



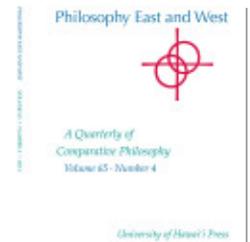
PROJECT MUSE®

The Chan Whip Anthology: A Companion to Zen Practice by Jeffrey L. Broughton (review)

Steven Heine

Philosophy East and West, Volume 65, Number 4, October 2015, pp.
1291-1293 (Review)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press
DOI: [10.1353/pew.2015.0085](https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2015.0085)



➔ For additional information about this article
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pew/summary/v065/65.4.heine.html>

The Chan Whip Anthology: A Companion to Zen Practice. Translated by Jeffrey L. Broughton with Elise Yoko Watanabe. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 240. Paper \$35.00, ISBN 978-0-190-20072-5.



Reviewed by **Steven Heine**
Florida International University
heines@fiu.edu

The Chan Whip Anthology: A Companion to Zen Practice, a richly annotated bilingual translation by Jeffrey Broughton, along with a substantial introductory essay situating the *Chan Whip Anthology* (based on the *Chan'guan cejin* from around 1600) in its appropriate religious and philosophical contexts, provides a very valuable contribution to our understanding of the overall textuality of the Chan/Zen school. Broughton has produced several first-rate renderings, based on the highest scholarly standards, by making great use of the vast resources of Japanese commentaries and reference works and some of the major works of classical Chinese Chan, ranging from writings by Bodhidharma and Zongmi to the recorded sayings of Linji. Here, he adds significantly to available academic work on author/compiler Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲袞宏 (1535–1615), a crucial late-Ming-dynasty Buddhist thinker relatively overlooked or perhaps better known for other kinds of compositions from his large, thirty-four-volume complete works, in a way that will be greatly appreciated by specialists and that will also be worthwhile for use in advanced classes covering East Asian religions.

Chun-fang Yü was the first author in Western scholarship to examine in depth Zhuhong's considerable impact on the revival of Buddhism, during a key transitional phase of Chinese history, in the monograph *Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-Hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981). The only other translation of the *Chan Whip Anthology*, by J. C. Cleary in *Meditating with Koans* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1992), although beneficial in many ways, did not attempt to provide the extensive documentation that Broughton accomplishes in such a thorough and insightful fashion. This new version is a complete and reliable translation that includes the full Chinese edition appended near the end of the volume (pp. 170–200). With its "Index to the *Chan Whip* by Section" (pp. 205–208) and other helpful research tools, the book is exceptionally informative in regard to so many different aspects of explicating terminology and conceptual meaning that it inspires one to read and reread the text in order to absorb all the relevant perspectives and implications.

The *Chan Whip Anthology*, which plays a vital role in Buddhist history, features a distinctive approach to Zen philosophy; it is composed in a rather unique literary style that draws from but is somewhat different from most other Zen genres that have been translated into English. Historically, the *Chan Whip Anthology* is important because it represents the relatively little explored period of the late Ming and incorporates many ingredients of Yuan dynasty Chan literature, when Zhuhong helped

promote the use of *gong'an* (*kōan*) study as the key to the path to enlightenment. Zhuhong more generally sought ways of establishing accord between the thought of Chan and Pure Land and the respective ritual techniques of *gong'an* and *nianfo*. This was done in light of the finding of pervasive underlying connections or convergences between the path of silent transmission and doctrines expressed in Mahāyāna sūtras, as well as the antinomian tendencies of Zen and the role of ethics in Confucianism, while further taking into account the challenges to Buddhism as a whole based on recent inroads made in China by sixteenth-century Jesuit missionaries, which Zhuhong fiercely rejected.

From the standpoint of philosophy, the anchor for Zhuhong's evaluative account of the history of Chan theory and practice is his appropriation of the legacy of the notion of *huatou*, which Broughton translates as "cue" while discussing this editorial choice in relation to the more typical renderings of "critical phrase" or "key word" (pp. 3, 35–38), so as to highlight the process or means of metaphorically pointing to the moon rather than to focus on the end in itself (or moon). Also, the term *yi*, usually translated simply as "doubt," for Broughton is "indecision-and-apprehension," so as to convey a fuller sense of the complex emotions evoked in religious training. The cue method for interpreting the significance of *gong'an*, introduced by Dahui during the Southern Song dynasty and further developed during the Yuan dynasty by Gaofeng Yuanmiao and his disciple Zhongfeng Mingben, became the dominant form of training in all of the Linji/Rinzai lineages, and its significance is made all the more clear through access to Zhuhong's approach.

In the Introduction, Broughton explains in detail how Zhuhong's reforms were indebted to the writings of Dahui and Gaofeng, in addition to various other sources including Indian Buddhist writings, Tang dynasty Chan discourse records, the *Mind-Mirror Record* of Yongming Yanshou, Song dynasty transmission-of-the-lamp records and biographies, and miscellaneous Yuan dynasty compilations. Broughton shows how Zhuhong, in turn, greatly influenced Hakuin and other subsequent developments in the Japanese Rinzai sect of the Edo period, while also explaining Hakuin's objections to Zhuhong's apparent compromise with *nianfo/nembutsu* recitation. The *Chan Whip Anthology* is also reflective of the outlook of Korean Son schools of practice, as in Hyujong's *Guide to Son*, published two decades before Zhuhong's work, so that it is crucial for knowing the whole gamut of East Asian Chan/Son/Zen thought in the premodern as well as modern eras.

In terms of style, Zhuhong was an opponent of a more literary view of *gong'an* training, as indicated in the preface (p. 65), which emphasizes through wordplay related to the book's title the role of expressions that use fewer words in order to create a greater motivation for trainees. He created a handbook to be used in a convenient way by monks at the time, who were encouraged to keep the work on their desk or in their travel bag for easy reference. The *Chan Whip* is first and foremost a manual for training that was meant to be accessible both as a body of writing that is eminently readable yet offers spiritual illumination and as a material object that is portable and is as easy to carry or transport as it is to digest. Many of the most compelling extracts cited by Zhuhong are early examples of autobiography in the Chinese literary tradition, or "the detailed self-narration of a life spent on the arduous

stages of the Chan path” (p. 15). These anecdotes forego abstract discussions of theory in favor of personal reflections; incitements through preaching, maxims, or catchphrases; and epistles to lay devotees that highlight the ebb and flow of everyday preparation, including the effects of the so-called Chan malady or psychosomatic illness linked to the anxiety and doubt invariably incurred as a necessary step in the cue training method.

One concern I have is with the longer translated version of the title that is cited on the first page of the Introduction but that was abbreviated for the book’s main title: *Whip for Spurring Students Onward Through the Chan Barrier Checkpoints*. Although Broughton offers an explanation in a lengthy footnote that is somewhat convincing, it should be pointed out that this rendering covers just the four Chinese characters of the *Chan’guan cejin* 禪關策進. There are two main issues here. First, “whip” (策) is accurate in referring to how a horse is prodded but could refer more to the abstract notion of an exhortation with urgent admonitions for disciples rather than a physical item; see also passage number 111 with the discussion in note 96 (pp. 167–168). Second, it seems sufficient to render the word 關, originally referred to as a “frontier pass” crossed by travelers requiring scrutiny of credentials by the gatekeeper in what would today be called a security check, by either “barrier” or “checkpoint” instead of resorting to the redundancy of using both words, especially since the main text opens with a discussion of the oxymoronic nature of the concept in a tradition that highlights the absence of intellectual boundaries or borders.

Alternative translations of the title are “Prodding (or Spurring) Students through the Checkpoints of Chan,” or “Recommendations for Making Progress with Chan Barriers,” or “How to Pass Through Chan Gates.” However, this is a very minor point that can be discussed and debated from various angles, and it in no way intrudes upon the merits of this excellent and well-produced volume. Despite its ample scholarly apparatus, the *Chan Whip Anthology* retains the sense of constituting a handy-to-use manual with “limpid prose . . . devoid of highfalutin discussions and abstract thought” (p. 39) despite—or perhaps because of—Broughton’s grounding in the classical style of writing, much as Zhuhong originally intended.

Begriff und Bild der modernen japanischen Philosophie (Concept and image of modern Japanese philosophy). Edited by Raji C. Steineck, Elena Louisa Lange, and Paulus Kaufmann. Stuttgart: frommann-holzboog, 2014. Pp. 348. €68. ISBN 978-3-772-82629-0.



Reviewed by **Hans Peter Liederbach**

Kwansei Gakuin University

hpl@kwansei.ac.jp

In the West, philosophy in Japan still is chronically understudied. In part, this is understandable: there is the seemingly insurmountable language barrier, the fact that