination system was being revived during the late Ming/early Qing, so that an emphasis on divination in regards to the success or failure in examinations became a central aspect of spirit-writing séances.¹⁶ The demarcation between the spirit world and that of men had become fluid and exceedingly permeable, thus providing those with access to that realm a valuable and coveted skill that was also accompanied with considerable power.

As Yuria Mori explains in his study of the *Taiyi jinhua zongzhi* 太乙金華宗旨 and the spirit-writing cult to Patriarch Lü in Qing China, spirit writing allowed believers to forgo mediation and communicate directly with a founding patriarch, which ultimately strengthens the sense of lineage by reinforcing a feeling of belonging.¹⁷ In the same way, the Ōbaku monks and Reigen would appeal to a common spiritual authority—the immortal Chen—whose prognostication created a sense of belonging through mutual

¹³ Chao 1942, pp. 9–10. This article records many interesting historical examples of the use of the *fujū*. In one, it relates how Emperor Jiajing 嘉靖 (r. 1522–1566) built an altar for the immortals and even decreed penalties and rewards to his subjects according to the words given by the *fujū*. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11. For in-depth presentations of the place of spirit writing in modern Taiwan, see Jordan and Overmyer 1986, pp. 36–79; also Clart 1997, pp. 1–32.

¹⁴ Jordan and Overmyer 1986, p. 36.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁷ Mori 2002, p. 181.

dependence. As long as the immortal's powers were assumed genuine, Yinyuan (and the Ōbaku school as a whole) and Reigen had a supernatural source validating their spiritual connection. The appropriation of Chen Tuan left open vast creative and interpretive latitude to the Ōbaku monks. Second-hand reports of an immortal's prognostication made through spirit writing in a locale remote from Japan rendered historical veracity inert and allowed a great range of creative interpretation. Mori, in discussing the cases examined, writes "spirit-writing not only constituted a method to relate people to Heaven, but also provided them with a lineage on earth, that is, a device that connected them with their preferred lineage context, where religion and history are not differentiated."¹⁸ In this way, by means of the *Tōzuihen*, a sense of spiritual belonging or affiliation between Yinyuan and Emperor Reigen was presented as history—a maneuver that was possible by citing an otherworldly medium such as spirit writing.

It would appear that the Ōbaku monks were not simply expecting imperial favor based solely on Chen's prognostication, but rather asserted that Yinyuan's presence in Japan (and by extension Ōbaku Zen as a whole) would also contribute to the welfare of the country. This much is clearly stated in the *Tōzuihen* chapter "Senshi kaigi" 仙詩解義 (An Explanation on the Meaning of the Immortal's Poem), which runs in part: "Yinyuan's own virtue was great, and would greatly benefit this country. The mind of the sage [Go-Mizunoo] and the mind of the Buddha [Yinyuan] both illuminated each other."¹⁹ Zen in Japan historically played a prominent role in serving to strengthen and promote the imperial house. Eisai 榮西 (1141–1215), one of the fathers of Japanese Zen, clearly presented Zen as a vehicle for ensuring the flourishing of the state as seen in his work *Kōzen gokokuron* 興禪護國論 (Promoting Zen for Protecting the Country). In section eight of Eisai's work, he lists ten provisions and sixteen types of ceremonies that maintain the program of rituals at Zen monasteries. The first two, it happens, are both directed toward the preservation of the emperor and the country.²⁰

Yinyuan and Go-Mizunoo's spiritual connection is well known. The emperor's respect for Yinyuan was expressed through monetary donations, gifts, exchanges of poetry, and the bequeathing of the title *Daikō fushō*

¹⁸ Mori 2002, p. 181.

¹⁹ See below for the full text.

²⁰ Albert Welter lists the sixteen types of ceremonies, among which the first ceremonies are for commemorating the emperor's birthday, and the second set refers to rituals associated with Buddha invocation and sutra chanting that are intended to spread imperial virtue and enhance imperial rule. For the exhaustive list of these ceremonies, see Welter 2008, pp. 113–38.

kokushi 大光普照国師 or the National Teacher of Great Light and Universal Illumination.²¹ Yinyuan's spiritual connection with Reigen—if there was one at all—is undocumented in sources apart from the *Tōzuihen*. Spirit writing, however, with its highly subjective and private nature was able to bypass the necessity of proving a direct connection between Yinyuan and Reigen, and rather to establish an affinity vested with the authority of Chen Tuan.

Tōzuihen: Character and Content

The *Tōzuihen* is comprised of three fascicles that contain thirty-five chapters of varying lengths with the shortest being a few lines and the longest two hundred and ninety lines. The vast majority of the chapters are ascribed to prominent Ōbaku monks, among them Yinyuan, Gaoquan Xingdun 高泉性澈 (Jp. Kōsen Shōton; 1633–1695), Gettan Dōchō 月潭道澄 (1636–1713), Qiandai Xing'an 千呆性俺 (Jp. Sengai Shōan; 1636–1705), and Daizui Dōki 大隨道機 (1652–1717), among others. Additional contributors include the courtiers, Fujiwara Akimitsu and Ichijō-in no Miya Shinkei Hōshinnō 一乘院宮真敬法親王 (1649–1706),²² both having written more than one chapter each. The first chapter of the work presents the immortal's prophetic verse that was interpreted as foretelling that Yinyuan's departure from China would coincide with Emperor Reigen's birth. Most of the following chapters attempt to interpret this verse in accordance with the a priori conclusion that Yinyuan and Emperor Reigen are indeed united through an otherworldly link based on the immortal's verse. Such a conclusion could have far reaching ramifications for the Ōbaku school, since if Reigen accepted his affinity to Yinyuan and the Ōbaku monks through Chen's verse, the school would stand to benefit enormously from an otherworldly and spiritually validated association with an imperial patron such as Reigen.

The originality of the text's contents is matched by its unusual title. The “*zui*” 蕊 of “*tōzui*” 桃蕊 (also 桃蕊) means “blossom” or “stamen,” the pollen-bearing organ of a flower.²³ Morohashi's *Dai kanwa jiten* 大漢和辭典 does not even include the compound 桃蕊, although the *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 lists “*taorui*” 桃蕊 and provides the definition “peach blossom

²¹ Baroni 2000, p. 175.

²² Prince Shinkei was the twelfth son of Emperor Go-Mizunoo. After taking religious orders under Ichijō-in no Miya Songaku Hōshinnō 一乘院宮尊覺法親王, he received the religious name Shōgaku 正覺. He eventually came to receive dharma transmission under Gaoquan, thus becoming a thirty-fifth generation master in Linji's line. See Ōtsuki, Katō, and Hayashi 1988, pp. 14–15.

²³ Morohashi 1957–60, vol. 9, p. 905.

buds” (*taohua huabao* 桃花花苞).²⁴ Even in the voluminous Chinese literary canon, this term is extremely rare and does not at all appear in a Buddhist context. Throughout this article “*tōzui*” has been translated as “peach buds.”

There are at least three appearances of “*tōzui*” in Yinyuan’s writings. The most interesting example appears in a verse he wrote during his eighty-first year. The passage runs “On the day that three thousand peach buds first bloom.”²⁵ The mention of “three thousand” peach buds has very loaded connotations. In Buddhism, the *udumbara* (Ch. *youtanhua*; Jp. *udonge* 優曇華), or *Ficus glomerata*, is a flower that is said to blossom once every three thousand years and that heralds the birth of a Buddha in the world, and by metaphorical extension, it is also used to express an extremely rare event.²⁶ In Daoism, the peach is associated with longevity and immortality, although it does not carry this signification in Buddhism. The *udumbara* is not a peach tree, but rather a species of fig. Yinyuan’s passage seems to conflate the *udumbara* and peach blossoms, although it is difficult if not impossible to ascertain if this was deliberate or not. It is within the realm of possibility that the above passage of Yinyuan’s coupled with the appearance of Chen “No Smoke” in Yinyuan’s writings was the original impetus for the production of the entire *Tōzuihen*. If the peach buds in Yinyuan’s passage were interpreted as the *udumbara*, the blossom that announces a Buddha’s arrival, it is very plausible that the Ōbaku monks, or Reigen himself nearly fifty years later, deliberately directed this association to the imperial birth.

According to Gaoquan’s background account that appears in the *Tōzuihen*’s second chapter, entitled, “*Senji hōgo*” 仙事法語,²⁷ the connection between Yinyuan and Chen Tuan starts back in China a few years prior to Yinyuan’s departure for Japan. During the year 1652, Yinyuan traveled from his home temple, Wanfusi 萬福寺 on Mt. Huangbo 黃檗,²⁸ to Mt. Shizhu 石竹 expressly for the purpose of consulting with the immortal Chen. During the séance, Yinyuan related to the medium through which Chen was speaking that he had recently received an invitation to come to Japan. He requested

²⁴ Hanyu Da Cidian Bianji Weiyuanhui 1986–94, vol. 4, p. 986.

²⁵ The original reads, “*sanqian taorui chu sheng ri*” 三千桃蕊初生日. Hirakubo 1979, vol. 10, p. 5019.

²⁶ Nakamura 1999, p. 92. The term is also transliterated as *udonbara* 優曇婆羅 and alternately known as *reizuige* 靈瑞華, as well. See also Zengaku Daijiten Hensanjo 1978, vol. 1, p. 67.

²⁷ Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1, pp. 1–3. Russell also provides a summary of Gaoquan’s chapter in Russell 1990b, pp. 113–14.

²⁸ Note that these same characters were used in the name of the temple that Yinyuan established in Kyoto, Ōbakusan Manpukuji.

guidance as to what course of action he should follow, since he had doubts about the feasibility of his dharma flourishing in Japan. The spirit attempted to allay his concerns, telling him that his dharma could indeed flourish in Japan, only that he should be sparing in his use of the staff in training since the common people among the Japanese might not understand its meaning.²⁹ Furthermore, not only was he assured that his dharma would flourish, but it was also predicted that his arrival would coincide with the birth of a new emperor. This was later taken to be a prophecy of the birth of Emperor Reigen, who was born during the same month and year (fifth month, 1654) as Yinyuan's departure from Fujian. It is telling that the spirit offered advice on the use of the staff in Zen training—something one would perhaps assume to be outside the purview of Chen as a Daoist practitioner of self-cultivation techniques. As Jiang Wu points out, one aspect of the revival of Chan in seventeenth-century China was a supposed restoration to what was perceived as the high point or golden age of Chan in the Tang and Song dynasties, in which masters are presented in their most irreverent and antinomian guise. This included beating and shouting at disciples during encounter dialogues. Beating and shouting as part of Zen training were (re)incorporated by Yinyuan's own masters Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 (1566–1642) and Feiyin Tongrong 費隱通容 (1593–1661).³⁰ The immortal's advice to be sparing in the use of the staff indicates a certain degree of self-consciousness regarding the importation of Ming Buddhist models into Japan. While it might seem incongruous for a patently Daoist immortal to offer advice on aspects of Zen training, it becomes less so when considered from the perspective of a group of Ōbaku monks who were engaged in retroactively rewriting and revising their school's history in Japan. During the séance the spirit presented Yinyuan with a *gāthā*³¹ that concerned his move to Japan. This *gāthā*, entitled “Sōkō shinshi” 送行讖詩 (also “Sōan shinshi”), appears as the first entry in the *Tōzuihen* and is attributed to “Prophetic Immortal Chen Bo of Mt. Hua” (Jp. *Kazan kisen Chin Haku* 華山箕仙陳博).³² This is a clear case of misidentification (or deliberate reassignment) of the immortal's identity as it is Chen Tuan who is historically linked to Mt.

²⁹ The “staff” refers to the *kyōsaku* 警策, a wooden implement roughly a meter long that is used to strike the Zen practitioner on the shoulder during meditation. Striking a student with the *kyōsaku* is not intended as a punishment, but is rather to guard against drowsiness as well as to encourage the student along in training. See Zengaku Daijiten Hensanjo 1978, vol. 1, p. 219.

³⁰ Wu 2004, pp. 90–91.

³¹ A *gāthā* (Ch. *ji*; Jp. *ge* 偈) is a short poem in praise of Buddhism or that succinctly expresses Buddhist doctrine. See Zengaku Daijiten Hensanjo 1978, vol. 1, p. 256.

³² Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1, p. 1.

Hua 華, not Chen Bo, the immortal who appears only in the writings of the Ōbaku monks.

At this point it might be a good idea to say a word about terminology. The “Sōkō shinshi” verse, twenty-eight characters in length, serves as the inspiration for the entire *Tōzuihen*. The character *shin* 識 is given in Morohashi’s *Dai kanwa jiten* as meaning “a sign” (*shirushi* しるし) and “prophetic writing” (*mirai* 未来記).³³ In addition to producing a very creative and unique text, it seems that the Ōbaku monks were also using linguistic license as the compound *shinshi* 識詩 has no obvious precedent that I can find, either in Morohashi or any other dictionary. This brings up the interesting question of the *Tōzuihen*’s genre. Certainly it does not fit cleanly into any one genre as it includes elements of poetry, apologia, prophetic pronouncement, history, compendium, biography, and encomium (to Chen as well as Yinyuan, Reigen, and the Japanese imperial house as a whole). Of course, these genres need not be, nor often are, hermetically sealed. As Michel Strickmann notes: “[T]he bond between poetry and prophecy is primordial. . . . Rhymed, rhythmic, or assonantal verse has at all times been a vehicle for the gods, whether as a direct conduit for oracular voices or through the medium of a divinely inspired poet.”³⁴ That “Sōkō shinshi” is a poem is unequivocal, with the character *shi* 詩 definitively connoting a verse. The rest of the work can be loosely interpreted as a commentary, in that the majority of the remaining chapters either directly discuss or expand upon the interpretation of the poem, or provide additional details on Chen Tuan, Reigen, and Yinyuan. Thus, “poetic commentary” could be added to the list of genres enumerated above.

An appeal to divine authority is a common strand in Chinese divinatory systems, and the *Tōzuihen* is a clear example of this.³⁵ The verse and its commentary as follows below are a direct appeal from the Ōbaku monks to the divine prophetic power of an immortal in order to assert a connection between their school’s founder and the retired Japanese emperor. “Sōkō shinshi” runs as follows.

Presented to the Huangbo monk [Yinyuan] on his journey to Japan:
Even if I thoroughly chew the yellow root, my teeth are not cold.
On this occasion it should be known that there is a pass for Zen
[to flourish]. On the day that three thousand peach buds first burst
forth, I will await to eat together with the immortal.³⁶

³³ Morohashi 1957–60, vol. 10, p. 624.

³⁴ Strickmann 2005, p. 87.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁶ Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1, p. 1.

Although the passage is quite short and opaque, it became the kernel around which the whole basis for the production of the *Tōzuihen* was formed. These few lines were the only ones said to have been pronounced by the immortal and the rest of the work is primarily composed of commentary on them. It is interesting to reflect that the elaborate interpretation of Chen predicting Yinyuan's arrival as coinciding with the birth of Emperor Reigen is all based on this short and ambiguous poem.

An examination of the *Tōzuihen* reveals that the construction of Yinyuan as a link to Emperor Reigen and the imperial family came about through a rewriting of history that was characterized by a certain degree of hagiography. That is, Yinyuan and his illustrious career in Japan are presented as a miraculous fulfillment of Chen's verse. A prominent example is seen in the chapter of the *Tōzuihen* written by Saiun Dōtō 齊雲道棟 (1637–1713),³⁷ entitled “Senshi kaigi” 仙詩解義 (An Explanation on the Meaning of the Immortal's Poem). The passage reveals how the short poem was reinterpreted in accordance with a very specific agenda. The section runs:

The phrase “Even if I thoroughly chew the yellow root, my teeth are not cold” means to say that when Yinyuan was residing at Mt. Huangbo in China, for roughly eighteen years he practiced the way of dharma. Since he had finished his special task, it therefore says “chewing the yellow root thoroughly.” “Yellow root” is, in other words, Mt. Huangbo. Yinyuan would flourish during the remainder of his life [in Japan].

At sixty-three years of age, he came to Japan in response to a request and again promoted the teaching of Rinzai. Therefore it says: “teeth are not cold. On this occasion it should be known that there is a pass for Zen [to flourish].” Yinyuan came to Japan, and time and again caused the teaching of Zen to thrive, greatly promoting the ineffable teaching of the Zen school. “The day that three thousand peach buds first burst forth” corresponds to the time when Yinyuan came [to Japan] after leaving Mt. Huangbo in China. In Japan this [was] the tenth day of the fifth month of the third year

³⁷ Saiun took orders at thirteen years of age and in 1652 studied under Daozhe Chaoyuan 道者超元 (1602–1662) at Sōfukuji 崇福寺 in Nagasaki. Upon Yinyuan's arrival in 1654, he quickly took to the new master and ended up becoming his trusted attendant, thereafter following him to Fumonji 普門寺 and eventually Manpukuji. Even after his master's death he remained at the forefront of events at Manpukuji. See Ōtsuki, Katō, and Hayashi 1988, pp. 132–34.

of Shōō 承応 [1654], the auspicious month of the birth of Emperor Reigen. While Yinyuan was formerly at the Fumonji in Settsu 摂津, Enkō-in 園光院 [n.d.] sometimes came to pay a visit. One time Yinyuan asked about the year and month of the emperor's birth. Enkō-in related the details of that event. Yinyuan heard [this] and then cried saying "At the time when this old monk left China, the immortal Chen sent a poem that went 'on the day that three thousand peach buds first burst forth, I will await to eat together with the immortal.' As for what the immortal Chen prophesized, now the sign is realized, [but] this should not be [thought] strange. From the start it was known [by the immortal Chen] that this old monk would have a superior destiny in this country [of Japan]."

When Yinyuan was at Kōfukuji 興福寺 in Nagasaki, the first time that he ascended [the hall to deliver a sermon] at the start of the summer retreat, his opening words were "On the day that three thousand peach buds first burst forth is the time that a single blossom of the *udumbara* appears." This phrase also coincides [with the prognostication of Chen]. Yinyuan often said to his attendant monks: "This old monk was born in the great Ming during the Wanli 万曆 era [1573–1619], and recently I witnessed the Qing dynasty reformation and my heart greatly lamented this. Now, I have arrived in this country and it is the Meireki 明曆 era [1655–1657]. Is this not joyous?"³⁸ Also, the throne was passed to Emperor Reigen on the twenty-sixth day of the first month of 1663. On the fifteenth of this same month, Yinyuan conducted the opening ceremony [at Manpukuji of the] new Mt. Ōbaku. These events occurred in the same year and the same month. Such a coincidence happened by its own accord. Is this not wondrous?

On the occasion of ascending the hall, Yinyuan also produced an opening *gāthā* that went: "The vast imperial wind increases the fortune of the people, and the dharma rain, plentiful and nourishing, makes the wisdom root grow. The true men of no rank all nod

³⁸ What Yinyuan exclaims to be joyous is the felicitous coincidence that the era name in Japan at the time of this episode was Meireki (1655–1658), the first character of which is the same one used for the Ming dynasty, and the second, *reki* (Ch. *li*), was the second character of the era name in China (Wanli, 1573–1619) at the time that he was born. Thus, he sees the auspicious coupling of these two characters in the compound of the era name to be a cause for joy.

their heads and the beauty of Mt. Ōbaku fills the universe.” As for “awaiting to eat together with the immortal,” although Yinyuan had never entered the court and met with the emperor [directly], [the emperor] had quickly attained wisdom. The emperor [Go-Mizunoo] was meritorious, wise, and he was also able to hear something and understand it [thoroughly]. Yinyuan’s own virtue was great, and would greatly benefit this country. The mind of the sage [Go-Mizunoo] and the mind of the Buddha [Yinyuan] both illuminated each other, and in other words this means to truly meet and eat together.

After three years had passed since Yinyuan’s coming to Japan, on the fifth day of the seventh month of 1656, [Yinyuan’s] attendant Dokushō Shōen 独照性円 [1617–1694] arranged a celebratory meal for the wonderful occurrence of Yinyuan’s arrival on the shores of Japan. Yinyuan laughed saying, “I passed sixty-three spring and autumns in China, [and] I have finished paying my debt to society. Now, only three years have passed since I have entered this country. I should be called ‘the three-year-old boy.’” Thereupon he produced ten *gāthās*. Therefore, Yinyuan and the Emperor Reigen should be said to have the same age. A while back the Emperor Go-Mizunoo³⁹ sent an imperial edict asking Gaoquan [to relate] the facts of the Immortal Chen. Gaoquan then wrote this one volume and presented it [to the emperor]. Now, Ichijō-in Shinnō invited Saiun Dōtō and those who had long served beside Yinyuan. [Then] cordially asking them about that matter, he ordered them to explain the meaning of the immortal’s poem. Thus, disregarding our ineptitude, we have recorded this in brief. We humbly offer it to the view of the exalted one.⁴⁰

In the above passage, Saiun takes the *gāthā* said to have been pronounced during the séance at Mt. Shizhu, and then makes a concerted attempt to interpret it in the most convenient fashion for establishing a connection between Yinyuan and the imperial house. An examination of each line in the *gāthā* with its corresponding commentary in the above passage proves instructive in demonstrating the deliberate agenda within. “Even if I thor-

³⁹ While the text has Go-Mizunoo, this is most likely a copyist error since Reigen himself mentions in his preface that it was he who inquired to the Ōbaku monks about Chen Tuan’s prognostication and later ordered the *Tōzuihen*’s composition. See Reigen’s preface below.

⁴⁰ Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1, pp. 9–10.

oughly chew the yellow root, my teeth are not cold”:⁴¹ “Yellow root” (Ch. *huanggen*; Jp. *ōkon* 黄根) is said to refer to Mt. Huangbo 黄檗 in China, and the “thoroughly chewing” (Jp. *shakujin* 嚼尽) to Yinyuan’s eighteen years of severe Buddhist training that he underwent there.⁴² The commentary continues the interpretation by asserting that “teeth are not cold” refers to Yinyuan’s journey to Japan. The next line “On this occasion it should be known that there is a pass for Zen [to flourish]”⁴³ is interpreted as referring to Yinyuan’s activities in helping to spread and make prosper in Japan the form of Buddhism he brought from China.⁴⁴ “On the day that three thousand peach buds first burst forth”⁴⁵ expresses a supremely rare occurrence, the synchronistic event of Yinyuan’s departure from China as corresponding to the birth of Emperor Reigen.⁴⁶ As it is presented in the passage, when Yinyuan was told of the emperor’s birth by Reigen’s older sister Enkō-in, he cites these lines, interpreting his arrival and the emperor’s birth as the fulfillment of Chen’s verse, something he relates as a sign of his illustrious destiny in Japan.⁴⁷ It is here that the meaning of *tōzui*, or “peach buds,” is hinted at; it is associated with the *udumbara*, the special tree that is said to bloom only once every three thousand years, and which heralds the birth of a Buddha in the world. In the hopes of furthering the synchronistic connection between Reigen and Yinyuan, the passage also points out that Reigen’s ascension to the throne occurred during the same month and year (first month, 1663) that Yinyuan performed the *shukkoku kaidō* 祝国開堂 at Manpukuji.⁴⁸ This chapter of the *Tōzuihen* clearly demonstrates the deliberate interpretation of the verse in accordance with a specific agenda—that of establishing an affinity between Yinyuan and the imperial house. While the basis for this is the verse attributed to the immortal, the question

⁴¹ “*Ōkon o kamitsukushite ha samukarazu*” 嚼尽黄根齒不寒。

⁴² “*Jū yū hachinen hōdō ōini gyōjite yoku tsukaeowarinu*” 十有八年法道大行能事已。

⁴³ “*Kige ni zenkan aru koto o shiru beshi*” 可知機下有禪閑。

⁴⁴ “*Rōnin tōraishite zenpō o jūkōshi shūmon o ōini furū kiyū no iware nari*” 老人東來重興禪法丕振宗門機用の謂也。

⁴⁵ “*Sanzen no tōzui hajimete shōzuru hi*” 三千桃藥初生日。

⁴⁶ “*Rōnin tōdosuruni Tō no Ōbaku o tateshiha honchō ni arite Shōō sannen gogatsu tōka nari sunawachi sendōtai jōkō kōtan no reigetsu ni ataru*” 老人東渡發唐黃檗在本朝承応三年五月十日乃当仙洞太上皇降誕之令月。

⁴⁷ “*Chinsen no yogensuru tokoro, ima no ka to fugōsu, mata kitosu bekarazaruya. Motoyori rōsō kono kuni ni oite ōini shōen arukoto o shireshi*” 陳仙所預言 今果符合 不亦可奇哉 固知老僧於此国大有勝緣矣。

⁴⁸ The *shukkoku kaidō* ceremony is conducted when a newly appointed abbot arrives at the monastery. He ascends before the assembly, prays for the safety of the country, and then delivers a sermon. Zengaku Daijiten Hensanjo 1978, vol. 1, p. 511.

of “who exactly *was* the immortal” remains as this is not specified in the chapter translated above. The immortal, mentioned twice in “Senshi kaigi,” is referred to on both occasions as “the immortal Chen” (*Chin sen* 陳仙), not specifying whether it is Chen Bo (Wuyan, or “No Smoke”), or Chen Tuan. The issue of the immortal’s identity is discussed in greater depth below.

The Question of the Immortal’s Identity: Chen Bo or Chen Tuan?

Antecedent to the production of the *Tōzuihen*, there are several references in Yinyuan’s works that make reference to an immortal (*xian* 仙) who is consulted by means of a divinatory willow stick, or planchette (*ji* 乩). These works include *Shizi yanzhi* 獅子巖志, *Huangboshan shizhi* 黃檗山寺志, and *Sanlai ji* 三籟集.⁴⁹ This figure invariably appears as Chen Bo, sometimes preceded by his appellation, Wuyan. In the gazetteer of Mt. Huangbo (*Huangboshan shizhi*) written during the Yongli 永曆 era (1647–1662), there is included a series of “Immortals’ Poems” (*xianshi* 仙詩) which are attributed to Chen Bo of the Song period (*Song Chen Bo* 宋陳博).⁵⁰ Thus far, all Chen Bo would appear to share with Chen Tuan is his surname and the fact that both took earthly form during the Song dynasty (although Chen Tuan was born in the late Tang). While Chen Tuan is historically associated with the practice of physiognomy (*xiangshu*) and reading fortunes, particularly for high Song officials, in none of these contexts is he presented as a spirit who prognosticates through the planchette. Some commentators have taken Chen Bo to be a posthumous strand of the Chen Tuan legend, who has been “definitely identified” with him.⁵¹ Although it is difficult to establish with any certainty whether these two figures are indeed one and the same, it will be instructive to see how the authors of the *Tōzuihen* dealt with this issue. Within our investigation of the immortal’s identity, we will consider whether the Ōbaku monks creatively appropriated a Daoist deity in order to forge a connection to the imperial house in the interests of security in an

⁴⁹ Lin 2002–3, p. 40.

⁵⁰ Duwang 1987, pp. 121–22.

⁵¹ See Pregadio 2008, vol. 1, p. 259. The whole passage runs: “In a completely different posthumous strand of Chen Tuan’s history, he takes the form of a prognosticating planchette spirit . . . who appears in the Chan community on Mount Huangbo (Huangbo shan 黃檗山, Fujian) and is transferred to Japan along with Yinyuan 隱元 (Jp.: Ingen, 1592–1673, the founder of the Ōbaku 黃檗 lineage of Zen Buddhism) in the seventeenth century. Definitely identified as Chen Tuan of the Song, he is venerated as a particularly powerful spirit and adopted successfully into a Buddhist environment, even changing his name to Chen Bo 陳博 (Chen, the Incense-Burner) and his appellation to Wuyan 無煙 (No-Smoke), signifying the complete extinction of all desires rather than the quest for immortality indicated by his Taoist, *Zhuangzi*-inspired names.”

increasingly uncertain world. We will also question whether it was Emperor Reigen and the imperial house that encouraged a certain interpretation of the text in a calculated attempt to associate themselves with a foreign deity in order to increase their own prestige at a time of severe bakufu repression.

While references to the immortal's name change are found throughout the *Tōzuihen*, there are three chapters of particular importance here. They are: "Senmei jigi" 仙名字義 by Gettan Dōchō, "Chin Haku meiben" 陳博名弁 by Daichū Dōka 大中道圭 (n.d.), and "Shinshi no setsu" 識詩之説 by Daizui Dōki. In addition, these three chapters are particularly revealing about the character of the immortal, as they touch upon his nature and abilities as well as his relations with the Ōbaku monks and the imperial house.

The first chapter, "Senmei jigi," starts out by freely intermingling Chen Tuan's biography with the nearly nonexistent details of Chen Bo's life, conflating Tuan's title, Xiyi 希夷 (Elder of the Inaudible and Invisible), bestowed by the Chinese emperor Taizong, and his historically validated residence on Mt. Hua, with the immortal [Bo] who appears in the writings of the Ōbaku monks. Already in the first couple lines of this section the two figures are presented as one. The union is further solidified when the immortal's Daoist name "Tuan" is clearly stated to have changed to "Bo" with the addition of the title "Wuyan" (No Smoke), claimed to be based on the imagery and associations of an incense burner. The section then segues into the immortal's (now simply designated "Chen") descent to Mt. Huangbo where it pronounced a single verse to Yinyuan that predicted his journey to Japan would coincide with the birth of a future emperor. At this point the text takes an interesting direction. The character of the immortal, and by extension, Yinyuan as well, is related through a revealing anecdote. Zizu 自足, whose name aptly translates as "self-sufficiency," is displeased at the monks who gather to request guidance of the transcendent, which he characterizes as "a hindering god" and "homeless spirit" who comes to deceive the monks. As the immortal sees into Zizu's mind and is angered by his perceptions, he predicts a tiger will be let loose to devour him, something for which Yinyuan admonishes the immortal, reminding him that immortals are supposed to be compassionate and admonish the taking of life. What is of particular interest in this episode is that the immortal, while wielding significant powers, is akin to a wayward child who requires (and acquiesces to) the instruction of a Buddhist monk, placing Yinyuan in the exalted status as teacher of both men and Daoist spirits/immortals.

The next chapter, "Chin Haku meiben," starts out by unequivocally establishing that the immortal is Chen Tuan, who is identified as Chen Bo, the prognosticating spirit channeled through the planchette. With Chen's

prophetic pedigree and talents established, the chapter turns to the prophecy and its genesis, which are related in detail. Prince Shōgaku (Shinkei 真敬) is presented as acting on the orders of Reigen when he inquires about the name change from “Tuan” to “Bo.” The name change itself is described rather ambiguously, simply stating “he later changed his name from Tuan to Bo” (*Tan nochi ni Haku ni aratamu* 搏後改博). The immortal is described as being like Mr. Li of the Old Earlobes (Li Laodan 李老聃, another name for Laozi 老子 [n.d.], the semi-mythical founder of Daoism) in that he manifests himself in the world under different names. As if citing company with Laozi is not enough to adequately explain the name change, it is averred that “it is difficult to standardize [the names]” (*jitsu ni ichijō shi gataki nari* 実難一定也). It should be noted that the considerable effort taken to identify Chen Tuan with the obscure Chen Bo has its purpose in the final lines of the chapter. Reigen’s virtue and his understanding of Buddhism are extolled such that he is called a “Bodhisattva of Station.”⁵² It is here that, arguably, the purpose of the chapter and the work as a whole can be found—the extolling of imperial prestige, phrased in this section as “Even before his [Emperor Reigen’s] birth his supreme merit was clear even under the skies of Fujian.” It is to this end that Chen Bo must be interpreted as Chen Tuan. If the emperor’s merit is sufficiently high so as to be recognized by a Daoist immortal, it could only further redound to his benefit to have the immortal identified as the illustrious Chen Tuan.

The third chapter, “Shinshi no setsu” differs from the other two in both structure and content. It opens with an almost aggressive assertion of the grandeur of the Japanese imperial house, founded by the Sun Goddess, and of its superiority to the imperial house in China where dynasties are “born in the morning and change by evening.” In addition, another point of divergence is the presentation of the immortal, who is referred to as Chen Bo throughout, and except for brief mention that he received the name “Xiyi” from the Chinese emperor, there is no attempt to explain the name change, as the character for Tuan does not even appear in the chapter. Also interesting is the assertion that Chen Bo traveled to Japan and met directly with an emperor (Go-Mizunoo?), and moved by a deep sense of gratitude, sent a divine agent, ostensibly Yinyuan, to serve the imperial house.

⁵² A “Bodhisattva of Station” (*jū no bosatsu* 地位菩薩) refers to a bodhisattva between the forty-first and fiftieth stages of the Fifty-two Stations of Bodhisattvas. See Nakamura 1999, p. 561.

An unbiased reading of the *Tōzuihen*, and particularly the passages above, leaves one with the impression that the planchette-divining Chen Bo was deliberately interpreted as Chen Tuan, the renowned immortal only partially associated with prophetic powers. It may have been deliberate or fortuitous, but with a prognosticating immortal named Chen Bo 陳博 who is separated only by a few brushstrokes from Chen Tuan 陳搏, it is not surprising that throughout the work there is a self-conscious effort to associate the two figures as one and the same. By so doing, the Ōbaku monks become custodians of an immortal associated with the prophetic pedigree of Chen Tuan. For both the Ōbaku school as well as the imperial house, Chen Bo's being interpreted as Chen Tuan was a matter of mutual convenience. As both the Ōbaku school and the imperial house were in difficult straits at the end of the seventeenth century, the prognostications of Chen Tuan represented an opportunity of symbiotic succor. Below we will take a closer look at Reigen and his connection with the *Tōzuihen*.

Emperor Reigen and the Tōzuihen

A discussion of Reigen must take into account the political climate of the contemporaneous imperial institution, which found itself at a low point in its long history. It is well known that as the early Tokugawa shoguns attempted to consolidate their power, they instituted a series of regulations, or *hatto* 法度, that were intended to severely limit the powers of the warrior class, the imperial house, and the Buddhist monasteries and temples. The regulations aimed at the imperial house, the *Kinchū narabi ni kuge shohatto* 禁中並公家諸法度 (1615), mainly conceived by the Rinzai monk Sūden 崇伝 (1569–1633), are composed of seventeen articles that effectively abrogate the self-determination of the emperor and imperial house, putting all political power in the hands of the bakufu. Already in 1613, Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616) had issued the *Kuge shū hatto* 公家衆法度, which put the purview of imperial ceremonials under bakufu authority, a humiliating maneuver that diminished the imperial institution's role in its most basic and defining function—the administration of its sacerdotal duties.

Reigen was at the center of the move to restore the imperial institution's ceremonial functions, a result of which was the revival of the Daijōsai 大嘗祭 at the ascension of Emperor Higashiyama 東山 (1675–1709; r. 1687–1709) in 1687, two hundred and twenty-one years after its previous performance. Although the fortunes of the imperial institution as a whole were increased by the revival of imperial ceremonials, Reigen himself was the target of bakufu suppression. Reigen's father, the emperor Go-Mizunoo,

abdicated the throne in response to the “Purple Robe Incident” (*shie jiken* 紫衣事件),⁵³ due to which he harbored resentment against the bakufu. This sense of antagonism was inherited by his son, whose less-than-harmonious relationship with the military authorities was partly due to his aggressive stance toward the imperial revival. From the third year of Genroku (1690), the imperial house moved away from Reigen’s unrelenting position and gave way to a more cooperative relationship, headed by the chief advisor to the emperor (*kanpaku* 関白), Konoe Motohiro 近衛基熙 (1648–1722), and his son Konoe Iehiro 近衛家熙 (1667–1736), who also went on later to become *kanpaku*.⁵⁴ Iehiro was particularly aligned with the Ōbaku monks as he became a disciple of Gaoquan, and later, the Japanese Ōbaku monk, Hyakusetsu Genyō 百拙元養 (1668–1749). Iehiro also contributed a chapter to the *Tōzuihen*, entitled “Sen hishi batsu” 仙批詩跋.

As Reigen’s relationship with the ruling bakufu government was not one of harmony due to the bakufu suppression of his restoration activities, one way for him to transcend his station and the political verities of his situation was to draw his authority and assert his prestige from a non-secular source, the most available being the native gods of which he was believed (as all emperors were) a descendent, and to which he was accorded special access. One expression of this was Reigen’s supplication, *Reigen jōkō ganmon* 靈元上皇願文, that he offered to the deities of the Shimogoryō 下御霊 shrine in Kyoto during the spring of 1710, five years after the presentation of the *Tōzuihen*. The supplication was composed of three articles, the first of which prayed for freedom from sickness and natural disasters, while the other two asked for the gods’ help in Reigen’s restoration activities.⁵⁵ While

⁵³ The main players in this drama were Takuan Sōhō 沢庵宗彭 (1573–1645) and Gyokushitsu Sōhaku 玉室宗珀 (1572–1641) of Daitokuji 大徳寺, as well as a number of monks from Myōshinji 妙心寺 who also became involved in the affair. They criticized the bakufu for its imposition of unrealistic and unjust regulations. All of the clerics involved were banished to the northern reaches of Japan, and in addition, a monk who received a purple robe after the promulgation of the edicts and without government permission had his robe stripped away. To the imperial court, which had a vested interest in and an established tradition of granting the purple robe to elite monks, this was an unpardonable affront that resulted in Emperor Go-Mizunoo abdicating the throne.

⁵⁴ Takano 1992, p. 160.

⁵⁵ As cited in Takano 1992, p. 216. Part of the text from the second article reads: “*Hayaku shinryo shōjiki no iriki o motte, hayaku kano jashinra o shirizokerare, chōtei fukko no gi o mamoritamau beki koto*” 早く神慮正直之威力を以って 早く彼の邪臣等を退けられ 朝廷復古の儀を守り給う可き事. Here, Reigen explicitly asks for the gods to lend their divine authority to help him achieve a restoration of the imperial ceremonials.

appealing to a divine authority—especially in the form of a formal supplication (*ganmon* 願文)—is not out of the ordinary for an emperor, it is not unreasonable to assume that Reigen, five years earlier, as his frustration was mounting, availed himself of a chance opportunity to further increase his prestige by citing an alliance with a foreign deity, in this case the immortal Chen who is portrayed in the *Tōzuihen* as having prophesized his birth. The fact that the *Tōzuihen*'s preface was written by Reigen himself demonstrates that he had much more than a passing interest in the text.

The preface is important in that it clearly establishes the premise for the whole work since Reigen here explicitly mentions how Chen's verse indeed serves as a link between himself and Yinyuan. The preface runs as follows.

The Retired Emperor Reigen's Personally Written Preface to the *Tōzuihen*:

We think of the way of the immortals [Daoism] as starting with Xuan Yuan 軒轅⁵⁶ [the Yellow Emperor] and developed to a great [extent] by Li Boyang 李伯陽 [Laozi]. Xian Yuan together with Yan Hao 炎昊⁵⁷ standardized [the art of] producing the trigrams [of the *Yijing*] and established a pure rule of non-action. Li Boyang passed on the rites to Zhongni 仲尼 [Confucius] and Zhongni would come to praise Laozi as that “one like a dragon.” Therefore how can [it be said] that the way of the immortals is neglected?

Now that we are peacefully residing in a deep cave within the Guye 姑射 mountains⁵⁸ [the palace grounds], can one say that the

⁵⁶ Xian Yuan is an alternate appellation for Huangdi 黃帝, the mythical Yellow Emperor of China. From the Qin and Han periods he came to be venerated as the founder of Daoism. Noguchi et al. 1994, pp. 152–53.

⁵⁷ Yan Hao refers to the two mythological emperors Yandi 炎帝 (also known as Shennong 神農) and Taihao 太昊 (also known as Fu Xi 伏羲). In Chinese mythology, Shennong is the god of agriculture and flora, which later resulted in his designation as the one who bestowed the five grains on the people and as the founder of medicine. These two figures together with Huangdi stand as one of the several combinations that comprise The Three Emperors (*sanhuang* 三皇). For more on Yandi Shennong, see Noguchi et al. 1994, p. 306; for the various combinations of *sanhuang*, see *ibid.*, p. 207.

⁵⁸ The Guye mountains are also referred to as the Miaoguye 藐姑射 mountains. The term appears in the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 entitled “Xiaoyaoyou” 逍遙遊 as a mountain where the immortals dwell. Another meaning is the grounds of the imperial residence. In the above context, it refers to the area of the imperial residence in Kyoto where Reigen resided after abdicating the throne. Morohashi 1957–60, vol. 3, p. 667c, s.v. “*koyasan*” 姑射山; vol. 9, p. 982c, s.v. “*hakoya*” 藐姑射.

way of the immortals is neglected? Formerly, when Yinyuan came to this country, the Immortal Chen Xiyi [Tuan] made a prognostication in a poem and prophesized our birth. Oh, is it not amazing that his prescience reached all the way from that distant land [China] separated by ten thousand li, [even] before he even knew of our country's existence? This is certainly [due to] the spiritual virtue of the eight million gods of our divine nation that reached to and was felt in China. It is certainly not due to our own worthless virtue.

Our father [Go-Mizunoo] had earlier received a Buddhist prognostication. He venerated the true vehicle, in particular believed in the National Teacher [Yinyuan], and received him with the utmost hospitality. In the end he ripened [in his practice] and attained the bliss of the dharma and the ecstasy of enlightenment. In this way, we also cannot but be moved by the Immortal Chen's prognostications. Therefore, [we] enquired of various [monks of the] Ōbaku school to investigate this matter. Also, we ordered the councillor Fujiwara Akimitsu to compile [this] and write the *Kōden*. All together it is three fascicles. It is called the *Tōzuihen*. We desire for people to know that the virtue of the gods has not attenuated even in the present day. The wondrous function of the divine powers is beyond reckoning. . . . May the reader know our [true] intention. This now serves as an introduction. Fifteenth day of the third month of the second year of Hōei 宝永.⁵⁹

Reigen starts out with a short history of Daoism, showcasing his familiarity with the Daoist tradition, which is referred to as “the way of the immortals” (*shinsen no michi* 神仙之道). He asserts the tradition's continued vibrancy and efficacy, which is crucial if the validity of Chen's prognostication is to be accepted. Reigen then mentions that he is “peacefully” residing within the imperial grounds (termed the Guye mountains, itself laden with Daoist associations) which he offers as further reason that the way of the immortals is not “neglected.” It is here that the immortal's prophetic verse is adduced as evidence of the spiritual virtue of the native Japanese gods, something that directly redounds to the imperial house's prestige, being as it is, descended from the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu 天照. The immortal (*shinnin* 真人, or “perfected one” as expressed by Reigen) is definitely identified as Chen Tuan rather than Chen Bo evidenced in Reigen's use of the

⁵⁹ Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1, p. 1.

name Xiyi (Inaudible and Invisible). Chen Tuan's prescience is portrayed as extending all the way from China, separated by ten thousand li, due to "the spiritual virtue of the eight million gods of our divine nation that reached to and was felt in China."⁶⁰ Following this, Reigen then extols the virtue of his father Go-Mizunoo, and after a brief account of the work's commission, he reiterates his desire for the people to know that "the virtue of the gods has not attenuated even in the present day. The wondrous function of the divine powers is beyond reckoning."⁶¹ It becomes apparent that the overriding theme of Reigen's preface is to assert the primacy of the native gods, which is in part achieved by recognizing the validity of Chen Tuan's prophetic powers, which were responsible for prognosticating his birth. It could be argued that since the Ōbaku monks were the ostensible custodians of Chen, through Reigen's imprimatur regarding Chen and his prophetic verse, they could assert a direct and legitimate connection to the imperial house, something that would have been a welcome addition as Ōbaku's former prominence waned after 1680. On the other hand, from what we have seen, Reigen and the imperial house were at a low point around this period as they attempted to assert their ceremonial primacy against bakufu opposition. Considered either way, the *Tōzuihen* is truly a unique work within the vast world of Japanese literary and religious tracts. As proposed above, it can be read as an attempt by Chinese and Japanese Ōbaku Zen monks who appropriated a Daoist figure into the Buddhist fold in order to perpetuate closer ties with the Japanese imperial house; or, looked at from another angle, a work commissioned by an emperor hoping to increase his prestige through recognition by a foreign deity.

Tōzuihen's Circulation: An Internal Text?

The question of the text's circulation should be addressed. The *Tōzuihen* exists only in manuscript form and was never published, leading us to question the compositional intent of its authors. There is the distinct possibility that the text was all along intended to be an internal document within the Ōbaku school. If this were true, it would seem to negate the thesis that the text was an attempt to attract Reigen's favor. However, this need not necessarily be the case as it was much more crucial that Reigen accepted the events depicted in the text than it was for it to be exposed to a wider

⁶⁰ *Kedashi waga shinkoku no yaoyorozu no kami no reitoku shuiki ni kantsū suru koto no itasu tokoro nari* 蓋吾神国八百万神之靈德感通于殊域之所致。

⁶¹ *Hito o shite shintoku no kōki ima ni itaritemo usuragazaru koto o shirashimen to hossu, jinzū no myōyū kisoku subekarazu* 欲令人知神德光照至今不磷、神通妙用不可窺測也。

and anonymous readership. The Ōbaku school had much to gain by a close association with a retired emperor, even if he was in an antagonistic relationship with the bakufu. Considered one way, it would seem plausible that the text was never meant for publication at all since any attempt by Reigen to increase his prestige or position by means of this text could easily have been squashed by the military authorities. Thus, it seems possible that the text was intended to be presented to Reigen, although not to leave the confines of the Ōbaku school.

One thing that can be safely asserted is that production of the text was rather awkward for both the Ōbaku monks as well as for Reigen and the imperial house. As Zen monks in Japan, with its more rigid division of tradition and sect, the Ōbaku monks' penchant for Daoist divination would have been something that they would not have wanted widely exposed. For Reigen and the imperial house, it may have seemed hopeless to assert the recognition of a Daoist divinity within the more pragmatic concerns of bakufu suppression. Whatever the provenance of this text, it remains one of the most original, and problematic, in early modern Japan.⁶²

Authenticity of the Text: History or Hoax?

Of course, the question that begs to be asked is whether this text is authentic and if the retired emperor Reigen actually had a hand in ordering the *Tōzuihen*'s compilation and writing of the preface. The truth of the matter is that, apart from the *Tōzuihen* itself, there are no sources that corroborate the contents or genesis of the work. Jiang Wu asserts that, while it is known that Yinyuan had contact with the Daoist immortal, "the prophesy was obviously a deliberate act of myth-making, with certain political implications."⁶³ Wu also points to the fact that the prophetic verse was not mentioned by Yinyuan or other Ōbaku monks when they first arrived in Japan, but rather "came to light" when the *Tōzuihen* was presented in 1705.⁶⁴ From this Wu concludes that Gaoquan may have been the one responsible for "making up" Yinyuan's Daoist link with Chen Tuan. This is not to conclude that the whole text is a production and that a coterie of Ōbaku monks seized on the "Poems on Immortals" found within the *Huangboshan sizhi* and fabricated the whole story surrounding Chen Tuan's verse, although this possibility distinctly exists. There is an interesting clue, however, that leads one

⁶² The author would like to thank Jiang Wu for sharing his insights regarding the issue of the text's circulation.

⁶³ Wu 2004, p. 101.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

to accept the possibility that Reigen did have access to a text called the *Tōzuihen*. Five thousand six hundred and forty of Reigen's poems from the sixty-two-year period from 1670 until his death in 1732 are collected in an anthology called the *Tōzui gyoshū* 桃麁御集. *Tōzui* is not a topos in Japanese poetry, nor is it a word encountered in Japanese literature at all, so the question remains as to how this word became affixed to Reigen's poetry collection. Sources agree that it was Reigen himself who selected *Tōzuishū* as the name for the collection, what is not widely known is "why."⁶⁵ Although he does not substantiate his reason for thinking such or his sources, Wada Hidematsu writes that the *tōzui* of the title is in fact derived from the *Tōzuihen*, a work he describes as being based on Chen Bo's prophetic poem that presaged Reigen's birth.⁶⁶

A recent discovery, however, sheds new light on the *Tōzuihen*. Formerly, there was nothing from Yinyuan's own hand that directly linked him to the prophetic "Sōkō shinshi" verse. Chen "No Smoke" does appear in the writings of Yinyuan, but the content of the "Sōkō shinshi" verse cannot be found in his collected works. There is a text, compiled in 1660 by Yinyuan, called the *Sanraishū* 三籟集, that comprises of 120 verses culled from the poetic works of three Yuan and Ming monks. According to the *Zengaku daijiten*, there is an appendix to the *Sanraishū* "of various writings [attributed] to Mr. Muen [No Smoke] Chin Haku [Chen Bo]. The text with head-notes was published in the twelfth year of Kanbun [1672]."⁶⁷ More correctly stated, the text with the appendix, the *Sanraishū chū* 三籟集註 (Commentary on the *Sanraishū*) was written by Yinyuan's dharma descendent Bairei Dōsetsu 梅嶺道雪 (1641–1717). At the end of the text is a section entitled "Fujibi" 附卮筆 (An Addendum of the Prophetic Brush) which is attributed to Mr. No Smoke Chen Bo, and is said to have been written on the occasion of "going to Mt. Shizhu with several others during which [they] visited Mr. Ke."⁶⁸ The third to the last verse in this series is the same as the "Sōkō shinshi"

⁶⁵ The *Tōzuishū* is also variously known as *Reigen-in gyosei shū* 靈元院御製集, *Reigen hōō gyoshū* 靈元法皇御集, and *Reigen-in goeisō* 靈元院御詠草. Reigen himself named the work *Tōzuishū*. See Inukai 1986, p. 1072, s.v. "*Reigen-in gyosei shū*"; Ichiko et al. 1983–85, vol. 6, p. 262, s.v. "*Reigen hōō gyoshū*." This fact strongly leads to the conclusion that Reigen was indeed familiar with the *Tōzuihen*, and significantly concerned with the work.

⁶⁶ Wada 1933, p. 419.

⁶⁷ *Zengaku Daijiten Hensanjo* 1978, vol. 1, p. 411.

⁶⁸ The original reads, "*Onajiki shoshi sekichiku ni asobite, kanete Ka shi o tazunu*" 同諸子遊石竹兼訪柯子 (Bairei 1672). In the head-note to the text "Mr. Ke" is said to be the name of [another] immortal (*sennin wa Ka sei nari* 仙人柯姓也). The note on Chen describes him as an immortal from the Song dynasty whose name is "Bo" and appellation is "No Smoke."

verse. There is little reason to believe that there existed a direct link between this verse and Yinyuan at the time of its composition, much less for it serving as a vehicle for connecting Yinyuan and the imperial house through Reigen. However, in a recent catalogue issued by the Komazawa University Museum of Zen Culture and History,⁶⁹ there is a scroll written in Yinyuan's own hand and dated to the sixth month of 1655, roughly a year after his arrival in Japan and seventeen years before publication of the verse in the *Sanraishū chū* and a full fifty years before the *Tōzuihen*'s presentation to Reigen (1705). Yinyuan wrote it while he was still at Sōfukuji in Nagasaki, just before his move to Fumonji in Settsu. The scroll only includes the verse,

Even if I thoroughly chew the yellow root, my teeth are not cold.
On this occasion it should be known that there is a pass for Zen
[to flourish]. On the day that three thousand peach buds first burst
forth, I will await to eat together with the immortal.⁷⁰

There is no reason to assume that Yinyuan or anyone else at this time saw this verse as an otherworldly link to the Japanese imperial house. There is not even an attribution to Chen Bo. There are a number of important points to be gleaned from this discovery, however. Firstly, one can reasonably assert that Yinyuan knew of this verse before his trip to Japan considering that it is dated so soon after his arrival. This suggests the possibility that the attribution to Chen Bo was a later addition, used as a mechanism to portray Yinyuan's journey to Japan as supernaturally ordained. Later, by means of the same tactic, a group of Ōbaku monks and figures associated with the imperial house made use of the attribution to Chen Bo, now reinterpreted as Chen Tuan, the illustrious prophetic immortal, to forge a strong otherworldly link, a symbiotic connection which could redound to the prestige of both.

⁶⁹ Komazawa Daigaku Zen Bunka Rekishi Hakubutsukan 駒澤大学禅文化歴史博物館.

⁷⁰ The original reads, “*Ōkon o kamitsukushite ha samukarazu. Kige ni zen no kan aru koto o shiru beshi. Sanzen no tōzui hajimete shōzuru hi, motte shinjin to tomoni taisan suru koto o matsu*” 嚼尽黄根菌不寒 可知機下有禅関 三千桃蕊初生日 以待真人共对餐 (Komazawa Daigaku Zen Bunka Rekishi Hakubutsukan 2007, p. 25). In a private conversation with the scholar-monk Tanaka Chizei of the Ōbaku Cultural Research Institute (Ōbakusan Manpukuji Bunkaden 黄檗山萬福寺文華殿), I was informed that formerly at a training school for Ōbaku monks, within the curriculum of literary Chinese this was the first verse that the students were required to learn. It was explained in class as having been Chen Tuan's parting verse to Yinyuan, but it is not known exactly when this became so interpreted. Mr. Tanaka mentioned that a detailed study of the scroll's box and the scroll itself could possibly reveal new insights, although a thorough investigation of both is beyond the scope of this current study. This remains a path of inquiry for a future study. Private conversation at the Ōbakusan Manpukuji Bunkaden, Kyoto, 2 July 2010.

It is difficult to determine how much, if any, influence the *Tōzuihen* had in relations between the Ōbaku school and the imperial house. Since the text is mentioned nowhere else, and considering that it is little-known among scholars, it is reasonable to conclude that the text ultimately had little influence on the history of the Ōbaku school in Japan. Today the text exists as a remnant of what may have been an attempt on the part of the Ōbaku monks and imperial house to ameliorate their respective situations.

Conclusion

While the Ōbaku monks may not have been unique in China, the cultural milieu within which they lived and trained, their continental pedigree set them very much apart from their Japanese Buddhist brethren at the time. They came to Japan and diffused the most recent trends and developments of Chinese Buddhism, which, superimposed on the landscape of Japanese Buddhist practice, caused quite a sensation. This eventually came to serve as the occasion for Japanese Buddhism to take a long introspective look at its own identity, models, and practices. Ming Buddhism, needless to say, is not simply a collection of purely Buddhist rituals and texts since elements of folk religion and practice, much of which is Daoist in provenance, also came to pervade the tradition. As we have seen above, one expression of this Daoist influence—if we may use the word “influence” in the case of a natural cultural accretion—was the practice of spirit writing, or *fuji*, the prognosticating planchette through which human beings attempt to communicate with immortals or gods from the spirit world. This was the asserted mechanism by which Yinyuan was said to have communicated with Chen Bo, the obscure immortal who later came to be identified as Chen Tuan.

Besides being a renowned Daoist immortal, Chen Tuan also has prominent characteristics which make him an apt spiritual benefactor to the Ōbaku monks. One of these is his association with officialdom, most conspicuously seen in his supposed meeting with Song Taizong, which contributed to his being viewed as the legitimizing saint of the new dynasty. It is my contention that, as the Ōbaku monks were facing a downturn in their fortunes in Japan, they seized on this by trying to forge a connection with one of the founts of Japanese political and cultural authority—the imperial house. That the Ōbaku monks made recourse to a Daoist practice (*fuji*) and a Chinese immortal in their dealings with the imperial house was not an extraneous maneuver since the Japanese imperial house itself is rich in Daoist influence and associations.

Comprised of chapters written by Chinese and Japanese Ōbaku monks, courtiers, and a preface by Emperor Reigen himself, the *Tōzuihen*'s unique content is only matched by the novelty of its agenda, namely, the assertion of a supernaturally validated spiritual connection between a resident Chinese monk and a retired Japanese sovereign. The extreme ambiguity of the single verse which serves as the impetus and rationale of this connection requires an elaborate and contrived justification, and this is what the *Tōzuihen* attempts to achieve. One aspect of this justification, the reinterpreting of Chen Bo with Chen Tuan, showcases the deliberate nature of the textual agenda.

The unique character and content of this text must be considered within its historical context. The *Tōzuihen* can very plausibly be interpreted as an attempt by a coterie of Ōbaku monks to reestablish a connection to the imperial house after the death of Go-Mizunoo, the steadfast imperial patron of the Ōbaku school. The establishment of a supernaturally validated connection between Yinyuan and Reigen would be one such means to achieve this end. Considered from another angle, however, the *Tōzuihen* can also be seen as a tool produced for the aggrandizement of the Japanese imperial house. When looked at in this way, Yinyuan himself becomes an appropriated figure much in the manner of Chen Tuan.

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