

## Shōbōgenzō-zuimonki

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# Introduction

## 1. Zen Master Eihei Dōgen and Koun Ejō

*Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki* consists of the dharma talks of Eihei Dōgen Zenji (1200–1253) who transmitted Sōtō Zen from China to Japan. These talks were originally recorded by Koun Ejō Zenji, Dōgen's dharma successor, and probably edited by his disciples after Ejō's death.

In this introduction, I'd like to briefly introduce Ejō Zenji since he is not as well known in the West as Dōgen Zenji.

Ejō was born of a noble family, the Fujiwara, in Kyoto, in 1198. In 1215, at eighteen years of age, he was ordained as a Tendai monk under Master Ennō at Yokawa on Mt. Hiei. He studied the fundamental philosophy of Buddhism; the Kusha (Abhidharmakosa-bhāṣya) Jōjitsu (Satyasidhi-sastra), and Tendai (Tientai) teachings etc. However, he realized that studying for fame and profit or for high position in the Buddhist order was meaningless. Arousing bodhi-mind, he wanted to leave the monastery just as many other Buddhist leaders did in that age.

According to the *Denkōroku* (The Record of Transmitting the Light) of Keizan Jōkin, who received ordination from Ejō and later became the successor of Tettsō Gikai, Ejō once visited his mother.