

Closing remarks

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It is a great joy for us as part of the “International Zen Research Project” that we were able to invite so many specialists from around the world, and in particular, Professor Bernard Faure, to hold this international symposium “On the Front Line of Studies of the History of Early Chan Buddhism.” The holding of this type of large international symposium follows on from the “International Dogen Studies Symposium” last year. There, university president Takemura Makio gave the keynote speech, and we were very thankful that he was able to join us here on the first day to give an opening address in which he explained how philosophy is the founding principle of the university. We are extremely grateful for his participation.

What I feel strongly from the research presented over the last two days is that, although it might be summed up as “early Chan Buddhism studies,” there is really a wide spectrum of research approaches. On the one hand there is research on the Dunhuang manuscripts and the unilateral characteristics of the Chan school, and on the other there is work that explores the relationship between early Chan thought and that of precursors such as *Daśabhūmikā* and *Mahāyānasamgraha*. There is work that deals with the relationship between Chan as a religious organization and the precepts, and there is also work on what was the taboo theme of sex in Chinese Chan. The wide variety of approaches

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shows us that there is much room for new studies on early Chan history.

Speaking from a personal standpoint, among all of the specialists assembled here, there are those with whom I have been acquainted for many years, and there are those with whom I have been fortunate enough to be involved more frequently in recent years. Again, there are those whom I have been able to meet here for the first time. This goes not just for me, and I think all of you attending can say the same. The real reason that we started the International Zen Studies Project with research funding from MEXT was to bring Chan research to a higher level by creating a space where researchers from around the world can come together and exchange ideas. With this symposium, I believe that we met that aim in the field of “early Chan research.”

I am just speaking for myself here, but I want to extend my personal gratitude to the late John McRae and to Bernard Faure as outstanding pioneers in this field.

It was over ten years ago, but we were lucky enough to have Professor McRae give a lecture at Toyo University’s Institute of Oriental Studies. He just happened to be residing in Japan, and upon hearing that, the head of the institute requested he give a lecture. I cannot remember the content of the lecture at all, but I have one lasting strong memory from that event. That is, Professor McRae was wearing a necktie with a large picture of a bikini-clad woman on it. It was so strange to see, that I risked sounding rude by asking him about it. He replied, “Well, it’s only good manners to wear a necktie at formal events in Japan, no?” This was actually strong criticism of a Japanese society that only cares about outward appearances. At that time, it really made me feel that, if one is to study Chan, one must take this sort of approach.

Professor McRae was an eminent scholar, but he did not rest on that, and he was actually living Chan. Recently, the relationship between Chan and the precepts has been a frequent topic of focus, but thinking now, it seems that Professor McRae had been foreshadowing this.

On the other hand, my first chance to meet Professor Faure was even earlier, some twenty-something years ago, before I had joined the faculty at Toyo University. Having deeply admired the intellectual originality of Professor Faure's writings, when I heard that he was giving a lecture at Komazawa University I headed down there and presented him with a few of the essays I had written up until that point. I had meant this as a sort of replacement for handing over a business card, but it was around a week later, I think, when the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies conference was being held in Kyoto and I unexpectedly met Professor Faure a second time. During our conversation, I was surprised to learn that he had already read and processed the information in my essays. I was overjoyed to have a professor I respect so much read my work. Sometime after that I got my hands on a copy of a book he had published in the United States, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, and upon seeing that the essays I had given him were quoted inside I was again overjoyed. After that, and to this day, it has been a great source of encouragement in my research. One of the reasons I have continued until now has been due to Professor Faure.

I have just been speaking for myself, but I think my experience shows how deeply significant it can be for a researcher to meet other researchers. Until now, I had not had time to be conscious of my own age, but when I look at those of you in attendance today, it seems that I have somehow ended up in the category of older researcher. It is my

sincere hope that this symposium has provided an opportunity for the participating researchers, and particularly the younger researchers, to make valuable new acquaintances. And, here, I would like to end the symposium and extend my sincere gratitude to you all.

(Translated by Stefan Grace)