

Postface

Whenever Professor Yoshitaka Iriya raised his bushy eyebrows to select a student for reading in his 1990 class on Chan records at Hanazono University, the students stared at the Chinese text or their notebook with varying degrees of absorption. Depending on their acting skills, some managed to participate for a whole year without having to expose their (in)abilities even once. But sitting just behind me was a student almost double their age, a high school mathematics teacher who at age 38 had quit his job to become a student at our university: Shun Murakami. He was not only supremely willing and capable of reading the Chinese text of the *Record of Yunmen* in the required kanbun fashion but kept handing over papers to Prof. Iriya at the beginning of the lesson. These papers usually dealt with some passage that we had read the previous week, and Prof. Iriya sometimes devoted a good portion of class time to the discussion of Murakami's thoughts. While Prof. Iriya in his publications is reticent to offer wayward interpretations and is, as the world's foremost specialist on the language of Chan texts, supremely equipped to exclude many conclusions a less knowledgeable reader might come up with, he showed himself in his classes as open to various approaches as one could be. And the opinions offered by Mr. Murakami always had a definite thrust to them; avoiding the vagueness that characterizes some Japanese writing and scholarship, he strove to set the stage by advancing a clearcut argument which he then used to draw conclusions, as one would expect from a mathematician. His interpretations often showed a kind of psychological approach, an attempt to interpret the text from the point of view of its author; at the same time, broad themes of the history of ideas crept in here and there. The section on Master Yunmen's teaching (chapter 3 of the second part) in this book reflects this approach well; it was written while he still was an undergraduate student. The section on Master Zhaozhou's teaching, on the other hand, is based on the outstanding thesis that concluded his formidable undergraduate days at Hanazono University.

Since he was a quiet and humble person, he did not advertise that he was very proficient in English; but alerted to this fact, I was lucky enough to gain his cooperation for various tasks at our institute. In 1992, he became my assistant in the Zen KnowledgeBase research project, and he soon also grew close to our institute's director, Prof. Seizan Yanagida. Prof. Yanagida immediately detected the unmistakable signs of great scholarly potential, and when he was awarded the very sizeable award of the Bukkyō dendō kyōkai for scholarly work in 1993, he

decided to use the entire amount of money for a scholarship stipend that enabled Mr. Murakami to write a doctoral thesis without financial worries and distraction. By then, Mr. Murakami had entered the graduate program in Buddhist studies at Ryûkoku University in Kyoto. He exhibited great interest in Huayan thought and Yogacara doctrine and found, as Prof. Yanagida pointed out in his foreword, very capable teachers at Ryûkoku. Mr. Murakami went about his work with a speed and productivity that reminded one of Mozart or Schubert — a flame that burned quickly and brightly. While taking graduate courses and assisting me with various tasks at the institute, giving seminars at Ryûkoku and actively participating at research meetings on Chan records, he managed to produce a stream of excellent papers that resonated in the scholarly world (see appended bibliography). Some of these papers now form part of the present work. The sections on Buddha-nature and No-mind are examples that demonstrate the breadth of scope and depth of scholarship that surprised teachers, colleagues, and friends alike. As was apparent from many discussions, his interest was far from limited to Chan or Chinese Buddhism; rather, we often spoke about differences and similarities between Indian, Chinese, and Western approaches and thought not only with regard to religion but also to natural science and philosophy. In the researches included in this volume, this wide horizon is noticeable behind the sharp focus of the argument. Sections 3 and 4 of the first part, for example, correlate early Chan teachings with Huayan and Yogacara doctrine.

Struck by a cancer and aware of impending death, he kept working at breakneck speed on the project which was to synthesize his previous efforts into a coherent work. The present book represents what he managed to achieve before his body refused to even let him type. The table of contents reflects Mr. Murakami's vision of the project two months before his death in June of 1995; the sections marked by ※ were not yet written or consist of notes that do not yet form a coherent argument. The last section, which is devoted to the Chan circle (*ensô*), indicates the direction his research was likely to take next; he had a longstanding interest in the significance and use of symbols, and he saw that the Chan texts provided a very interesting basis for developing this thought. It is to be hoped that, with the help of Prof. Yanagida, Mr. Murakami's additional work on this topic may appear in the future.

The arduous task of producing a volume out of a multitude of unformatted computer files, verifying all references, adding cross-references, following the author's leads for completing some footnotes, etc. necessitated the combined efforts of a number of people. It could not have been achieved without the devoted initiative and collaboration of Mr. Murakami's

closest friend and confidante, Naomi Maeda, who had already edited some of his earlier papers for the journals published by the Institute of Zen Studies. A member of my Zen KnowledgeBase research team, Kumiko Fujimoto, spent extraordinary amounts of time and effort to verify references, design missing characters, and expertly lead the whole project from simple text files to camera-ready copy. Additional thanks go to Rie Abe who again demonstrated her impressive proofreading skills; to Prof. Yoshio Nishiguchi who, ever his humble self, offered many valuable leads and expert advice, particularly for the completion of a number of notes that his friend Murakami only sketched; and to Sachiko Usami who managed to survey and catalogue Mr. Murakami's study library, now housed at our institute, in record time.

We were all privileged to be Mr. Murakami's friends; he will live on in our hearts. May his thought do so in yours, dear reader.

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