

The Role of *Mondō* (Conversations) in Hōnen's Life and Work

Martin REPP

Ryukoku University

In this article I would like to introduce and analyze some of the *mondō* 問答 appearing in the writings and hagiographies of Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212), the acclaimed founder of the Japanese Pure Land school (Jōdo-shū). This study is part of an ongoing research project on different forms of communication and their role in Buddhism. Among verbal communications one can distinguish between monologues, such as sermons (*seppō* 説法, *hōwa* 法話) and dialogical forms, such as *mondō*, *kōan* 公案, *dangi* 談義, and *rongi* 論義. As indicated by the characters of the term, *mondō* are conversations in the form of question and answers, which in the Buddhist context are mostly conducted between the master and disciples or lay-people. In normal *mondō*, the student or lay person first takes the initiative and poses questions and then the master responds. This order, however, is reversed in Zen *kōan*, a special form of *mondō*; here it is the master who begins the conversation by asking oftentimes nonsensical questions in order to help the student break through rational thinking and attain awakening.

In distinction to ordinary *mondō*, *dangi* and *rongi* are more formal debates and consist of sequences of numerous *mondō*; they are applied in doctrinal disputes between different schools and/or practiced in the doctrinal training of monks within the monastic education system. All these kinds of verbal communications have been recorded frequently, especially for the purpose of study by later generations. A typical case of such a textualization process can be seen in actual *mondō* that concern doctrinal questions, such as discrepancies or contradictions in canonical scriptures. These were often included (and sometimes modified) in commentaries and systematic treatises, which often consisted of prose in monologue form as well as *mondō* sections.

In this study I will treat *mondō* in Hōnen's writings and hagiographies. *Dangi* and *rongi* also appear in his writings, but in the interests of space I shall concentrate my investigation in this article only on *mondō*. The focus of my present research is not so much on the content of *mondō*, even though it is equally important and interesting, but rather on their different forms and the role they play. Thereby I hope to shed more light on the interplay between the forms and the contents of *mondō*.

In Hōnen's case there are a number of *mondō* which were actually held, recorded,

and finally included in his collected works (*Kurodani Shōnin gotōroku* 黒谷上人語燈録). Although his later hagiographies contain many *mondō*, it is not easy to judge whether they were authentic recordings, or to what extent they were edited or even created by compilers in order to fit the purpose of the hagiography. Here I would like to introduce *mondō* from Hōnen's works and hagiographies in an attempt to clarify the questions of how *mondō* function, the results they bear and to what purpose they serve. I will begin with a brief introduction to the etiquette of conversations and an anecdote about Hōnen's life, and then I will consider *mondō* in accordance with the different types of interlocutors, such as his disciples, lay followers, and known monks from other religious orders.

1. Etiquette of Conversations

The basic etiquette of *mondō*, like in any ordinary conversation, consists of greetings in the beginning and at the end. There are also other forms of etiquette, in accordance with cultural differences, such as the way of sitting down and standing up, or the way to pose questions and to give answers. The early Indian sutras present a vivid picture of such etiquette in conversations between the Buddha and his disciples or with other people. In Hōnen's *mondō*, such elements of etiquette are rarely mentioned although there is one case in which their absence is recorded. Once the Shingon monk Myōhen 明遍 asked Hōnen questions concerning Pure Land teachings. At the end of this *mondō*, the person who recorded it mentions: "Before and after this *mondō*, [Myōhen] did not exchange any greetings, and (thus) he left."¹ Apparently the bystanders noticed the interlocutor's lack of etiquette as a peculiarity of this conversation.²

Another interesting aspect of this *mondō* is its peculiar form of conversation which is cast in different modes of politeness in speech. According to the formulations of the first exchange, "Myōhen deigned to respectfully present the question" (*Myōhen mon tatematsurite no tamawaku* 明遍問たてまつりての給はく), whereupon "The Holy Man deigned to respond" (*Shōnin kotaete no tamawaku* 上人答ての給はく).³ The expression "respectfully present the question" clearly marks the politeness of a person in a lower status communicating with a person in a superior position. The level of politeness in the introductory formulations to the

¹ HSZ p. 693; cf. Coates and Ishizuka 1949, p. 318 f. For this and subsequent translations of Hōnen's *mondō* I have also consulted the rendering into modern Japanese by Ōhashi 1989 III.

² This reminds one of the direct and sometimes rude communication style of Zen *kōan*.

³ HSZ p. 692.

subsequent exchanges is somewhat tuned down, but still retains the different positions between interlocutor and respondent when we read: “The Abbot said” (*Sōzu no iwaku* 僧都のいはく, whereas the “Holy Man deigned to respond” (*Shōnin kotaete no tamawaku* 上人答ての給はく).⁴

By formulating questions and answers in such a way, the person who recorded the *mondō* makes a clear distinction in rank between Hōnen and Myōhen. However, this sharply contrasts with their real socio-religious positions in contemporary society since the title of an abbot signifies a high clerical rank whereas “holy man” is at that time an honorable title informally attributed by followers to their revered teacher. Actually, Hōnen's clerical status was that of an ordinary monk (*shamon* 沙門).⁵ Such an inversion of positions may be explained by the assumption that a follower of Hōnen recorded the conversation and expressed thereby his respect for his teacher. The final remark that Myōhen left without formal greetings, however, seems to record an actual lack of respect. However this may be, these observations indicate that in *mondō* also the relationship of psychological and social inferiority and superiority plays a role between the interlocutor seeking answers to questions, and the respondent who “deigns” to give them.

There is another unusual form of behavior during a conversation that is recorded in the *Hōnen Shōnin gyōjō ezu* 法然上人行状絵図 hagiography. Here it is mentioned that in a discussion between the young Hōnen and his teacher Eikū 叡空 (? – 1179) the master suddenly lost his temper and threw a wooden headrest (*makura*) towards the disciple who reacted fast enough to avoid being hit by the projectile.⁶ Beginning with a very similar anecdote, in the subsequent sections I shall introduce a number of *mondō* according to different types of interlocutors.

2. Hōnen's Discussions with His Teacher Eikū

Hōnen hagiographies describe several doctrinal discussions (*mondō*) with his teacher Eikū. As mentioned, the *Hōnen Shōnin gyōjō ezu* narrates the anecdote of Eikū throwing the headrest towards his disciple in a discussion concerning the nature of precepts. Apparently Hōnen is portrayed here as the student who challenges the master's authority. According to another hagiography, however, the *Shūi kotoku-den ekotoba* 拾遺古徳伝絵詞, the master loses his temper in a

⁴ HSZ p. 692 f.

⁵ Cf. HSZ pp. 67; 97.

⁶ HSD p. 11.

controversial discussion concerning Pure Land teachings.⁷ When Eikū explains to him Genshin's 源信 (942-1017) *Ōjō yōshū* 往生要集, the main treatise of the Tendai Pure Land tradition, he states that this work teaches two forms of *nenbutsu* 念仏, the meditative (*kanbutsu* 観仏) and the recitative (*shōmyō* 称名), and that the meditative *nenbutsu* is the superior practice. Hereupon Hōnen counters that the recitative *nenbutsu* is foremost because it is the practice of Amida's original vow (*hongan* 本願). Eikū responds by referring to his own teacher Ryōnin 良忍 (1072-1132) who considered the meditation as superior. Hōnen, however, maintains that this contradicts the authority of the sutra text. Hereupon Eikū gets angry and throws the headrest towards the disciple.

We cannot be sure whether such conversation conveyed in this hagiography really took place, but this anecdote portrays the young Hōnen as being in the process of detaching himself from traditional Tendai Pure Land doctrine. This process apparently implied conflicts with his teacher. Thus, a didactic *mondō* turns into a controversial dispute when a certain tradition is replaced by doctrinal innovation.

3. Conversations with Disciples (Monks)

Next we turn our attention to Hōnen as someone who developed from a student to an independent teacher in his own right, and who eventually attracted a large number of students. The records of his *mondō* frequently state that they occurred occasionally (*aru toki tōte iwaku* ある時間ていはく).⁸ Quite a number of them seemed to have been rather informal. Once the occasion is mentioned that the conversation between Hōnen and his disciples took place on the way home to the monks' quarters.⁹ To the best of my knowledge, there are no sources indicating a formal setting of *mondō*, such as regularly scheduled classes.

According to the contents, the conversations with his disciples may be roughly divided between those *mondō* focusing on Pure Land teaching and practice, and those dealing with outside criticism. Therefore we can distinguish between didactic and apologetic forms of conversation between master and disciple. However, these categories may also overlap, like in the case of the following exchange from *Jūni mondō* 十二問答.

Question: "In [the passage on] the Deep [grounded] Mind (*jinshin* 深心) of

⁷ HSD p. 597 f.

⁸ Cf. HSZ p. 669 f.

⁹ HSZ p. 695.

[Shandao's] *Ōjō raisan* it is explained (*shaku* 釈): '[When reciting the *nenbutsu*] with [raising] the voice ten times or [only] once, one certainly attains birth [into the Pure Land]; one should not have a doubtful mind even for one moment (*ichi nen* 一念).' But in [his] Commentary [on the Contemplation Sutra] he explains in [the passage on] the Deep Mind: 'Not wasting any moment (*nen nen* 念念) is called the right and decisive karmic act.' Which one should I consider and determine for myself?"

Answer: "The explanation of [raising] the voice ten times or one time concerns the way of how to trust in the *nenbutsu* (*nenbutsu o shinzuru yō* 念仏ヲ信ズルヤウ). For this reason it is an explanation which recommends entrusting (*shin* 信) that birth [in the Pure Land] is settled through one *nen[butsu]*, but in respect to practice (*gyō* 行) one should strive throughout one's whole life. Again, according to [the passage] the Great Import [of the sutra], the explanation 'after the [trusting] mind has arisen [one should not stop practicing *nenbutsu*]' has to be made the basis [for this matter]."¹⁰

This represents a typical Buddhist *mondō* that is triggered by doctrinal discrepancies in sutras, commentaries, etc. The student raises doubtful points in teaching and practice which are extremely important insofar as they determine whether one attains religious liberation (*ōjō* 往生, *gedatsu* 解脱) or not. The role of the teacher is to clarify such questions and thus to remove the lingering doubts (*fushin* 不審). Such *mondō* may be called didactic or educational.

Whereas this kind of *mondō* concerns doctrinal issues associated with one's own religious tradition, another type is focused on the problem of the relationship between one's own school and other traditions, as the following exchange from *Jūni mondō* shows.

Question: "When a person from another school (tradition, *shū* 宗) asks whether one may have the liberty (*jiyū* 自由) and establish the name of *jōdo-shū* 浄土宗¹¹ besides the eight or nine schools, how should one respond?"

Answer: "To establish the name of a school (*shū*) is not contained in Buddha's teaching (sermons, *bussetsu* 仏説). Based on the teachings of those sutras on which oneself is focused, it consists of studying the principles (*gi* 義)

¹⁰ HSZ p. 636. For an English translation of the whole *mondō*, see Atone and Hayashi 1998.

¹¹ The word *jōdo-shū* means here the Pure Land teaching tradition; it should not be confused with Jōdo-shū, the later institutionalized Pure Land school based on Hōnen's teaching.

profoundly and judging contents and principles (*shūgi* 宗義). The names of schools are all [developed] in such way. Now, in respect to establishing the name of *jōdo-shū*, on the basis of the proper sutras of the Pure Land, previous teachers (patriarchs *sendatsu* 先達) profoundly awakened to the principle of Birth [into the Land of] Utmost Bliss and established the name of the school. [Only] a person who does not know the rise of schools asks such questions.”¹²

This kind of *mondō* between Hōnen and his disciples is triggered by criticism from outside. It serves the aim to ensure followers that one’s own religious belonging has a proper foundation and cannot be negated by outside critics. Hōnen’s disciples faced the challenge to define their proper place in the contemporary religious environment and to explain the relationship between their new movement and the traditional Buddhist establishment. In addition to this external direction, this kind of conversation is directed also towards inside the group since it helps to foster the identity of its members. I would call this kind of conversation an apologetic *mondō* since it defines the relationship to other schools.

4. Conversations with Lay Followers

An interesting aspect of *mondō* is that some of them contain valuable information about the time, the people and their religiosity which is not found in doctrinal works, for example. One such case is *Mondō 145 (Ippyaku shijūgo kajō mondō 百四十五箇条問答)* by an unknown person. Judging from the kind of questions, it was very likely a lady of higher social standing with a certain degree of literacy. This *mondō* reveals much about contemporary religiosity, especially folk beliefs.¹³ It is the longest among Hōnen’s recorded *mondō*. In distinction to other *mondō*, it is kept in the form of very brief exchanges between interlocutor and Hōnen. In this *mondō*, also, the date *Kennin gannen* (1201), twelfth month, fourteenth day, is mentioned. A few examples may serve here as illustration:

Question: “It is said that one does not [need to] keep abstinence (taboo, *imi*) when a child of (up to) seven years dies. How is that?”

Answer: “In Buddha’s teaching (*bukkyō* 仏教)¹⁴ there is not such a thing as

¹² HSZ p. 632.

¹³ For studies of the contents of this *mondō*, see Itō 1984 and Repp 1993.

¹⁴ *Bukkyō* in this case should not be translated as “Buddhism,” as this is the meaning in modern Japanese since the Meiji Restoration. In pre-modern usage, however, it has to be rendered as

taboo. This only applies to the mundane world (*sezoku* 世俗).”¹⁵

Question: “Is it true, as it is said, that one should refrain from visiting *kami* shrines and Buddha halls (*shinbutsu* 神仏) for one hundred days after childbirth?”

Answer: “Also in this respect there is no taboo in Buddha’s dharma (*buppō* 仏法).”¹⁶

Question: “It is said that it is a sin to die before one’s parents. How is that?”

Answer: “In this defiled world (we) have no power over [dying] before or after [our parents].”¹⁷

Question: “Should one receive sutra [-readings] by a priest?”

Answer: “If one is able to read by oneself, it is not necessary to receive [readings from] a priest.”¹⁸

Question: “Is it possible to attain Birth [in the Pure Land] even if one has not become a monk or nun (*shukke* 出家)?”

Answer: “There are many people who have attained birth as a lay person (*zaike* 在家).”¹⁹

Question: “What happens when a man or woman dies and their hair has not been shaven?”

Answer: “[Birth into the Pure Land] does not depend on hair, but on the *nenbutsu*.”²⁰

First a few comments on the formal aspect of these *mondō* shall be made. Even though these exchanges of question and answer are kept quite short, they are very much to the point. In his replies, Hōnen does not waste time in long and sophisticated doctrinal discourses, but his brief answers are particularly striking in their down-to-earth realism.

In one *mondō*, the lady expresses her motivation for consulting Hōnen: “I came here to hear your teaching ...”²¹ Thus, the interlocutor is searching for concrete religious orientation. Repeatedly she refers to hearsay when stating “as it is said.” Thus, she is aware of the opinion of others, but apparently not satisfied with them. In

“Buddha’s teaching” or as similar expressions.

¹⁵ HSZ p. 654 . For an English translation of the whole *mondō*, see Atone and Hayashi 2001.

¹⁶ HSZ p. 659.

¹⁷ HSZ p. 654.

¹⁸ HSZ p. 655.

¹⁹ HSZ p. 662.

²⁰ HSZ p. 662.

²¹ HSZ p. 648.

the midst of such diverse religious convictions she consults Hōnen for guidance. In another *mondō* she expresses her personal attitude towards Hōnen: “I ask because what you are saying is reliable (trustworthy).”²² This gives an important hint for the peculiar relationship between the interlocutor and respondent in this type of *mondō*. If there is no trust in the teacher, these questions would not have been posed.

As for the contents, the 145 *Mondō* discuss a wide range of religious questions, including folk religious beliefs, Confucian ethics, popular as well as general Buddhist practices, and Pure Land topics. Thus these *mondō* convey a vivid impression of the inner life of a woman at this time, and by extension, they also provide a colorful picture of the religious world of the early Kamakura period. Such valuable information may be found in contemporary poetry, but rarely in Buddhist doctrinal works.

The examples quoted here suggest this type of *mondō* may be called “edifying.” This is similar to the didactic function of Hōnen’s *mondō* with his disciples as interlocutors; however, the abstract doctrinal discourse of the latter does not appear so much in *mondō* with lay people. In their case, concrete questions of ordinary religious practice are of the greatest concern.

5. Discussions with Known Monks of the Time

In distinction to the *mondō* involving Hōnen’s clerical disciples and lay followers, the interlocutors of the following category of *mondō* are well known monks of the time and mostly affiliated with schools other than Tendai. Like in the case of disciples and lay followers, these monks take the initiative to approach Hōnen in order to receive clarification concerning certain topics. As mentioned before (cf. section 1), such a kind of communication creates the delicate situation where a monk of higher social standing occasionally appears as the interlocutor to a respondent of inferior standing.

Probably the best known among these monks is Shunjō-bō Chōgen 俊乘房重源 (1121-1206). After the destruction of the central state-temple Tōdai-ji by the Taira in 1180, the Imperial Court entrusted Chōgen with the enormous task of raising funds and collecting material (*kanjin* 勧進) to rebuild the huge hall and Buddha statue in Nara.²³ Chōgen was inclined towards the Pure Land beliefs of his time

²² HSZ p. 648.

²³ See Goodwin 1994, pp. 67-106.

(Insei Period), but he was not limited to that.²⁴ In 1190, Chōgen had invited Hōnen to lecture on the Three Pure Land Sutras at Tōdai-ji,²⁵ probably for those monks (*kanjin hijiri* 勧進聖) who were involved in the construction project. During the following year, a conversation between Chōgen and Hōnen took place which was recorded under the title *Tōdai-ji jū mondō* 東大寺十問答 and is dated *Kenkyū 2* (1191), third month, thirteenth day.²⁶ It consists of ten exchanges. Chōgen's first question is as follows:

“Is Shakyamuni's sacred teaching (*shōgyō* 聖教) [preached] during his lifetime all contained in *jōdo-shū* 淨土宗, and is it limited to the Three [Pure Land] Sutras (*sanbu-kyō* 三部經)?”

Answer: “All the eight or nine schools (*hasshū* 八宗, *kyūshū* 九宗) are completely accommodated (contained *osamete*) in our school (*waga shū* わが宗) and they are divided into the two gates of the Sacred Path (or Path of the arhat, *shōdō-mon* 聖道門) and the Pure Land (*jōdo-mon* 淨土門). In the Gate of the Sacred Path are Mahāyāna and Hinayāna, and the provisional and the true [teaching]. In the Gate of the Pure Land are [the Buddha Lands in] the ten directions, and the one in the Western direction. In the gate of the Western direction are the miscellaneous practices (*zōgyō* 雜行) and the right practice (*shōgyō* 正行). In the right practice are the supporting practices (*jogyō* 助行) and the properly determining karmic acts (*shōjō-gō* 正定業). In such a way, the Sacred Path is difficult [to master], and the Pure Land [practice] is easy, says the Commentary [Daochuo's *Anle-ji*]. Only those who do not know the intent of establishing a school (or teaching tradition, *shū o tatsuru* 宗を立つる) say that [Shakyamuni's teaching] is limited to the Three Sutras.”²⁷

Chōgen's initial question is aimed at clarification of the relationship between the established schools of the time and Hōnen's *jōdo-shū* teaching. This issue seemed to be of concern for Chōgen since on the one hand he was a Pure Land adherent and on the other hand his main work at that time was dedicated to the reconstruction of the Vairocana Buddha (Dainichi Nyorai) statue and the Tōdai-ji in Nara. Whereas he

²⁴ For example, for some time he also had close ties with Eisai, the founder of Rinzai-shū.

²⁵ Ōhashi 1989 I, p. 66. At that time, the temple was still under construction; it was completed in 1195.

²⁶ HSZ pp. 643-647. For an English translation of the whole *mondō*, see Atone and Hayashi 1999.

²⁷ HSZ p. 643.

adhered to multiple Buddhist traditions, Hōnen only taught the exclusive *nenbutsu* practice (*senju nenbutsu* 専修念仏) directed towards Amida Buddha.

In his next question, Chōgen follows the line of Hōnen's explanation moving from the doctrinal distinction between the Gate of Pure Land and the Gate of the Sacred Teachings to the concrete level of practice. Also his subsequent questions concern practical issues more or less on the borderline between Hōnen's Pure Land teachings and the established schools. In the fifth *mondō*, for example, Chōgen poses the interesting question: "When I venerate this Great Buddha (Vairocana) will he consider sending [me] to the Pure Land?"²⁸ Hōnen first refutes such an approach by saying: "This is a different matter." Then he argues doctrinally that such an assumption is not possible because one cannot imagine that the Buddha remains in this world of illusion while the practitioner proceeds to the Western direction. Finally, Hōnen returns to the concrete level of practice and concludes: "However, to make a statue of the noble Buddha of the Pure Land [Amida] while thinking of the true Buddha produces merit (*kudoku* 功德) [for birth into the Pure Land]."²⁹ By suggesting to create an Amida statue, it seems, Hōnen tries to pull Chōgen from his dedication to Vairocana Buddha towards a "pure" Pure Land teaching and practice. If my interpretation is correct, Hōnen thereby implicitly criticizes nothing less than Chōgen's enormous life work.

Another example of *mondō* with a known monk of the time is a conversation with Myōhen 明遍 (1142-1224), a representative of the Pure Land tradition within the Shingon school. Myōhen first had studied Sanron and Esoteric Buddhism in Nara. Later, in 1161, he moved to Mt. Kōya where he built a Samadhi hall in Rengedani (*Renge sanmai-in* 蓮華三昧院) and became its abbot (*Rengedani sōzu* 蓮華谷僧都).³⁰ His conversation with Hōnen is called *Shōnin to Myōhen Sōzu to no mondō* 上人と明遍僧都との問答 and contains only three exchanges of questions and answers.³¹

Question: "How can we sinful and defiled ordinary beings (*bonbu* 凡夫) of the final evil age be liberated from [the cycle of] birth-and-death?"

Answer: "One should know that only by reciting Namu Amida Butsu and by hoping for the [Land of] Utmost Bliss (*gokuraku* 極樂) can one attain it."

Question: "... Even though [my] mind is distracted when reciting the

²⁸ HSZ p. 645.

²⁹ HSZ p. 645.

³⁰ NBJJ p. 744 f; cf. Ōhashi 1989 III, p. 326.

³¹ HSZ p. 692 f; cf. Coates p. 316 ff, esp. p. 318 f.

nenbutsu, what should [I] do?"

Answer: "Also Genkū's [Hōnen] power does not reach so far (as to calm the mind)."

Question: "Then what should one do?"

Answer: "I have realized that even though the mind is distracted, if one recites [Amida's] name, being carried by the power of the Original Vow one can attain birth. However, the point to be considered (*sen 詮*) is that reciting the *nenbutsu* many times is a matter of priority (*daiichi no koto 第一の事*)."³²

Myōhen concludes his question by stating: "It is so (as you said). I came here in order to receive such (instruction)."³³ Then he leaves without any greetings, as mentioned above. This *mondō* serves in the role of instruction concerning religious practice, therefore it may be categorized basically as didactic. In distinction, the previous *mondō* with Chōgen may be called apologetic because it deals mainly with the difference between Hōnen's teaching and practice and those of other Buddhist schools.

6. Some Conclusions

We do not know whether Hōnen's *mondō* still preserved today are representative of the various religious conversations he had during his life. He certainly communicated with many more people of very different social standing, ranging from imperial family members and court nobility (such as an imperial nun or Kujō Kanezane) to the warrior nobility and *bushi* (such as Kumagai Naozane) as well as to ordinary people. If we believe his hagiography, he talked even with a prostitute about religious matters. In this case the conversation led to a conversion which indicates yet another category of *mondō* employed as a means for proselytization.

In introducing Hōnen's *mondō*, I attempted to select some representative conversations among those available today. A short study like the present one cannot give full justice to the subject under discussion. The preserved *mondō* involve different kinds of interlocutors, such as Hōnen's teacher and his own disciples, well-known monks and a lay-woman. The contents of the *mondō* treated here include the broad variety of rather abstract doctrinal questions concerning Pure Land teachings, concrete issues of everyday Pure Land practice, as well as diverse folk religious beliefs and practices. The variety of contents naturally derives from

³² HSZ p. 692 f.

³³ HSZ p. 693.

the questions posed by different types of interlocutors. This indicates some important characteristics of *mondō*, namely their contingency, spontaneity and heavy dependency on the situation. Even though this is *basically* true also for doctrinal works, the *degree* of contingent factors is considerably different. Thus, the constellations of time, place, interlocutors, etc., play a dominant role in the genesis of the contents of *mondō*. Hence, *mondō* may be characterized as occasional forms of communication. In this respect they differ, for example, from scholarly disputations (*dangi, rongi*), which are prepared in advance, conducted in formalized settings within an institutional framework, and repeated regularly in public events. This leads to the observation that it is precisely this contingent, occasional character of *mondō* that provides a rich source of interesting and valuable information for religious studies today.

I have attempted here to develop a typology of this unique form of oral discourse by suggesting a distinction between controversial, doctrinal, didactic (educational), edifying, and apologetic *mondō*. The different forms are closely interrelated with the respective contents of these *mondō*. Thus, formal studies of *mondō* can contribute considerably to the understanding of their contents. Yet, because of overlapping and terminological shortcomings, the terms and categorization proposed here may not be completely adequate, but they may serve to stimulate further discussion on this interesting subject.

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HSD: Ikawa 1978:

HSZ: Ishii 1991

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