

平常心是道

The  
Records of  
Mazu and the  
Making of  
Classical  
Chan Literature

MARIO POCESKI

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of Classical Chan Literature*



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## *Preface and Acknowledgments*

THE DISTANT ORIGINS of this book go back in time to my late teens, when I first got seriously interested in the study of Chan/Zen Buddhism. That happened at an island hermitage in Sri Lanka, where I took temporary residence after extended overland travel from Europe. The initial encounter with books about Zen prompted me to travel to East Asia in a youthful search for knowledge. The record of Mazu Daoyi (709–788), *Mazu yulu*, was among the earliest Chinese texts I ever read, after I taught myself classical Chinese while living at another monastery located on an island, this time in Hong Kong. My first book, *Sun Face Buddha* (Asian Humanities Press 1993)—published before my entry into graduate school, while I was still in my twenties—included a translation of Mazu’s record, along with other related materials. Other markers on the way to this volume included my PhD dissertation on Tang Chan (UCLA 2000) and my book on the history, doctrines, and practices of Mazu’s Hongzhou School, *Ordinary Mind as the Way* (Oxford 2007), along with a number of shorter publications on related subjects. The idea of this book was born while I was working on the Hongzhou School book, although a number of other projects, including work on two other books, delayed the progress on the manuscript.

The work on a book of this kind, like much of humanistic scholarship, is for the most part a solitary undertaking. In a way, it evokes a comparison with monastic life, of the eremitic variety. Nonetheless, my academic life has taken me to many places and brought me into contact with a number of people. Over the years, I have greatly benefited from the support, example, and encouragement that was kindly extended to me by a number of individuals and institutions. I would especially like to thank Steven Heine, Robert Buswell, Albert Welter, and Beata Grant, as well as my colleagues and students at the University of Florida, particularly Richard Wang.

Much of the writing of the book, especially the final stages, was done during two research stays in Germany, as a Humboldt fellow and a visiting professor

at the University of Hamburg. I am especially grateful to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for their generous support, which enabled me to spend the summers and falls of 2013 and 2014 in Germany (plus a forthcoming stay in the summer of 2015). I am also greatly appreciative of the hospitality I have received in Hamburg, where I am affiliated with the Asien-Afrika-Institut. I have especially enjoyed the support and friendship of my academic host, Michael Zimmermann, the director of the University of Hamburg's Center for Buddhist Studies, who also offered valuable feedback on the book's introduction and chapter 1.

I also want to acknowledge the support I received from my home institution, the University of Florida. That included grants that facilitated two research stays in Japan: Humanities Scholarship Enhancement Grant, from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Rothman Summer Fellowship, from the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere. During my second stay in Japan, in the summer of 2012, I was fortunate to be able to conduct research in Nagoya, where I used the excellent facilities of the Institute for Religion and Culture at Nanzan University. Special thanks go to James Heisig and Paul Swanson, who facilitated my stay there and inspired me by their high standards of scholarship.

I wish to thank Cynthia Read, Executive Editor, and the production team at Oxford University Press, including Glenn Ramirez, for their excellent work and high level of professionalism, as well as Joy Matkowski for her expert editing. I would also like to acknowledge the encouragement and constructive feedback I received from the three anonymous scholars who reviewed the manuscript for Oxford. In preparing the present book, with the publisher's permission I made use of materials from two earlier chapters, which I wrote for edited volumes published by Oxford: "Monastic Innovator, Iconoclast, and Teacher of Doctrine: The Varied Images of Chan Master Baizhang," in Steven Heine and Dale Wright, eds., *Zen Masters* (Oxford 2010), and "Mazu yulu and the Creation of the Chan Records of Sayings," in Steven Heine and Dale Wright, eds., *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts* (Oxford 2004). I used only small and revised portions of the first, while the second publication became a foundation for a number of sections in chapter 6.

I especially want to thank Rev. Dixuan (Chen Yujing), a graduate student of mine, for going over most of the translations and offering valuable comments. The same kind of thankfulness goes to Rev. Guoguang, for her helpful feedback on my translation of Mazu's stele inscription. I also received assistance from Zhou Chunyang (a graduate student at Hamburg), who proffered the Chinese characters, and Zhang Yanchao (a graduate student at Florida), who located and sent me digital copies of various research

materials, especially during my stays abroad. Special thanks go to Ruth Sheng, a great colleague and a former graduate student of mine, for the wonderful calligraphy that graces the cover of the book. As always, at the end I want to express the greatest appreciation and gratitude to my wife, Hiroko Poceski, for her love, patience, and support.



## Abbreviations

### Canonical Collections

- T *Taishō shinshū dai zōkyō* 大正新修大藏經  
X *Xu zang jing* 續藏經 (reprint of *Dai nihon zoku zōkyō* 大日本續藏經)

### Primary Sources

- BGL *Baizhang guang lu* 百丈廣錄  
BLZ *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳  
BYL *Bi yan lu* 碧巖錄  
CDL *Jingde chuan deng lu* 景德傳燈錄  
FHJ *Miao fa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經  
GSZ *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳  
GZY *Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄  
HYJ *Huayan jing* 華嚴經  
JTS *Jiu tang shu* 舊唐書  
MY *Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄  
QTW *Quan tang wen* 全唐文  
SGS *Song gao seng zhuan* 宋高僧傳  
TGL *Tiansheng guang deng lu* 天聖廣燈錄  
WMJ *Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經  
WYY *Wen yuan ying hua* 文苑英華  
XTS *Xin tang shu* 新唐書  
ZJL *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄  
ZTJ *Zu tang ji* 祖堂集

### Languages

- C Chinese  
J Japanese

P	Pāli
S	Sanskrit

*Journals*

IBK	<i>Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū</i> 印度學佛教學研究
ZK	<i>Zengaku kenkyū</i> 禪學研究

## *Conventions*

ON THE WHOLE, the book follows standard academic conventions used in Western scholarship on Chinese Buddhism, especially Chan studies. The abbreviations listed here are used only in the notes and the bibliography, not in the main body of the text, with the exception of the language abbreviations. Chinese words are transliterated according to the Pinyin system, with the exception of names that are better known in another transcription. For Japanese, I use the Revised Hepburn Romanization system. References to classical Chinese texts include title (or abbreviation), followed by fascicle number and page(s) number (for instance, ZTJ 14.304–05). When individual texts are included in larger canonical collections, such as the *Taishō* and *Zokuzōkyō* editions of the Buddhist canon, after the title and the fascicle number, I include the name (or abbreviation) of the collection, followed by the volume, page, column indicator (a, b, or c), and (if relevant) line number. For instance, CDL 7, T 51.256b1, stands for: *Jingde chuan deng lu*, fascicle 7, in the *Taishō* canon, vol. 51, p. 256, central column, line 1. When referring to the geographical locations of various monasteries, mountains, or other sites, normally I use present-day provincial designations and boundaries. The translations from Chinese texts are my own, unless noted otherwise. When making use of the translations of others, I have ordinarily revised them, usually considerably.



*The Records of Mazu and the Making  
of Classical Chan Literature*



## *Introduction*

IN GENERAL TERMS, this volume explores the historical growth, makeup, and transformation of Chan 禪 (J: Zen) Buddhist literature in late medieval China. It also surveys the distinctive features and the contents of particular types of texts and analyzes the forces, milieus, and concerns that shaped key processes of textual production. While the main emphasis is on a range of written sources that deal with a celebrated Chan tradition that developed and rose to prominence during the Tang 唐 era (618–907), the coverage also extends to the Five Dynasties 五代 (907–960) and Song 宋 (960–1279) periods, when many of the best-known Chan collections were compiled. In addition, the book presents a range of primary materials that are important for the historical study of Chan Buddhism, some of them translated for the first time into English (or other Western language).

At a basic level, the book's primary focus is on the earliest extant records about the life, teachings, and legacy of Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788), the famous leader of the Hongzhou School 洪州宗 and one of the principal figures in Chan history. Some of these texts are well known and form a central part of classical Chan (or more broadly Buddhist) literature in China, but until fairly recently, other texts have been largely ignored, forgotten, or glossed over. At the same time, the book is also concerned with the Chan School's creative adaptation of classical literary forms and experimentation with novel narrative styles and structures, which led to the creation of several distinctive Chan genres that exerted notable influences on the subsequent development of Buddhism in China and the rest of East Asia. Many of these influences continue down to the present. With the growing popularity of Chan/Zen, increasingly their impacts are also felt on a global scale.

In addition, these textual innovations are related to the pertinent religious milieus, broader historical contexts, and notable developments in the

cultural sphere. Ultimately, while the book's main focus is on the provenances, contents, and resonances of particular texts—as well as on the genesis and attributes of the genres in which they were composed—the pertinent literary materials are primarily approached in terms of their importance and value as historical sources for the study of Chan Buddhism, as it grew and changed during the Tang-Song transition. In that sense, this book is an integral part of a larger scholarly inquiry into the history of Chan, which includes a nuanced reassessment of the tradition's developmental trajectories, its place in Chinese religious and social life, and its relationship with the rest of Buddhism.

### *Positioning Chan*

Critical scholarship is increasingly revealing how the basic makeup of the Chan tradition and its position within the religious landscape of Tang China—especially its relationship with the rest of Buddhism, in its rarefied as well as popular manifestations—include many more overlaps, linkages, and congruencies than the familiar narrative about Chan's supposed uniqueness would lead us to believe. In fact, establishing and analyzing these kinds of connections are among the main points that distinguish serious scholarly works from the kinds of unduly romanticized and largely ahistorical treatments of Chan/Zen one finds in the popular literature on the subject, starting with the pioneering publications of D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966), many of which are still in print.

The numerous intersections between Chan and the rest of Buddhism (as well as other religious traditions) assume a variety of forms and occur on several levels: literary, doctrinal, soteriological, or institutional. It is therefore fairly clear that the emergence and evolution of Chan Buddhism, in all of its variety and complexity, took place against the backdrop of established institutions, mores, and ideals, not all of which were Buddhist in origin. Within the broader Buddhist context, especially at the elite level, virtually all major elements that came together to form the Chan School's basic identity—which was by no means fixed and changed over time—were to a large degree shaped by the established monastic tradition, as well as by an array of normative theoretical templates and philosophical perspectives, which were primarily based on canonical models and sources. Additional factors that need to be taken into account include some of the popular types of exemplary piety, the prevailing cultural sensibilities, and the basic patterns of economic support and patronage.

At the same time, with the growth of Chan as a distinct tradition within Chinese Buddhism, we can also discern the emergence of new attitudes and ideas. Often we can find them expressed in the formulation of innovative and compelling approaches to essential aspects of spiritual life, as well as in the construction of new religious ideals, primarily centered on the exalted image of an awakened Chan master. There are also the subtle shifts in doctrinal emphasis, the development of new rhetorical styles, and the creative rearrangements or reinterpretations of traditional Buddhist concepts and paradigms. In that sense, Chan Buddhism turns out to be a rather convoluted *mélange* of disparate elements. Some of them are new and unique, but many more are rather old and well established as integral parts of the Buddhist mainstream.

We know about these kinds of developments only because they found literary expression in particular texts, many of which are hybrid creations and contain several distinctive types of narratives. At their point of origin, in form as well as content, these written records contained both novel and traditional elements. The latter were derived or influenced by both Buddhist and non-Buddhist models of writing. At the center of the majority of these texts were the lives, actions, and impacts of notable Chan teachers such as Mazu and his prominent disciples. Some of these texts were composed during the lifetimes or soon after the passing away of the monks featured in them. Others were written at later periods and included various communal remembrances, hagiographic embellishments, or retroactive reimaginings of the monks in question.

In some measure, these kinds of hagiographic representations were meant to serve as paradigmatic illustrations of an inimitable religious ethos, at the core of which lies the notion of a singular Chan path of practice and realization. Nonetheless, that ethos changed over time, as did the various elements that molded, accentuated, and reinforced it. That is reflected in the notable changes in the scope, substance, and texture of Chan teachings and practices, as well as in the attitudes and perspectives that underscored them. These developments were related to a host of internal and external factors. Along with changing religious outlooks, they also included adjustments in the scope and standing of the Chan School within social and religious life, in Tang as well as Song China. But we can access and assess these developments only inasmuch as they are described or alluded to in the extant records, which need to be approached with great care, sound judgment, and an eye for nuance. We thus find ourselves, once again, at the pivotal intersection between Chan history and literature.

It is the multilayered interplay between the old and new elements, or between tradition and innovation—with all the tensions and ambiguities

that entails—that played an essential role in the ongoing constructions of the Chan School's shared identity. That also had an impact on other significant areas, such as the dominant conception of religious authority, including the central notion of an unbroken lineage of patriarchs that came to form the linchpin of Chan orthodoxy. That, in turn, was tied up with the aforementioned reformulation of Chan teachings and practices, as conveyed by the extant records. The cumulative force of these interlinked developments is evident when we compare the notable differences between Tang and Song Chan, not to mention the later strands of Japanese Zen or Korean Sŏn.

Accordingly, besides its stated focus on presenting, analyzing, and translating specific types of Chan texts, this book aims at shedding light on the kinds of broader themes and issues that are central in Chan studies. In the end, even when literary artifacts are the central foci or targets of scholarly attention, we still inevitably end up dealing with many of the significant historical shifts, soteriological reconfigurations, and ideological repositionings that were among the central forces that shaped the growth and evolution of Chan, from the Tang and into the Song era. Therefore, the book aims at providing additional materials and innovative perspectives that, I hope, will add to the general knowledge of Chan Buddhism and facilitate the fuller appreciation of its place in Chinese religious life.

### *Book's Overall Structure and Coverage*

The book consists of two main parts, of roughly comparable length. Part I is primarily envisioned to serve as a broad study of classical Chan literature, anchored around the various texts about Mazu. In contrast, part II contains translations and commentaries of the early records that deal with the monastic life and thought of Mazu. The whole volume is structured in such a way that it is possible to read the two sections separately, although it is, of course, best to approach them as integral parts of a coherent whole.

Generally speaking, part I, the study part of the book, is concerned with the convoluted provenance, structure, contents, transmission, and ideological underpinning of a particular group of Chan texts (or texts about Chan). That is complemented with the translations and commentaries of the seven key texts included in part II, which in addition to their intrinsic value also serve as germane illustrations of the broader literary themes and historical processes examined in part I. Among other things, these important records serve as primary sources for the study of Chan history, literature, doctrine, and praxis,

and some of them still continue to influence contemporary Buddhist traditions, not only in Asia but also in the West.

While the main focus is on the various records about Mazu Daoyi, they also serve as entry points for exploring wider issues, especially the evolving religious images and literary representations of accomplished Chan masters that are conveyed in these and other related texts. Consequently, in a wider context, this study aims at shedding light on the principal historical trajectories and the multifaceted predicaments that shaped significant processes of textual creation and canon formation in Tang and Song China. In view of that, the book can be read in two ways, or perhaps approached at two complementary and overlapping levels.

In a narrow sense, the book can be construed as being primarily concerned with a particular historical figure, namely, Mazu Daoyi, and a cluster of texts composed in various genres that center on his religious persona, as it was remembered, reimagined, or reconstructed by generations of Chan followers, writers, and editors. In a broader sense, the book is also about key developments in the conceptual and literary spheres, including the development of peculiar literary forms and narrative tropes, as well as the production of constellations of religious symbols and imageries, centered on major historical figures who occupied central positions within the flourishing Chan movement. Within such a framework, one can either choose to focus on Mazu and his records or read the book as dealing with larger issues in the study of Chan literature and history. In the latter sense, Mazu's records mainly serve as instructive examples of a range of Chan texts. They also reveal many of the central themes, concerns, and issues that affected the communal remembrance—or perhaps misremembrance, innocuous or willful—of the past and to a substantial degree shaped the historical growth of Chan Buddhism.

The book is thus about a particular historical person and about some of the major aspects of the religious tradition with which he is associated, especially its textual production and identity formation. It is also about the ways that tradition remembered or reinvented its paradigmatic sages, in part against the backdrop of an ongoing concern with defining its orthodoxy and orthopraxy. By extension, this volume is also about the beliefs, actions, perspectives, and agendas of the individuals and groups who created, edited, and transmitted these texts, which notwithstanding their limitations still function as our main windows or entry points into the multifaceted and fascinating world of Chan Buddhism. By looking at all these levels, perhaps in tandem and in relation to each other, we are in a good position to ascertain some of the broader historical exigencies, spiritual concerns, creative impulses, socioreligious frameworks, institutional tensions, and ideological agendas that shaped the ongoing

development and transformation of the Chan School during the Tang-Song transition.

### *Chapter Summary of Part I*

The study part of the book comprises six chapters. The first chapter is fairly general, and to some extent, it situates the present study within a broader academic context. Principally, it is meant to lay the basic analytical framework and serve as an introduction, of sorts, for the next five chapters. In it, I briefly introduce Mazu and his records, and highlight some of the general themes, central issues, and academic contexts that so far have shaped the scholarly study of Chan literature, history, and institutions. That incorporates a brief survey of the relevant secondary literature, along with tentative reflections on some of the tacit assumptions and interpretative choices that often shape the reading, interpretation, and use of Chan sources. In addition, I explore the idea of looking at the Chan tradition as a community of memory.

Chapters 2 and 3 are closely related and best read in conjunction. Taken together, they explore the larger issues of historical remembrance and religious (re)imagination within the Chan tradition, primarily by looking at key hagiographic portrayals and transformations of Mazu, as they are preserved in a variety of Chan texts from the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song eras. Mazu's well-known depiction as a prototypical Chan iconoclast—which first emerged during the tenth century and has tended to dominate both traditional and modern accounts of his life and teachings—is examined in some detail in chapter 2. The discussion of Mazu's main types of hagiographic representation continues in chapter 3, which highlights two earlier and largely ignored portrayals of Mazu—a teacher of Buddhist doctrine and a thaumaturge—both of which are closer to the somewhat conventional models of exemplary religiosity that were prevalent in Tang China. The key hagiographic transformations of Mazu and other Tang monks, as described in these two chapters, can be explained in terms of the gradual emergence of a range of distinctive Chan narratives (discussed in the next two chapters), which were composed at different times, in response to different socioreligious predicaments, and under the influence of different ideological agendas.

In chapters 4 and 5—which together form another pair of closely related chapters—I explore the formation, characteristics, and diffusion of the main Chan genres that emerged in Tang and Song China. The establishment of distinctive Chan genres, such as the record of sayings (*yulu* 語錄) and the *gong'an* 公案 (J: *kōan*; lit. “public cases”) collection, served to codify specific

literary formats and popularize narrative styles that, with some modifications, served as normative models for the majority of Chan texts that in due time became included in the Buddhist canon. Specifically, chapter 4 examines the general aspects of Chan literature, as they relate to the development of individual genres, and also surveys the other kinds of relevant sources that do not belong to the main Chan genres. Then, in chapter 5, there is a bit more detailed discussion of each of the four main Chan genres.

By examining the composite structure and convoluted provenance of the main parts that comprise Mazu's record of sayings, *Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄—compiled about three centuries after his passing away, on the basis of earlier sources—the last chapter links together the gradual evolution of distinctly Chan forms of literary representation, changing conceptions of orthodoxy, and retroactive makeovers of the religious personas of leading Chan monks such as Mazu. It also shows how these interwoven developments shaped the Chan School's collective identity and influenced its broad historical trajectory during the Tang-Song transition. Among other things, the chapter suggests possible linkages, as well as notable discrepancies and points of rupture, between the historical personas of Mazu and other monks from the Tang era, on one hand, and their retroactive imaginings and literary representations on another hand, as they are presented in later texts, including the prominent records of sayings composed during the Song period.

### *About the Translated Materials in Part II*

The second part of the book contains annotated translations of the earliest extant records about Mazu Daoyi, accompanied with copious comments, meant to provide various kinds of relevant information and aid contemporary readers in their comprehension and enjoyment of the classical texts. The texts themselves are full of all sorts of quotations and allusions, typically not identified as such, and feature numerous ancient titles and names of persons, places, and institutions, usually presented in an abbreviated (or alternative) form. There is also an array of technical terms, obscure references, and oblique metaphors, many of them on non-Buddhist themes or of secular origin. Many of these textual features are easy to miss, unless one has specialist knowledge about Chinese Buddhist literature and Chan texts of that type.

In preparing the translations and the commentaries, I have kept both scholarly and nonacademic (general) audiences in mind. That is especially evident in my comments, which in a number of places provide the kind of general information that, in a narrower academic milieu, might be perceived

as somewhat superfluous. While my approach is basically scholarly, I very much hope that people outside of the narrow confines of academic circles will find the material relevant, interesting, and reasonably approachable. Writing for different audiences at the same time is not an easy task, given the different expectations, predilections, and levels of familiarity with the subject matter one has to take into account. I have tried my best to reach out, in part because I believe it is imperative for scholars to try to communicate their work and findings to groups and individuals beyond the narrow (and, sorry to say, often parochial) world of the ivory tower and its environs.

The translated materials are organized in a chronological order, from earlier (mid-Tang) to later (early Song). Each of the seven texts includes an introduction, the original Chinese text, the English translation, and comments. There is also additional information that is relegated to the footnotes. This kind of arrangement was in part inspired by the format of modern Japanese translations of classical Buddhist texts. A pertinent example is Iriya Yoshitaka's 入谷義高 translation of Mazu's record of sayings, *Baso no goroku* 馬祖の語録, which I have consulted in the course of producing some of my translations.<sup>1</sup>

I have primarily used standard versions of the original Chinese texts, included in major canonical collections, especially the Taishō, *Zoku zōkyō* (Xu zangjing), and Koryō editions of the Buddhist canon. I have also extensively used the CBETA editions of most of these texts. In a number of cases, they served as the primary version, with some minor adaptations. Notable overlaps or discrepancies among the various versions of specific texts are noted in the comments and the footnotes.

In preparing the Chinese texts and the translations, at times I have consulted modern punctuated editions of the texts, if available, such as the two-volume edition of *Song gao seng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Song Biographies of Eminent Monks), published by Zhonghua shuju and edited by Fan Xiangyong 范祥雍. The most relevant and comprehensive example of this kind of resource is *Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄, edited by Xing Dongfeng 邢东风, which has pretty much all materials about Mazu in a single convenient volume, although unfortunately it is all in simplified Chinese. In addition, occasionally I have referred to modern Japanese and Chinese translations of some of the original

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1. Iriya's translation, which on the whole is of an excellent quality, primarily focuses on Mazu's record of sayings, *Mazu yulu*, but it also includes relevant materials or cross references to other Chan texts, especially CDL, ZTJ, and ZJL. Unfortunately, it does not include translations of two of the most important texts about Mazu: his biographical entry in SGS (Text 5 in this volume) and the stele inscription composed by Quan Deyu (Text 1), although it contains the Chinese texts of the second, at the very end of the book, along with a Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering.

texts.<sup>2</sup> While sometimes I have looked at the modern punctuation (and relevant notes) in these sources, the final arrangement and punctuation of all Chinese texts is mine.

### *Translation and Interpretation*

Translating inevitably involves a large amount of interpreting, especially when it is done between two very different languages, in this case literary Chinese (with some ancient vernacular mixed in) and modern English. In that sense, the translator is constantly faced with all sorts of difficult interpretative choices, especially given the multivalent or ambivalent meaning of many Chinese characters and expressions, the lack of subject in many sentences, the frequent use of all sorts of technical terms and abbreviations, sometimes in rather unconventional ways, and the like. While some translations are better than others, coming up with a translation that is completely accurate and fully captures the meaning and style of the original is an impossibility, due to all sorts of constraints, including the specific features and inherent limitations of the languages in question.

However, that does not mean that producing high-quality translations, which retain a sense of fidelity to the original manuscripts, is not a viable and important undertaking. After all, the original text also does not have a fixed or singular meaning. Consequently, the seemingly straightforward act of reading the original text implies all sorts of subjective interpretations and value judgments, which do not always operate at a conscious level. The reading of texts also invariably takes place within specific contexts, be they religious, social, cultural, or institutional. The same goes for the translation of classical texts into modern Chinese or Japanese, although obviously that tends to be a more straightforward undertaking and presents different challenges than the translation into English or another European language.

In preparing the translations, I have tried to tread a middle way, between providing overly literary and free renderings. Following the original Chinese text too closely often result in clumsy and inelegant English—such as “no-gate is the Dharma-gate”—and can even lead to largely meaningless or potentially misleading translations.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, presenting excessively free

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2. In addition to Iriya's translation mentioned earlier, that includes Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, *Sodōshū* 祖堂集, 46–48; Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, *Zen goroku* 禪語錄, 272–288; and Feng Zuomin 馮作民 and Song Xiuling 宋秀玲, *Chan yulu* 禪語錄, 705–726.

3. For example, see the literalist translation in Jia Jinhua, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- through Tenth-Century China*, 120.

translations that stray too much from the original Chinese texts is also problematic, even if the English texts read pretty well.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, I have primarily tried to clearly convey the essential meanings implied in the Chinese texts and to express them in reasonably readable and idiomatic English, which is possible to follow even by readers without much background in Chinese Buddhism. To that end, although I follow the originals quite closely, I have changed minor textual elements, such as modifying forms of address; adding words or phrases that are only implied in the original Chinese (usually inserted in parentheses); providing the full names (or titles) of persons, places, and texts (that tend to be abbreviated); and adding quotation marks to indicate citations from canonical texts and other sources.

While I have paid special attention to the manner in which I translate various technical Chinese terms, I have not always insisted on translating them uniformly with the same English words or phrases. After all, technical terms often convey various shades of meaning, which are influenced by the contexts in which those terms are deployed. In addition, in different Chan texts the same terms are not always used in an identical manner, nor do they necessarily cover exactly the same range of meanings. To highlight that kind of philological ambiguity, at times I have consciously rendered some common Chan terms with different English words, hence the varied use of relevant terminology (e.g., Chan school/lineage/tradition or monastic biographies/hagiographies).

## *Organizational Structure of Part II*

Some of the original Chinese texts contained in part II, including Mazu's stele inscription, hagiography in *Zu tang ji* 祖堂集 (Hall of Patriarchs Collection), and biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*, have never before been translated into English or any other European language. Others have appeared before, in part or as a whole, in earlier publications. I have occasionally consulted these earlier translations and wish to express my appreciation for the valuable work of the scholars who produced them.<sup>5</sup> I have also consulted my

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4. Examples of the second approach include some of the later translations of Chan texts produced by Thomas Clearly, which presumably are meant to cater to the tastes and expectations of specific Western audiences. His earlier translations, including his translation of Baizhang's record, *Sayings and Doings of Pai-chang*, are much more reliable and constitute notable contributions to Chan studies.

5. See Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- through Tenth-Century China*, 119–130; Albert Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu: A Special Transmission within the Scriptures*, 170–194; Ogata Sōhaku, *The Transmission of the Lamp: Early Masters*, 187–191; and Chang Chung-yuan, *Original Teachings of Chan Buddhism*, 148–152.

earlier translation of *Mazu yulu* (see later) for those sections that overlap with the materials translated in this book.

To facilitate easier reading and aid the reader, I have tried to organize the materials in a logical pattern and present them in a convenient form. Accordingly, I have divided the Chinese texts into discrete sections, to which I have added section headings (as well as subheadings, if relevant) of my own making.<sup>6</sup> These divisions are entirely lacking in the original texts, which tend to be continuous narratives without any structural breaks or explicit divisions.

The translated texts contain materials about Mazu that were written, compiled, or edited during the late Tang, Five Dynasties, and early Song eras. In terms of precise chronology, the seven translated texts start with Mazu's stele inscription, composed in 791 by the famous official and literatus Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759–818), and end with Mazu's biographical entry and transcribed sermon in *Jingde chuan deng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Record of the Lamp's Transmission from the Jingde Era), the seminal Chan chronicle compiled at the beginning of the Song era. The stele inscription was composed about three years after Mazu's passing away and is the earliest and most reliable surviving text with historical information about his life, thought, and influence. It is followed by a short text inscribed on the relic case that was placed in Mazu's memorial pagoda, which was erected in 791.

The Tang-era inscriptions are followed by the translations of two records compiled in the middle part of the tenth century, which contain valuable information about Mazu's legacy and teachings, and the ways they were transcribed, remembered, or (re)constructed by later generations of Chan monks. The first text is Mazu's biographical entry in *Zu tang ji*. That is followed by several pertinent excerpts from Yongming Yanshou's 永明延壽 (904–975) *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄 (Record of Reflections of the Essential Truth). The fifth translated text is Mazu's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*, compiled in 988 by the noted Buddhist prelate and historian Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001). The latest translated materials included in the book are the two relevant sections from *Jingde chuan deng lu* (incorporated into fascicles 6 and 28), first "published" in 1004, which include biographical materials, encounter dialogues, and transcribed sermons. I have basically used 1004 as a cutoff point and translated all the main extant texts about Mazu that were composed or compiled before then.

In addition to Quan Deyu's stele inscription from 791, there was also another inscription composed around the same period, written by the official

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6. To some degree, these kinds of divisions and subheadings can also be found in Iriya's translation of some of the texts, as well as in other Japanese translations of ancient Chan texts.

Bao Ji 包佶 (dates unknown).<sup>7</sup> This inscription might be datable to around the same time, namely close to the time of Mazu's death in 788, but it is no longer extant. Fortunately, it was still available during the late tenth century, and its contents were incorporated into Mazu's biography in *Song gao seng zhuan*. Among the early records from the Tang era, there was also a biography of Mazu that was included in the tenth (and last) fascicle of *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (*Baolin Biographies*), composed in 801. Unfortunately, this text was also lost, and we have no way of knowing its contents, with the exception of a few short fragments.<sup>8</sup>

While the second part of this volume contains translations of the earliest and most important records about Mazu, it is not meant to cover all possible sources that in some way deal with Mazu's life, teachings, or legacy, which are dispersed across a broad spectrum of Chan literature. The book does not contain a translation of *Mazu yulu*, arguably the best-known text about Mazu, which was initially compiled around the late 1060s. A translation of that text, which is discussed in more detail in chapter 6, is available in one of my earlier publications.<sup>9</sup> That book was published while I was quite young and before I had received any formal education in Buddhist studies. I could perhaps improve on the earlier translation, in part by adding a more sophisticated scholarly apparatus. Nonetheless, I think that translation is still acceptable, especially for a general audience. Moreover, most materials contained in *Mazu yulu*, a fairly late text, can be traced back to the earlier records translated in this volume. That was among the additional reasons behind my decision to exclude *Mazu yulu* and instead draw a line at Mazu's main materials in *Jingde chuan deng lu*.

### *Chan Trilogy*

This book is an integral part of a larger historical study of Chan Buddhism, which focuses on the tradition's incipient growth during the Tang era and its transformation during the Tang-Song transition. It can be viewed as a companion volume to *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford University Press 2007), my comprehensive

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7. See my introduction to Text 5 in part II.

8. See Shiina Kōyū 椎名宏雄, "Hōrinden itsubun no kenkyū" 寶林伝逸文の研究, and Shiina Kōyū, "Hōrinden makikyū makiju no itsubun" 寶林伝巻九巻十の逸文.

9. Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha: The Teachings of Ma-Tsu and the Hung-Chou School of Ch'an*, 57-94.

study of the Hongzhou School of Chan during the Tang era. Consequently, there are occasionally overlaps between this book and its companion volume, most of it caused by the need to provide appropriate context or to make sense of specific themes or issues without constantly referring to the earlier book.<sup>10</sup> Ideally, it might be fruitful to peruse the two books together, although each of them can also be read as an independent work.

In my earlier book, I presented a wide-ranging study of the history and doctrines of the Hongzhou School, in which Mazu played a central role as the founding figure. The first part of the book offers a systematic examination of the Hongzhou School's rapid growth during the middle part of the Tang era and its rise to preeminence as the main bearer of Chan orthodoxy, both at the Tang capitals and in the provinces. That is accompanied with an analysis of the Hongzhou School's doctrines and practices, set against the backdrop of the relevant canonical models, philosophical frameworks, and religious milieus of Tang China.

In this book, I shift the main center of attention away from the study of Chan history and doctrine. Instead, I focus on the development of Chan literature, with awareness that these three areas are closely interconnected and must be approached in relation to each other.

In the (near) future, I plan to follow up these two books with a third volume, provisionally titled *Chan, Tiantai, and the Evolution of Chinese Buddhist Monasticism*, which will deal with Buddhist institutions and the impact of the Chan and Tiantai schools' growth on the evolution of monasticism in China, with a primary focus on the Sui 隋 (581–618), Tang, and Five Dynasties eras.<sup>11</sup> Taken together, the three books can be viewed as a Chan trilogy. They will provide a wealth of information and analysis, covering a broad range of sources, themes, and issues that are central to Chan studies, with some coverage of Tiantai Buddhism as well. They will especially contribute, I hope, to our knowledge about the formative growth of Chan in Tang China, its relationship with the rest of Buddhism, and its emergence as the main tradition of elite Buddhism.

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10. I have also tried to avoid excessive cross-referencing to my earlier works on Tang Chan, which in addition to the volume about the Hongzhou School also include a number of shorter publications that are cited in the subsequent chapters, as appropriate. For a complete listing, see the bibliography.

11. I have several publications on the relationship between Chan and monasticism, which I plan to rework and integrate into the new book. For instance, see Poceski, "Guishan jingce and the Ethical Foundations of Chan Practice," and Poceski, "Xuefeng's Code and the Chan School's Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations."



PART I

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*Study of Chan Literature*



# I

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## *Mazu's Records and the Study of Chan Literature*

THE SCHOLARLY STUDY of Chan history, doctrine, and practice, especially as it pertains to earlier periods of the tradition's development, is constrained and demarcated by the quantity and nature of the available sources. Such study is primarily based on various kinds of Chan records and other pertinent texts, which can be grouped into several categories, in terms of their subject matter, form, and structure. In order to make sense of these texts and use them constructively as primary sources for the study of select aspects of Chan history and doctrine, it is prudent to carefully consider their complex provenance, the reasons for which they were created, and the ways they were used, transmitted, or interpreted by later generations of Chan adherents and other relevant parties, including the Chinese literati. We also need to be mindful of the institutional constraints that shaped the prevalent processes of textual creation and diffusion, as well as of the religious beliefs and ideological suppositions of the Buddhist communities that in various ways were connected with these texts. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the texts' intrinsic properties and formal features.

Before delving into the structure and content of specific Chan texts, the varying representations of Chan sages and the teachings conveyed in them, or the origins and defining features of the genres in which they were composed, it might be helpful to briefly consider some of the broader contexts and germane issues that affect or inform that kind of study. Consequently, this chapter is primarily concerned with the broad picture, and to certain extent it can be viewed as an introduction to the next five chapters (namely, to part I of the book). In it, I succinctly introduce Mazu, his disciples, and the relevant records. That is followed by a brief survey of some of the relevant

secondary literature, as well as discussion of certain trends, concerns, and contexts that shape the contemporary study of Chan history and literature, especially as they pertain to the topic at hand. That includes a host of implicit assumptions, theoretical commitments, analytical frameworks, and tacit agendas that, in ways subtle or obvious, might influence the manner in which we approach, read, or interpret the varied sources and use them for our own purposes.

Additionally, in the middle of the chapter, I introduce the notion of looking at the Chan School as a community of memory. That might be useful for understanding the reasons and the manners in which Chan teachers, writers, and adherents approached and reimagined their tradition's past, and tried to assert a sense of control over it. Such a way of dealing with the cumulative past was especially impactful on the process of constructing the identity of Chan as a distinct tradition within Buddhism. It also enabled the Chan School to buttress its claim to the status of a widely acknowledged orthodoxy.

### *The Legacy of Mazu and His Hongzhou School*

Mazu is widely recognized as a central figure in the history of Chan Buddhism, by the tradition's adherents and its historians, in China as well as the rest of East Asia. That perception is reflected in classical Chan literature, where his records occupy important positions as vital repositories of age-old wisdom, as well as in his conspicuous image in popular Chan lore. The prevailing view about his importance is also based on the notion that, along with his leading disciples—collectively referred to as the Hongzhou School 洪州宗—he played a central role in the development of Chan during an important transitional period. Among other things, that led to the formation of a Chan orthodoxy that, with a number of later adjustments and reformulations, continued to be dominant over the subsequent centuries. In that sense, all later traditions of Chan/Zen incorporate elements of Mazu's legacy—real, imagined, or a mixture of both—and the wider Chan tradition he represents, as it developed during the latter half of the Tang era.

The influence and authority of Mazu and his prominent disciples, as well as of other well-known Chan monks from the Tang era, continues to this day. That is readily apparent when we look at the recent revival of Buddhism in China. There is, for instance, the republishing of their records and the writing of new books and articles about them. In addition, as part of the rebuilding of monastic communities and historical sites that were closed or destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, many of the monasteries (and monuments) associated with Mazu and other prominent Chan masters—such as Yunmen

Wenyan 雲門文偃 (864–949), Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (778–897), Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866), and Huineng 慧能 (638–713)—have been rebuilt, often on a grand scale. Once again, these ancient establishments serve as significant centers of spiritual practice and popular piety, as well as popular destinations for pilgrims and tourists. A central part of the ongoing process of renewal, which often is interwoven with the fashioning of a new communal identity, is drawing direct and robust connections with the monastery's founding figure or other important Chan master(s) who once taught there.

Often the historical links with prominent Chan masters such as Mazu are unambiguously displayed at the very entrance of the monastery or at other prominent sites within the monastic compound. Such is the case, for instance, with Youmin Monastery 佑民寺 in Nanchang 南昌, the present-day capital of Jiangxi province, which is the modern iteration of Mazu's Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou. There, near the top of the main entrance gate, we find an inscription that proclaims the monastery to be a “sanctuary of Mazu.” The close connection with Mazu is also made explicit in a number of places inside the monastery, including a plaque that provides basic information about the monastery and its illustrious history, and Mazu occupies a central position in the Hall of Patriarchs.

The same wording, this time displayed even more prominently and written in bigger characters, can be found at the top of the entrance gate of Baofeng monastery 寶峰寺, on Shimen Mountain 石門山 in Jiangxi. This monastery, which was the original site of Mazu's burial and his memorial pagoda, also proudly identifies itself as Mazu's sanctuary (*daochang* 道場).<sup>1</sup> Inside the monastery one can also find a new memorial stūpa dedicated to the great master, made from white marble, erected at the site of the old stūpa that was destroyed and rebuilt a number of times, with the last round of destruction occurring during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>2</sup> Given that these monasteries' main (or only) claim to fame is the historical connection with Mazu, it is perhaps not surprising that the present-day congregations would be eager to highlight that illustrious heritage.

With some local variations, similar trends can also be found at other prominent monastic institutions with Chan associations that have long and rich histories. Pertinent examples include Tiantong Monastery 天童寺, located in

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1. For a recent description of these and other monastic sites in Jiangxi and Hunan that are related to Mazu, his disciples, and other Chan figures from the Tang era, see Shi Dayuan 釋大願, *Chong zou jiang hu* 重走江湖. The book is written as a travelogue, or rather an account of a pilgrimage undertaken by a contemporary monk.

2. The rebuilding of the stūpa is discussed in the introduction to Text 2, in part II.

the vicinity of Ningbo (Zhejiang), whose earliest origins can be traced back to 300 C.E., and Gaomin Monastery 高旻寺, near Yangzhou (Jiangsu), which in addition to its illustrious past was among the main places for Chan practice during the Republican Period. The same applies to many other monasteries in China, and this trend is not necessarily restricted to establishments that have links with noted Chan masters.

With the ongoing globalization of Buddhism, to some extent we also see a spread of that kind of legacy to other lands beyond Chan's or Zen's East Asian homeland. That includes various parts of Europe and the Americas where there is an interest in Chan/Zen Buddhism, as a historical as well as a living tradition. As part of that process, in addition to scholarly studies, there are contemporary interpretations or reimaginings of Mazu and his teachings—along with those of other prominent Chan teachers from the Tang era—that are parts of present-day religious discourses, even if their contents often have little to do with the actual historical persons or the religious ethos espoused by Mazu and his disciples.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike some of the best-known Chan teachers from the Tang era—such as Huineng, the putative “sixth patriarch” of Chan in China, who was a marginal figure during his lifetime and became only retroactively recognized as a major Chan patriarch—Mazu achieved considerable renown and became an influential figure during his lifetime.<sup>4</sup> I have already written in detail about Mazu's formative training and his rise to prominence, so there is no need to repeat the same story.<sup>5</sup> The same goes for his teachings. It might be helpful, however, to reiterate that an important part of Mazu's influence is reflected in the large number of disciples he attracted from all parts of the sprawling Tang empire, who came to study with him at his monasteries in Jiangxi, initially at Gonggong mountain 龔公山 and then in Hongzhou 洪州 (present-day Nanchang).<sup>6</sup>

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3. For an example of a recent Japanese book about Mazu's teachings, see Yamada Fumio 山田史生, *Hajimete no zen mondō* はじめての禅問答. The book focuses on well-known stories about Mazu written in the encounter dialogue format and is primarily meant for a general audience interested in popular representations of Zen. The author also tries to explore the essential meanings behind the stories in a manner that bears relevance to contemporary spiritual concerns.

4. For Huineng, his legend, and his oft-cited role as the sixth Chan patriarch, see Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*; and Morten Schlütter and Stephen F. Teiser, eds., *Readings of the Platform Sutra*.

5. Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 21–43.

6. See Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 45–83.

In the end, Mazu arguably attracted more disciples than any other Chan teacher from the Tang era. A number of his disciples, such as Xitang Zhizang 西堂智藏 (735–817), Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (749–814), Xingshan Weikuan 興善惟寬 (755–817), and Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (748–834), became the most prominent Chan teachers of their generation. The same trend also continued with the subsequent generation of disciples, which included prominent Chan teachers such as Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (d. 850?), Guishan Lingyou 澗山靈祐 (771–853, sometimes also referred to as Weishan), and Zhaozhou Congshen.

### *Masters and Disciples*

As is usually the case throughout the history of Chinese Buddhism—or, more broadly, the history of religion—Mazu's reputation and historical standing were closely linked with the success of his disciples. The long-term prominence and the staying power of the master was, in important ways, closely related to his disciples' ability to create strong and lasting communities, which could preserve or reinvent the legacy of the master. Accordingly, Mazu's historical stature grew with the emergence of his first- through third-generation disciples as the dominant group within the flourishing Chan movement, which took place at a pivotal point in its development as a major tradition of Chinese Buddhism. Mazu legacy was further cemented with his recognition as a key ancestor (or progenitor) of some of the main Chan lineages that came to the fore during the Five Dynasties and early Song eras. That was especially the case with the Linji lineage (or school) 臨濟宗, which became dominant in China during the early Song period, after which it was also transmitted to Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. In those countries, Linji (J: Rinzai) Chan also achieved positions of prominence that, with some variations, to a large degree continue to the present time.

The corollary of Mazu's fame and the widely held view about his historical importance was the continuing transformation of his religious persona and the reinterpretation of the teachings attributed to him, as recorded in the texts presented and discussed in this volume. He was by no means the only Chan teacher to be subjected to these kinds of hagiographic and exegetical processes. That makes his records representative of larger historical and literary trends, as well as useful sources for exploring some of the notable paradigm shifts that, among other things, are behind the considerable differences between Tang and Song Chan. Typically, such protracted processes of hagiographic representation and evolving exegesis were embedded within concrete historical circumstances and reflected specific religious perspectives

and institutional concerns. As such, they provide us with insights about the varied historical environments and the many actors that produced, modified, or popularized the texts examined in this volume, as well as with clues about the social and religious milieus in which they were active.

As is to be expected, with the passage of time the memories of the lives and spiritual exploits of Chan teachers such as Mazu became the stuff of legend. In due course, they were refashioned or reimagined in ways that perhaps had little to do with the lived realities and the spiritual perspectives of the persons behind those images and ideas. As we carefully scrutinize the later historical records, it becomes apparent that often the Chan teacher as an actual historical person recedes in the distance. Instead, generations of devotees, monks, and writers continuously reinterpret or recreate his character, message, and legacy, in terms of their own views, perspectives, or vested interests.

Over the centuries, that led to the creation of new records about Mazu and other prominent Chan monks. There were also the revisions or reinterpretations of existing records in light of concerns, attitudes, and perspectives current within the later Chan milieus. While for the most part all of these were primarily monastic endeavors, we also need to keep in mind the influence of key segments among the lay supporters and followers, most notably the sociopolitical elites of China (and later of other parts of East Asia). During both the Tang and the Song eras, key segments of the sociopolitical elites constituted important audiences for Chan texts and teachings, as well as for the rituals and other practices performed at Chan monasteries. As is to be expected, these dominant strata of Chinese society approached the Chan School and the broader Buddhist tradition with their own spiritual predilections and utilitarian concerns, and in light of their cultural affinities and intellectual horizons.<sup>7</sup>

### *Texts and Contexts*

From early on, Mazu's records—along with the records of his prominent disciples, such as Baizhang—were taken to represent a distinct type of Chan tradition, centered on a paradigmatic model of religious virtuosity. As such, they left lasting imprints on religious life in East Asia. By the Song era, they became largely construed and interpreted in terms of an iconoclastic ethos that, according to tradition, was to a large degree pioneered by Mazu and was emblematic of the Chan School's golden age. The familiar vistas of Chan

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7. For the concerns and roles of the laity, especially the Song literati, see Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism*; and Mark Halperin, *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960–1279*.

iconoclasm are encapsulated in the numerous short stories that depict the Chan masters' enigmatic statements and dramatic encounters with their disciples, a number of which are discussed and translated in this volume. Consequently, some of these texts, especially Mazu's record of sayings and his biographical entries in popular Chan collections such as *Jingde chuan deng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Record of the Lamp's Transmission from the Jingde Era), along with popular *gong'an* 公案 (J: *kōan*) collections such as *Bi yan lu* 碧巖錄 (Blue Cliff Record), became focal elements of classical Chan literature and important markers of Chan orthodoxy.

With some exceptions, the various Chan texts presented and analyzed in this volume tend to be multilayered works that contain hybrid narratives, incorporating a variety of sources and representing a multitude of voices. As repositories of collective memories or creative imaginings, usually they are not simple literary products that can be ascribed to specific individuals. Instead, they developed over time in the context of complex religious networks and were impacted by changing narrative frameworks. Consequently, while they might tell us something about Mazu or the other monks featured in them, these texts also serve as windows into the worlds and actions of the many people who were involved in their creation, dissemination, and reception. Taken as a corpus, the creation and adaptation of these texts unfolded over several centuries, but after some of them attained "canonical" status during the Song era, they became recognized as key statements of Buddhist orthodoxy. As such, the records of Mazu and his disciples have ever since continued to shape the religious and institutional identities of assorted traditions of Chan/Zen Buddhism, in China and elsewhere.

As was noted in the Introduction, besides providing a detailed study of the provenances, functions, and contents of the various texts that deal with Mazu, in a wider sense this volume aims at illuminating key historical trajectories, socioreligious backgrounds, and ideological repositionings that shaped the creation and transmission of Chan writings in Tang and Song China. That also includes critical examination of the establishment and adaptation of the major Chan genres, especially those that feature prominent elements of genealogical schematization and hagiographic storytelling, which are representative of much of the canonical literature produced by the Chan School. Along with its analysis of the main Chan genres—the records of sayings (*yulu* 語錄), the transmission of the lamp (*chuan deng* 傳燈) chronicles (or "histories"), the Chan monastic codes (*qinggui* 清規, lit. "rules of purity"), and the *gong'an* collections—the book also explores the inclusion of information about the lives and teachings of Chan masters like Mazu in texts composed in non-Chan genres, such as the stele inscriptions (*beiming* 碑銘) and the biographies of

eminent monks (*gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳), which were based on secular literary models.

Although within the Chan tradition prominent masters such as Mazu were viewed as historical persons, in many contexts they mainly functioned as paradigmatic exemplars of central religious ideals, which changed over time. As the tradition evolved during the Tang-Song transition—in part in response to notable changes in the social, cultural, and political environments—its religious perspectives, essential identity, and modes of self-representation also underwent significant transformations. Among the primary means of effecting and legitimizing such changes was the retroactive attribution of new attitudes and ideals, along with the symbolic imagery and the ideological agendas that surrounded them, to notable Chan figures such as Mazu.

A central element among these far-reaching changes was the transformation of Mazu and other Tang masters into the indomitable iconoclasts of classical Chan lore, especially as it grew during the Song era. These developments are reflected in a broad range of texts composed in the aforementioned Chan genres. Even as it affirmed its exceptional status apart from the earlier monastic mainstream and the established canonical tradition—and to a substantial degree based its quasi-sectarian identity on the problematic notion of non-reliance on the mediums of words and letters—Song Chan was a tradition that was immensely prolific in its literary production. Accordingly, the major developments within the literary arena, surveyed in some detail in the subsequent chapters, were integral parts of larger efforts to firmly establish the Chan School's central position within the Buddhist mainstream. To a large extent, that also depended on the procurement of imperial support and literati patronage.

### *Community of Memory*

As active participants in complex historical processes that involved the promotion of specific visions of religious orthodoxy, generations of Chan teachers, writers, editors, and adherents reenvisioned Mazu's iconic image and transformed his religious persona in light of ever-changing views, attitudes, and institutional predicaments. The same can be said of other prominent Chan teachers from the Tang era. Consequently, Mazu's hagiographic portrayals, as preserved in the translated texts, serve as valuable illustrations of larger patterns of communal remembrance and historical representation within Chinese Buddhism—or, more broadly, within Chinese religion—which to a

degree persist to the present day. They help us understand some of the primary means by which the Chan School constructed and redefined its collective identity, as well as the ways it projected onto the external world intricately constructed tapestries of sanctified images and symbolic representations of archetypal spirituality. To a substantial degree, behind most of that was the indubitable authority and hallowed charisma of the great Chan masters—such as Mazu and the prominent disciples who followed in his footsteps—which at different times and places were construed in somewhat divergent or even contradictory ways.

One way of thinking about the Chan School, in fairly general terms, is to view it as a community of memory, to use a concept deployed by Robert Bellah and his collaborators in their influential study of American society.<sup>8</sup> At its core, the concept denotes socially interdependent groups that share certain practices and are bound together by their communal remembrance of the past, which provides them with a sense of collective identity and a common heritage. Such communal remembrances are often expressed in stories or accounts about important events and persons, and they form the basic foundations for the construction of individual and group identities. Given the great importance played by the remembrance of the community's shared past, which acts as a key constitutive element of its identity, it is not surprising to find that its members are continuously engaged in retelling the central narratives about its collective history.

In order not to forget that past, a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative, and in so doing, it offers examples of the men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community. These stories of collective history and exemplary individuals are an important part of the tradition that is so central to a community of memory.<sup>9</sup>

In many instances, these sorts of communal remembrances assume religious character and are linked with various types of practices and rituals. This kind of analysis fits fairly well with what we know about the historical development and essential character of Chan Buddhism. It is also helpful in framing our analysis of the manner in which the monks associated with the Chan School

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8. Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, 152–155.

9. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, 153.

created a sense of common tradition, with a shared heritage, notwithstanding the occasional presence of centrifugal forces and quasi-sectarian biases. While undoubtedly that points in the direction of novel developments, including elements that were unique to the Chan School, to a significant degree such wide-ranging processes were also influenced by the great importance given to historical remembrance and retelling of the past in medieval Chinese society, which was reflected in the rich and immensely powerful tradition of historical writing and exegesis.<sup>10</sup>

In a basic sense, most religious traditions can be construed as communities of memory. Communal remembrance—or ingenious reinvention—of the past plays a crucial role in the construction of religious identities across a broad spectrum of religious traditions. Often those religious identities are interwoven with other types of identities and allegiances, including ethnic and national identities. For instance, the concept of community of memory can readily be applied to the early Christian churches. The early Gospels can be understood as literary expressions, presumably based on oral traditions, of the disciples' remembrances of the words and acts of Jesus, as they were handed down within early Christian communities. The communal identity of the nascent Christian church, therefore, cannot be separated from the communal memories about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

The same could be said of early Islam. Some of the key issues and events in Islamic history, including the split between the Sunni and the Shia,<sup>12</sup> go back to pivotal remembrances of a shared past. As is perhaps to be expected, depending on perspective, some of those remembrances can be seen as being selective or disputable—within as well as outside of the broader community of believers. That is especially the case with regard to communal remembrances that pertain to the life and legacy of Muhammad (c. 570–632), his family, and the religion's early followers.

These and many other possible examples point to the presence of inherently conservative tendencies that can be found in virtually all religions. That includes a propensity to constantly look backward in time, toward the paradigmatic figures or the seminal events in the religion's formative history. That is exemplified by the commonplace evocation of the Buddha's supreme awakening across a wide spectrum of Buddhist lands and traditions, or the

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10. See David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, 159–205.

11. Allen Verhey, *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life*, 21–29.

12. See Lesley Hazleton, *After the Prophet: The Epic Story of the Shia-Sunni Split in Islam*.

ubiquitous image of Christ at the cross. Consequently, there is a continuing recall, reflection, or discussion of the past, which tends to be interpreted in light of cumulative traditions, entrenched dogmas, normative values, or current concerns and exigencies.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding its undeniable importance, the past cannot be retrieved or accessed directly. To a large degree, its conception and understanding tend to be based on fallible memories, as well as on inexact or problematic sources. Consequently, the past is essentially contestable and fraught with all sorts of ambiguities. It is also open to various interpretations and can be approached from a number of perspectives. In fact, all too often we are faced with innocuous misconceptions or overt manipulations of the past, some of which might be promoted by official institutions.

As explained by modern scientific research, at the personal level, memory involves the interlinked processes of encoding, storing, and retrieving information about past events, experiences, facts, and the like.<sup>13</sup> Although human beings have a remarkable capacity for different types of long-term memory, they are also prone to various kinds of memory malfunctions, gaps, interferences, and misremembrances. That takes us back to the basic manner in which memories or remembrances are constructed. Far from being a purely automatic or mechanical process, the encoding, storage, and retrieval of information are done in a selective manner and usually take place within a particular social context.

To a substantial degree, the memory processes tend to be highly subjective and selective, influenced by the individual's desires, goals, and expectations, as well as by the social contexts and situational demands he or she encounters at a given point in time. Being constructed, adjusted, and embellished, memories are not necessarily accurate or factual representations of real facts, nor do they precisely record what has actually transpired.<sup>14</sup> They can be influenced by all sorts of extraneous factors, which can be cultural, social, religious, or psychological. All too often, they can also be affected by various types of misinformation or manipulation. There is also the possibility of memory inhibition or repression, or even of engendering false memories. Consequently, the process of remembering things and events implies intricate interweaving of fantasy and reality.<sup>15</sup>

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13. John Sutton et al., "Memory and Cognition," 211–212.

14. John Sutton et al., "Memory and Cognition," 213.

15. Roger Kennedy, "Memory and the Unconscious," 179.

The situation becomes even more complex as we move from the realm of individual memory into the realm of collective memory, as that brings to the foreground some of the key interpersonal or social aspects of remembering. That also takes us back to the aforementioned intersections between memory and identity, by pointing to the manner in which group identity is anchored by communal memory. Such collective remembrance, as it is passed from one generation to another, becomes a key ingredient in the creation of a distinctive communal identity. Some of the basic aspects of this process can be observed, albeit from a considerable distance, when we look carefully into the historical growth of Chan during the Tang and Song eras.

Collective memories do not necessarily go unquestioned or uncontested, and at times they tend to be unstable or transient. Consequently, over time they can be prone to all sorts of transmutations, additions, or embroideries. They might also be influenced by the views and agendas of particular groups (or individuals) who appropriate for themselves—or are bestowed by others—the roles of custodians of the past and guardians of collective memory. Often the procurement of such privileged position enables those groups, which can include authoritarian governments, to also act as arbiters of the present and shapers of the future. In addition, these processes often involve the establishment of particular sites as places of communal memory. In the present context, that is applicable to the monasteries, stūpas, and ancestral halls associated with prominent Chan masters such as Mazu.

Consequently, communal memories, including those that developed or were diffused within the Chan School, tend to be complex and dynamic assemblages of disparate elements. Some of those elements might exist in tension to each other, and by and large they are open to change or reinterpretation. Depending on context and perspective, such memories can be viewed in a number of ways. For instance, they can be criticized and dismissed as pious embellishments or blatant distortions, perhaps formulated in light of existing political circumstances, social backdrops, or utilitarian concerns. They can also be seen as rich repositories of religious teachings and popular lore, as well as prime instances of religious imagination at work, developed by living traditions as pragmatic responses to changing religious needs and cultural predicaments. In any case, when used with care and sensitivity, the texts that serve as main storehouses of such collective memories help us ascertain key religious themes and ideological positions, as well as map broad historical trajectories. They also afford us glimpses into the lives, perspectives, and values of the people who were behind the ancient texts and the memories that are interwoven or encapsulated in them.

## *Study of Chan History and Literature*

This book can be situated within a larger academic context, especially the recent advances in the scholarly study of Buddhism and Chinese religious history. That includes the significant contributions made by scholars working in the narrower field of Chan studies—to whom I am greatly indebted—such as Yanagida Seizan, Ishii Shūdō, Shiina Kōyū, and Ogawa Takashi in Japan,<sup>16</sup> and John McRae, Albert Welte, Jiang Wu, Bernard Faure, Robert Buswell, Morten Schlütter, and Wendy Adamek in the West, to mention a few.<sup>17</sup> While the study of Chinese Buddhism is not without all sorts of problems, including many of the unfortunate trends and challenging issues that influence academic research in America, Japan, China, and elsewhere, on the whole there has been considerable improvement in our understanding of Chan and its place in Chinese Buddhism. By questioning normative assumptions and traditional narratives, and by using a broad range of pertinent materials, contemporary researchers have been able to construct a more accurate and nuanced picture of Chan history, thought, practice, and literature.

Perhaps needless to say, the academic study of Chan (and other traditions of Chinese Buddhism) has not always been a straight line of progress, and there is always some room for improvement. At times, that has meant going overboard with highly critical or negative approaches—or perhaps the opposite, namely, not being critical enough—misusing (or ignoring) relevant primary sources, catering to fleeting academic fashions, or coming up with questionable interpretations. However, on the whole over the last several decades, there has been a marked improvement in our knowledge about

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16. For instance, see Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禪宗史書の研究; Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū: Chūgoku sōtōshū to dōgen zen* 宋代禪宗史の研究: 中国曹洞宗と道元禪; Shiina Kōyū 椎名宏雄, *Sōgenban zenseki no kenkyū* 宋元版禪籍の研究; and Ogawa Takashi 小川隆, *Goroku no shisō shi: Chūgoku zen no kenkyū* 語録の思想史: 中国禪の研究.

17. Examples of relevant books in English, in addition to those described later, include John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Genealogy, and Transformation in Chinese Chan Buddhism*; Robert Buswell, *The Formation of Chan Ideology in China and Korea: The Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra, A Buddhist Apocriphon*; Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*; and Jia Jinhua, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- through Tenth-Century China*. Also worth mentioning are the two books that deal with Zongmi and his corpus: Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, and Jeffrey L. Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*. In addition, the series of volumes on Zen edited by Steven Heine and Dale Wright—including *Zen Masters* (Oxford 2010), *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts* (Oxford 2004), and *Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Theory in Practice* (Oxford 2008)—contain a number of excellent contributions.

virtually all aspects of the tradition. That becomes apparent when we compare some of the recent studies produced by the aforementioned scholars with the questionable formulations presented in the works of pioneering scholars such as Hu Shi (1891–1962) and D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966).

Among other things, research advances have enabled us to arrive at a clearer understanding of the manner in which the Chan School was situated within the wider religious, social, and intellectual worlds, especially during crucial periods in Chinese history, such as the Tang and the Song. Furthermore, by using a broader range of sources, including long-lost texts recovered at Dunhuang 敦煌 and elsewhere, we have also been able to obtain a wealth of information about some of the marginal streams of early Chan. That, in turn, has led scholars to rethink a host of broader historical and theoretical issues, and has opened up new avenues for further research.

Recent English-language studies relevant to the present topic include Albert Welter's outstanding books: *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford 2006), *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy: The Development of Chan's Records of Sayings Literature* (Oxford 2008), and *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu: A Special Transmission within the Scriptures* (Oxford 2011). Among the three, the present book is most closely related to Welter's exemplary study of the creation of Linji Yixuan's 臨濟義玄 (d. 866) record of sayings, *Linji yulu* 臨濟語錄, and its relationship with the construction of Chan orthodoxy in Song China. There he argues that the compiling of Linji's record reflected a prolonged process of myth-making, meant to retroactively reposition Linji as a pivotal patriarchal figure. The whole process was undertaken by the increasingly powerful Linji School, which buttressed its legitimacy in the religious world of Song China by tracing its spiritual ancestry back to the great master, who was Mazu's third-generation disciple, and by refashioning his image in ways that suited its needs at a particular point in history.

Other notable volumes on Chan Buddhism, with which this new book is related only in very general terms, include *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and Its Contexts* (Columbia 2007) by Wendi Adamek, and Morten Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Hawaïi 2008). Adamek's wide-ranging study of Tang Chan centers on the *Lidai fa bao ji* 歷代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma Jewel through Successive Generations), an early Chan chronicle produced in the late eighth century by the Baotang School 保唐宗 in Sichuan, which presents a unique perspective on early Chan history. Schlütter's engaging volume explores the notorious dispute over the nature and meaning of enlightenment within twelfth-century Chan, at the

core of which was Dahui Zonggao's 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) trenchant critique of the alleged heresy of “silent illumination Chan,” which was advocated by the newly reinvented Caodong School 曹洞宗. As we move into later Buddhist history, Jiang Wu's well-researched *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (Oxford 2008) surveys the revival of Chan Buddhism during the seventeenth century and its reemergence as the main tradition of Chinese Buddhism, with a focus on the various controversies about Chan lineage, practice, and enlightenment.

### *Filling the Gaps*

Notwithstanding these and other significant contributions to scholarship, there are still a number of notable gaps in the study of Chan history, doctrine, and literature—not to mention the study of Chinese Buddhism as a whole—and lots of additional work needs to be done. That includes a lack of critical translations and studies of many important texts, especially those that are relevant to our enhanced understanding of the significant and multidimensional changes that the Chan School and the rest of Buddhism experienced during the Tang-Song transition. While a number of early Chan manuscripts recovered from the library cave at Dunhuang, especially those dealing with the East Mountain tradition and the Northern School of early Chan, have received the kind of attention they deserve,<sup>18</sup> there are other Dunhuang materials that are still worth exploring.<sup>19</sup> In addition, there are the voluminous contents of previously ignored or long-lost manuscripts, rediscovered in monastic libraries in Korea and elsewhere. Pertinent examples include *Zu tang ji* 祖堂集 (Hall of Patriarchs Collection) and *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (Baolin Biographies), which have received some scholarly attention, but certainly more work could be done on them.

It might also be helpful to revisit and have a more careful look at some of the familiar texts from the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song eras, the contents and contexts of many of which are still understood imperfectly. Examples of such texts include *Bi yan lu*, *Wumen guan* 無門關 (Wumen's Passage), *Tiansheng guang deng lu* 天聖廣燈錄 (Extensive Lamp Record from the Tiansheng Era), *Baizhang guang lu* 百丈廣錄 (Extensive Record of Baizhang), *Mingzhou dameishan chang chanshi yulu* 明州大梅山常禪師語錄 (Recorded Sayings of

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18. See John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*; and Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*.

19. For a broad overview of Chan manuscripts from Dunhuang, see Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū* 敦煌禪宗文献の研究.

Chan Mater Chang, from Damei Mountain in Mingzhou), and *Zongmen shi gui lun* 宗門十規論 (Treatise of the Chan School's Ten Rules). To these we can add shorter texts that have yet to be studied, such as Ehu Dayi's 鵝湖大義 (746–818) *Zuochan ming* 坐禪銘 (Inscription on Sitting Meditation), which is included in *Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訓 (Buddhist Sermons).<sup>20</sup> On the flip side, there is also an urgent need to pay more attention to the broader picture, which at some point will hopefully lead to the writing of comprehensive new histories of Buddhism and Chan in China, to replace the dated but still widely used volumes by Kenneth Ch'en and Heinrich Dumoulin.<sup>21</sup>

### *Critiques and Caveats*

Welter's aforementioned study of *Linji yulu* successfully links the creation of a hagiographical narrative about Linji with the formation of the Linji School and its emergence as the dominant tradition of Song Chan. The book's analysis, on the whole, is of a high quality, and its general approach tends to be fairly balanced. Nonetheless, in places the book also exhibits some of the potential problems we find in recent Chan studies (especially in English-language publications). Using the book only as an example of some general trends, let me briefly point to three areas of concern that are relevant in the present context. First, sometimes the book tends to present an overly cynical reading of Chan history, in which all sorts of politicking and literati involvement tend to be the major or determining factors. This sort of approach is not uncommon in modern (especially American) scholarship, which increasingly tends to focus on governmental policies, social factors, and economic considerations. At times, that comes at the expense of careful consideration of the actual ideas and teachings presented in the pertinent text(s), or the mores, practices, and ideals of the communities that created and disseminated them.

Second, Welter's comprehensive study of *Linji yulu* also neglects to include any meaningful consideration of Linji as a historical person—and of the religious world in which he participated—as an integral part of the story. Instead, the sole focus in the book is on the later sectarian movement that created the text about Linji (as well as the literati associated with it), while the text itself is by and large construed as a work of religious fiction.<sup>22</sup> But surely Linji was a

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20. *Zimen jingxun* 2, T 48.1048b-c.

21. Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*; Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China*. McRae's *Seeing through Zen* is only a partial replacement for Dumoulin's volume.

22. See my review of Welter's volume in *Philosophy East and West*, 61/2 (2011), 395–399.

real person (however personhood might be construed), as were the other noted Chan monks from the Tang era. Even though his life is somewhat shrouded in mystery—more so than the lives (and ideas) of Mazu and some of the other monks featured in this volume—perhaps at least echoes of Linji's acts, ideas, and legacy can be found somewhere within the extant materials. After all, *Linji yulu* and other similar records composed during the Song period were compilations based on a variety of earlier sources, some of which went back to the Tang era, rather than completely new literary works.

This kind of disappearing act is somewhat reminiscent of Bernard Faure's treatment of Bodhidharma and his legend, in which the historical person all but vanishes in a haze of uncertainty. Instead, the actual person is replaced by a textual or religious paradigm, which can then be dissected or manipulated by the application of various Western theoretical models, including structural criticism.<sup>23</sup> Faure goes as far as to suggest that historical individuality is an "obsolete concept."<sup>24</sup> As old-fashioned historians mistakenly toil to uncover some of the basic historical facts related to the legendary founder of Chan, according to Faure, their reading and interpretation of hagiographic texts is akin to the "mortuary washing" of a skeleton, which they are supposedly preparing for placement in the "museum of history." But the search for Bodhidharma's skeleton, we are told, leads to virtually nothing. In the end, all we find is an "empty grave" that, as suggested by an old apocryphal story, contains only a sandal.<sup>25</sup>

It is fairly obvious that there are notable discrepancies between the historical Bodhidharma, a somewhat obscure meditation master about whom there is a paucity of reliable sources, and the hagiographic depictions of him found in later Chan sources. This has already been acknowledged by some of the old-fashioned historians criticized by Faure. Furthermore, it needs to be pointed out that, on the whole, Bodhidharma's case is rather exceptional, as is his relationship and status with the broader Chan tradition. We have much more material to work with when it comes to later Chan figures, although of course not nearly as much as we might wish or hope for.

While there might be empty graves somewhere, most tombs actually contain the remains of actual people who, in all sort of ways, small or big, left their mark on history. If approached with requisite care and scrutinized

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23. Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, 126–135.

24. Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 135.

25. Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 126.

with the right tools, those remains can tell us all sorts of rich and interesting stories. The same goes for the material artifacts and the written records that the ancients have left us. The people in the graves, or behind the texts, monuments, and sculptures that have survived over the centuries, were once as real—or empty—as we are. After all, in constructive humanistic scholarship that has some connection to reality, we always end up dealing with actual human beings, who are inevitably grounded in particular times and places, even if at times they might engage in the manufacture of abstruse philosophical discourses, textual paradigms, and the like. The basic task of the historian is to try to figure out, the best he or she can on the basis of the available evidence, what those people were up to, how they lived, and what were their beliefs, ways of thinking, aspirations, and so on.

Going back to the last point about Welter's treatment of Linji and his records—namely, Linji's curious disappearance from the picture—that points to a larger trend in the study of Chan and Chinese Buddhism, especially evident in the work of American scholars who specialize in the Song era. That is to say, occasionally there is a propensity to treat the Song as the key period in Buddhist history. In part, this seems to be a reflection of the scholars' keenness to overemphasize the historical importance and religious creativity of the tradition(s) or period(s) they happen to study, a tendency that is fairly common in academic circles. For instance, in the introduction to a volume on Song Buddhism, we find the problematic assertion that the Song is most deserving of being characterized as the golden age of Buddhism.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, that kind of sweeping statement is made on the basis of weak and unconvincing arguments, and without any meaningful data or strong evidence that lends support to its overreaching assumptions. Typically, this sort of questionable argument—which is largely ignored by Chinese historians and scholars working in other areas of Tang and Song studies—is framed as a response to Kenneth Ch'en's largely negative assessment of Song Buddhism as a tradition in decline (which, one could argue in Ch'en's defense, is not necessarily that much off the mark).<sup>27</sup>

Be that as it may, all too often this sort of one-sided emphasis on the Song era comes at the expense of proper assessment and appreciation of Tang Buddhism. That includes downplay or obfuscation of the significant

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26. See Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung*, esp. 2. See also Robert Buswell, "The 'Short-Cut' Approach of *K'an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," 322, 327–328, 356.

27. Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*, 389–408.

flourishing of the Chan School that took place during the Tang era, which was a crucial period in both Chinese and Buddhist history. Within that kind of restrictive perspective, prevalent ideas about the Tang era as the Chan School's classical or central period—and more broadly the highpoint of Buddhism in China—are offhandedly dismissed as mere byproducts of Song-era myth-making, side effects of the intellectual creativity and religious dynamism of Song Chan.<sup>28</sup> But surely we can do both: carefully study Tang- and Song-era Chan in a balanced manner, in terms of their specific contexts and distinctive features, as well as in relation to each other. In between, we also need to account for the key developments that took place during the Five Dynasties period.

That kind of nuanced and balanced approach to the study of Chan can also be enhanced by a general appreciation and understanding of the broader picture and keen awareness of the main elements that are amalgamated in it. To put that in the context of the present book, we can study the lives and ideas of Mazu and his disciples within their proper Tang milieu, but we can also examine how their religious personas and their legacies were reinterpreted or reimagined within the context of later Chan traditions, starting with the Five Dynasties and the Song eras. Then we can also try to connect the dots, linking the different periods, milieus, and traditions, so that we can unify them into a single and reasonably coherent story about the growth and evolution of Chan Buddhism and its place within the Chinese religious landscape. Admittedly, that is easier said than done, in part because of the limited sources at our disposal, but it is perhaps worthwhile to keep on trying to arrive at a better and more rounded understanding.

### *Tacit Assumptions and Interpretive Choices*

In regard to the basic approach to the study of Chan history and literature taken here (and in my other publications on Chan), it tends to be fairly straightforward and unembellished. I start with delineating the topic(s) I want to pursue—which might involve specific historical figures, traditions, periods, texts, doctrines, practices, or institutions—and then move on to identifying and analyzing the whole range of relevant sources, Buddhist as well as

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28. Examples of this sort of dubious argument, sometimes based on flawed historical understanding or insufficient knowledge of the relevant sources, can be found in the work of Griffith Foulk. For instance, see Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," esp. 149–150, although the chapter, as a whole, contains some useful information about Song Chan.

non-Buddhist. A stated focus on a specific historical period, doctrinal issue, or influential figure often takes us into a number of different directions and necessitates the consideration of an array of outlying issues. Partially that is influenced by the fact that some of the main sources, along with the normative assumptions we have to deal with, point toward different eras or reflect the views and values of other groups of people. The study of Mazu and his Hongzhou School is a case in point. Although the main focus might be on Tang Chan, one also has to take into account all sorts of texts, viewpoints, and interpretive schemes that involve later periods and different traditions. To these we can add various theoretical and methodological concerns, including reflections on the kinds of questions we ask and the ways we frame our topics, as well as the multitude of implicit assumptions, interpretive choices, and vested interests we bring into our research.

Interesting as they may be for their peculiar literary qualities, arguably the main value of classical Chan records, including those studied and translated in this volume, is the opportunity they afford us for approaching and apprehending the multilayered worlds of the people who appear in them or are behind them, in all of their mysterious remoteness and confounding complexity. When dealing with these subjects and sources, I try to follow a middle way, of sorts. That involves avoiding what might be called traditionalist tendencies, such as the propensity to credulously take accepted sources as reliable historical documents, or to follow (perhaps unconsciously) entrenched sectarian views or prevailing interpretive biases. There is also the danger of unreflectively accepting unproven or normative assumptions about the spiritual value—or truth—of the teachings and traditions being studied. At the same time, it might be well advised to be somewhat concerned about the kinds of overly aggressive debunking, deconstructive analysis, unnecessary obfuscation, or overinterpretation we sometimes find in scholarly works. Sometimes, in a zeal to debunk or deflate entrenched paradigms, or to display our creative acumen by charting new interpretive schemes, we end up adopting hypercritical or one-sided approaches. Additionally, we might occasionally engage in indiscriminate or undisciplined use of unrelated theoretical models, typically derived from (once) trendy Western discourses, which are not necessarily fruitful or well suited to the subjects being studied.

Going back to the basic issue of balance, it is fairly unproblematic to assume that we should examine the political considerations and the social circumstances that affected the formulation of Chan doctrines, practices, and institutions. We should also try to assess how they influenced the compilation of the texts that articulated particular versions of Chan orthodoxy, as well as carefully analyze the provenance, structure, contents, and impact of such

sources. The same is true of our examination of the influences that the imperial government and the literati exerted on the institutional growth of Chan, the formation of its identity, and the public presentation of its teachings. Nonetheless, perhaps we should not overstate any of those aspects, overinterpret (or gloss over) our sources, or take them somewhat out of context.

Critical analysis need not come at the expense of considering, perhaps even taking seriously, the professed pieties and (at times genuine) spiritual concerns of the groups and individuals we study. It is quite probable that many of them truly believed in what they said or wrote. It is also likely that they sincerely tried to put that into practice, even if, as in all religious traditions, there was presumably a fair amount of hypocrisy, deception, and a general failure to live up to the lofty standards sanctioned by tradition. Furthermore, some of the ideas presented in the ancient texts might be quite interesting, perhaps even illuminating or uplifting, and they might be able to shed new or different light on the world in which we live. The opposite might also be the case; namely, texts sanctioned by tradition (and uncritically praised by modern scholars) might be filled with all sorts of nonsense.

All things considered, we need not assume that the historical persons we study were akin to the enigmatic or immaculate sages of traditional lore or popular Zen literature. Neither do we have to presuppose that the various stories and vignettes featured in the major Chan collections, especially those composed in the encounter dialogue format, exemplify profound spiritual experiences or point to rarefied truths. At the same time, it might be unhelpful to primarily look for elements of hypocrisy, moral frailty, or obsession with wealth and power, especially if that means projecting our own values and concerns onto ancient people we understand imperfectly. That might mean looking carefully at everything and from all possible angles, with a healthy dose of humility about our capacity for understanding. On a basic level, that involves consideration of the multitude of external influences, as well as the inner dynamics that shaped the protracted evolution of Chan texts, teachings, and practices, during the Tang and the Song eras, as well as beyond, all the way down to the present.

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## *Hagiographic Representations of Patriarch Ma*

THE BASIC INFORMATION about Mazu's life, ideas, and impact on the historical development of Chan Buddhism comes in fragmentary form and is dispersed among several different types of sources, as can be seen from the texts translated in part II of this volume. In various Chan records and collections, there are assorted pieces of chronological data and other pertinent information that shed light on his formative years, monastic vocation, and the roles he played later in life as a prominent Chan teacher. There are also short texts that purportedly contain records of the teachings he gave to his monastic and lay disciples. Beyond a narrow concern with establishing the basic contours of Mazu's life and thought, such documents also help us understand the growth and influence of his Hongzhou School—and, more broadly, the Chan tradition—within the wider religious, social, and historical contexts of Tang China.

However, often the available sources go beyond merely providing historical facts about Mazu, his disciples, their teachings, and the world in which they lived. They also convey information about how the great master and his followers were viewed, remembered, or reimagined by later generations of Chan writers, editors, and adherents. We are thus faced with a variety of multilayered sources, which point in the direction of several distinct historical periods—especially the Tang and the Song—and reflect the beliefs, outlooks, and agendas of different groups of people. In view of that, we face the challenge of coming to terms with several distinct visions of what a Chan master such as Mazu, as an embodiment of a religious ideal, is supposed to look like, what is the expected tenor and content of his teaching, and how he is expected to behave in certain contexts.

In light of the presence of multiple images of the Chan master as an exemplary figure, in this and the next chapter I examine the larger issues of historical remembrance and religious (re)imagination within the Chan tradition. More specifically, I look at key hagiographic portrayals and retroactive transformations of Mazu's iconic image as a paradigmatic Chan patriarch. My examination of these refracting portrayals and variegated imageries of Mazu is based on an analysis of an assortment of Chan texts, composed during the Tang, Five Dynasties, and early Song eras. The same kind of inquiry can also be extended to cover other noted Chan teachers from the late Tang period. Consequently, although my present focus is on key hagiographic representations of Mazu's religious persona, generally speaking the discussion that follows is also applicable to the "classical" Chan tradition as a whole. That includes Mazu's prominent disciples, such as Baizhang and Nanquan, as well as other noted Chan teachers from the late Tang era. I should perhaps also point out that the historical and literary processes examined here continued after the Song era, albeit with some new wrinkles and shifts in orientation or emphasis.<sup>1</sup> In fact, they are also evident, to a substantial degree, in the recent hagiographies written for (or in some cases by) modern Chan/Zen masters.<sup>2</sup>

Among the various literary depictions or retroactive imaginings of Mazu, by far the best known are some of the popular stories that portray him as an archetypal Chan iconoclast. This kind of representation, examined in more detail in the second half of this chapter, is prominently featured in Chan literature and plays a central part in popular lore. It tends to dominate both traditional and modern accounts of Mazu life and teachings—with some notable exceptions—as well as descriptions of the classical Chan tradition as a whole. Nonetheless, in the extant sources we can also find additional or alternative portrayals of Mazu, especially the two representational models examined in the next chapter: a thaumaturge and a teacher of Buddhist doctrine. Before delving into the specificities of each model, however, it might be helpful to present a broad overview of some of the pertinent issues, including the primary modes of hagiographic representation found in classical Chan literature.

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1. For pertinent developments during the late Ming and early Qing eras, see Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China*.

2. See, for instance, Sheng Yen, *Footprints in the Snow: The Autobiography of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*.

### *Texts and Transitions*

The textual sources that deal with Mazu and other Chan monks from the Tang era were written in a number of literary formats and belong to several distinct genres, some of which are unique to the Chan School. Moreover, they were composed and edited over an extended period, especially during the key Tang-Song transition. Over the course of this protracted time frame—particularly the period from the late eighth to the late eleventh century, the main focus of this volume—the Chan School underwent far-reaching makeovers and important transformations, in a range of key areas. Among other things, such changes encompassed an ongoing reconfiguration of the Chan School's doctrinal outlooks, soteriological paradigms, and ideological postures. They also involved a redrawing of the markers and parameters of Chan orthodoxy, reconstitution of the institutional framework, and creation of novel methods of contemplative praxis.

Similar kinds of far-reaching changes are also observable in the literary sphere. Namely, the various types of literary records produced by, or about, the Chan School also underwent a number of significant changes, in both form and content. That is evident when we scrutinize specific parts of the pertinent Chan collections, as well as other documents that purport to provide information about the lives and teachings of noted Chan monks. Such sources include the transcripts of Chan sermons and the varied accounts of interactions between Chan teachers and their disciples. In effect, the broad range of changes that Chan Buddhism experienced during the Tang-Song transition is reflected in the interlinked spheres of literary expression and textual production.

That brings to the fore a host of questions or issues regarding the kinds of primary sources we have at our disposal, including the provenance of individual texts and their usefulness as sources of historical information for the study of Tang (and Song) Chan. One potentially helpful approach is to have a closer look at the various portrayals or images of Mazu, or rather of his religious persona, as they are conveyed in the whole range of extant primary sources. Some later texts, such as Mazu's record of sayings, *Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄, composed in the late eleventh century, attempt to create a seemingly coherent picture of Mazu, which incorporates several overlaying facets of his multidimensional religious persona.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, in reality we are faced with a number of

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3. Discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

contrasting images and representations, created at different times and places, that are not necessarily compatible with each other. The entire picture regarding Mazu's life and teachings, in the end, is both incomplete and composite: a collage of disparate and interwoven elements, each with its own peculiar quality and convoluted provenance.

### *Persons and Ideals*

Over the centuries, the Chan tradition viewed a major Chan master such as Mazu as both a historical person and a compelling exemplar of significant religious ideals. At different times and places, there was more emphasis on one or the other, although by and large there was a tendency to blend the two. As the tradition evolved during the Tang-Song transition—partially in response to changes in the religious, social, and political environments—its ideals, tenets, and modes of self-representation also underwent notable transformations. Among the primary means of effecting and legitimizing such changes was the retroactive attribution of the new attitudes, ideas, and values, along with the symbolic imagery that surrounded them, to notable Chan figures such as Mazu.

In effect, successive generations of Chan teachers, adherents, and writers attributed various aspects of their pious beliefs, ideological agendas, or religious outlooks back to Mazu, his prominent disciples, and other Chan teachers from the late Tang era. As active participants in intricate historical processes, which involved the articulation and promotion of specific visions of Chan orthodoxy, they envisaged Mazu iconic images and transformed his religious persona in light of ever-changing doctrinal perspectives, ideological agendas, and institutional circumstances. In doing that, to some degree they also responded to the changing tastes and the horizons of expectation of key audiences, both within and outside of the monastic order.

Because the collective memories and literary depictions centered on other prominent Chan teachers from the Tang era functioned in similar ways, Mazu's hagiographic portrayals serve as helpful illustrations of larger patterns of communal remembrance and historical representation. They also help us understand some of the principal means by which the Chan School constructed its collective identity. That involved a manufacture and projection of intricately constructed tapestries of sanctified symbols and colorful images—primarily centered on the great Chan teachers from the Tang and (to a somewhat lesser extent) the Five Dynasties eras—onto the broader world beyond the walls of monastic compounds, as evidenced in the numerous Chan texts and other

related sources that were produced over the centuries. These complex processes, in turn, help us better understand the Chan School's broad historical trajectories. They point toward the considerable conceptual fluidity, cumulative embellishment, and strategic reframing that marked the Chan School's evolving self-representations, as revealed in a variety of interlinked sources that, to a large degree, revolve around the abstruse statements and animated images of the leading Chan patriarchs.

### *Hagiographic Narratives*

The composition, embellishment, and modification of hagiographic narratives about prominent Chan teachers such as Mazu was one of the primary modes by which the Chan School remembered, embroidered, and reimagined its cumulative growth and convoluted past. Within that literary context, the category of hagiography can be used to designate a special type of biography, namely, a religious biography that typically deals with the life, ideas, and legacy of a person deemed to be saintly or exemplary in some religious sense. Originally, the term was used in Christianity to refer to the biographies of various saints and leading ecclesiastics.<sup>4</sup> However, in modern usage its meaning is commonly extended to cover similar types of biographical narratives produced by the writers and adherents of other religions, including Buddhism.<sup>5</sup>

These kinds of sources are sometimes criticized for their assorted historical distortions and obfuscations, or for the mythical elements they often contain. At the most extreme—and perhaps a rather ill-advised—level, they are dismissed as works of fiction, largely unrelated to the actual veracities of the world they purport to represent. Obviously, we need not gloss over the limitations of these kinds of texts, and we should be mindful of the textual and interpretative challenges they pose. Nevertheless, it is also undoubtedly true that, in both the Christian and the Buddhist contexts, such sources contain lots of valuable information, as hagiographic narratives tend to have tangible connections with the societies and the religious groups that produced them.

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4. For instance, see Thomas Head, *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*; Clyde Binfield, *Sainthood Revisited: Studies in Hagiography and Biography*; John Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender: Male and Female in Merovingian Hagiography*; Virginia Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography*.

5. For examples, see the essays in Stephan Conermann and Jim Rheingans, eds., *Narrative Pattern and Genre in Hagiographic Life Writing: Comparative Perspectives from Asia to Europe*.

At their best, these kinds of texts include all sorts of details about local historical events, social structures, religious ideals, established institutions, common beliefs, popular customs, and indigenous cults, among other things. Within a narrower religious context, they also epitomize particular paradigms of spiritual life, humanized by the literary act of grounding them in the lives, thoughts, and legacies of individual persons. They thus perform important didactic functions within the pertinent religious communities, often eliciting feelings of faith, respect, and devotion. In many contexts they also provide meaningful models of moral conduct or spiritual practice that can be emulated by the faithful.

The two literary designations—biography and hagiography—are to a large extent interchangeable, as often it is not possible to draw sharp distinctions or affix rigid boundaries that separate the two. At a basic level, hagiography is simply a special kind of biography. Consequently, sometimes I use the two terms interchangeably. One might argue that in hagiographies one tends to find a preponderance of certain types of religious tropes, as well as prominent legendary or mythical elements, including depictions of miracles. However, a tendency to mythologize or idolize—albeit in a somewhat different fashion—is also not absent from secular biographies, including a number of recent examples of the genre. That includes biographies that depict their main subject in an excessively flattering light or present an unduly romanticized portrayal that does not stand up to critical scrutiny. In fact, in modern parlance the term *hagiography* is commonly used in a pejorative sense, as a way of dismissing or critiquing biographical narratives deemed to be overly reverential, uncritical, or skewed in some other way.

Inside the various Chan/Zen milieus, traditionally a person afforded a biography or hagiography is deemed to be an exemplary spiritual virtuoso or a perfected sage who, having realized the timeless truth of enlightenment, has become a member of the Chan lineage. While Chan hagiographies, like other types of Buddhist hagiographies, are concerned with the lives of idealized religious figures, to some extent they mirror the overall formats and stylistic conventions of standard (secular) biographies, many of which are incorporated in the official dynastic histories composed throughout the long history of ancient and imperial China.<sup>6</sup> In traditional Chinese society, those biographies occupied a central place in a dominant historiographical tradition, which played an immensely important role in the political, social, and cultural realms.

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6. See Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*; and Denis Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography."

### *Normative Chinese Models*

In contrast to the paucity of biographical writing in Indian Buddhism, in China we find a profusion of various types of biographical narratives, both within and outside of Buddhism. In ancient China, writing biographies of prominent persons was an integral part of a rich tradition of historical writing, whose origins were closely linked with the emergence of strong historical consciousness among the political and intellectual elites. Early Chinese classics, such as the immensely influential *Zuo Zhuan* 左傳 (Commentary of Zuo; probably composed in the late fourth century B.C.E.), contain numerous records of spoken words (including speeches, proclamations, and conversations) attributed to ancient rulers and other notable persons, along with descriptions of historical events. While in those kinds of early texts there is a tendency to blur the lines between what we might call history and fiction, their wide dissemination points to the great prestige of history and its dominant role in traditional Chinese society.<sup>7</sup> In a way, biographical writing served as bridge that brought together the two narrative forms and was influential in shaping later forms of writing that can be placed into the general categories of fiction and history.<sup>8</sup>

The central place of biographical narratives within the Chinese historiographical tradition is already evident in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (c. 135–86 B.C.E.) *Shi ji* 史記 (Historical Records), an epoch-making text that served as a model for most subsequent types of historical writing. There the collection of biographies, or “arrayed biographies” (*lie zhuan* 列傳), constitutes one of the five main sections of the text. Together with the “basic annals” (*ben ji* 本紀), the biographies became one of the two primary modes of historical writing. Jointly known as the “annals and biographies” form, they are the two main sections of dynastic histories. As such, they are featured in all twenty-five official histories.<sup>9</sup>

The normative models of biographical narratives found in the official histories, which included lively personal stories as well as formulaic accounts of official activities and accomplishments, also had an impact on other forms of biographical writing. Pertinent examples include Liu Xiang's 劉向 (77–6 B.C.E.) *Lie nü zhuan* 列女傳 (Biographies of [Exemplary] Women),<sup>10</sup> as well as the

7. Stephen Durrant, “The Literary Features of Historical Writing,” 493–497.

8. William H. Nienhauser Jr., “Early Biography,” 51.

9. Durrant, “The Literary Features of Historical Writing,” 503; Nienhauser, “Early Biography,” 514–517.

10. See Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China*, esp. ch. 4.

various types of biographies (or hagiographies) created by religious authors. Revealing illustrations of such influences in the religious realm can be found in the earliest collections of (proto-) Daoist hagiographies, such as *Lie xian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Biographies of Transcendents), also attributed to Liu Xiang, and Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–343) *Shen xian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Divine Transcendents).<sup>11</sup> The same can be said of the various Buddhist texts belonging to the biographies of eminent monks genre (discussed in chapter 4), the earliest extant example of which is Huijiao's 慧皎 (497–554) *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks). As pointed out by Robert Campany, there are notable similarities between Ge Hong's and Huijiao's collections of biographies/hagiographies, and one could argue that in terms of genre they occupy a common space.<sup>12</sup>

Like their secular counterparts, both general Buddhist and Chan hagiographies often present plausible chronological accounts of the lives of their subjects, from birth until passing away. They also provide all sorts of historical data, including dates and descriptions of important events, and background information about various sites and individuals. At the same time, they tend to be somewhat one-dimensional, focusing on select topoi and highlighting aspects of individual lives that fit into established patterns of religious behavior. In addition, often the lives of their historical subjects are embroidered or mythologized. Usually the end result is a distinctive type of biographical/hagiographic narrative that blurs the already fuzzy boundaries that separate myth-making from the writing of "factual" biographies. We also have to keep in mind that hagiographic narratives are often related to—and influenced by—oral traditions of storytelling. That was apparently the case with Chan Buddhism, where we find numerous examples of literary materials that can be traced back to oral sources.

### *Modes of Hagiographic Representation*

When Chan writers and historians embarked on the task of composing historical records about their tradition's prior transmission and development, they primarily wrote or compiled monastic hagiographies, which in their standard form were integrated into larger biographical collections, or "sacred histories,"

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11. For Ge Hong's text, see Robert Ford Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents*. For more on Daoist hagiographies, see also Robert Ford Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*, 294–306.

12. Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 100.

such as *Zu tang ji* and *Jingde chuan deng lu*. These texts purportedly relayed pertinent information about the paradigmatic lives, deeds, and teachings of prominent Chan teachers, who almost always were members of the monastic order. Some of those monks were quite famous and widely respected within and beyond their local communities, although very few could be considered Mazu's equals in terms of their overall renown and influence. The best known among them were afforded fairly substantive hagiographies, along with other sources of information about their teachings. In some cases, we also have texts they wrote, although there are not too many examples of that kind from the second half of the Tang dynasty.

We also have extant records about monks who occupied less lofty positions within the constantly expanding pantheon of patriarchs and worthies associated with the burgeoning Chan movement. They include dozens of lesser-known disciples of Mazu about whom we have some historical data. Often the information about such Chan teachers is fairly sketchy, just a brief story or two, frequently without any additional biographical information. Other times we only have a name, positioned at a particular point within a larger genealogical scheme. On the whole, the volume of Chan hagiographies and other related documents is quite staggering in terms of their number and scope. That is even more striking when we consider the normative Chan claim that theirs is a tradition that does not rely on words and letters, not to mention the conventional views about the prevalence of bibliophobia within the classical Chan tradition.

As the Chan School developed its diverse and extensive literary canon, monastic hagiographies and related quasi-historical records became incorporated into the transmission of the lamp chronicle (*chuan deng shi* 傳燈史) genre, as well as other kinds of pertinent compilations, such as the records of sayings of individual monks. In fact, elements of hagiographic narratives are featured prominently in virtually all Chan genres (surveyed in chapter 5), including the *gong'an* collections. They can also be found in other types of textual sources that usually are not included in the broad category of Chan literature, especially the stele inscriptions and the aforementioned biographies of eminent monks, both of which are pan-Buddhist genres. Notable exceptions to that rule are the Chan monastic codes that belong to the rules of purity genre. However, even in that instance, the putative genesis of the initial set of such rules is closely linked with the well-known legend that depicts Baizhang, Mazu's most prominent disciple, as the inventor and architect of a new system of monasticism that was unique to the Chan School.

The tendency to look backward in time and celebrate the glories of certain bygone eras—most notably the Tang—which are romanticized, mythologized,

or (mis)understood in light of current concerns and circumstances, is among the salient characteristics of Chan history. To some degree, these kinds of tendencies can also be traced back to the Tang period, but they became especially prominent later on, starting with the tenth century. Within such contexts, the putative deeds and words of prominent Chan figures such as Mazu were continuously subjected to various revisions and reinterpretations. In the course of time, new materials were also produced and added to the expanding literary corpus, although there was also an occasional loss of certain sources, especially if they did not fit into evolving notions of Chan orthodoxy. To a large degree, these narratives functioned as essential elements of a cumulative tradition that, according to a popular myth of origins that serves as a bedrock of Chan orthodoxy, went back to the Buddha's original experience of supreme awakening in ancient India. In effect, Chan was a tradition that simultaneously encompassed the past and the present, often blurring the boundaries between the two.

In an earlier publication—which explores the hagiographic portrayals of Baizhang—I pointed to a variety of contrasting images or hagiographic modes of representation, ascribed to Baizhang and other prominent Chan teachers of the Tang era.<sup>13</sup> Two of the three primary hagiographic images I discussed in relation to Baizhang—classical Chan iconoclast and learned teacher of doctrine and contemplative practice—are also applicable to Mazu. The same can be said of other prominent monks associated with the Hongzhou School for whom we have more extensive materials, including Tang-era records about their teachings, such as Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 (fl. eighth century) and Huangbo. The third type of hagiographic representation I analyzed—monastic legislator and patron saint of Chan monasticism—is unique to Baizhang and is among the primary reasons for his elevated status as one of the most prominent Chan teachers of all time.<sup>14</sup> Despite the lack of any evidence, some scholars have suggested that Mazu should also be afforded similar treatment. At least some of Baizhang's (nonexistent) monastic rules, the questionable argument goes, must be traceable back to Mazu's monastery in Hongzhou, where Baizhang trained as a young monk.<sup>15</sup>

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13. Mario Poceski, "Monastic Innovator, Iconoclast, and Teacher of Doctrine: The Varied Images of Chan Master Baizhang." As stated in the acknowledgments, revised parts of that publication are integrated into this volume.

14. Mario Poceski, "Monastic Innovator, Iconoclast, and Teacher of Doctrine," 15–20. For more on the legend about Baizhang's invention of Chan monasticism, see Mario Poceski, "Xuefeng's Code and the Chan School's Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations," 35–41.

15. See Okimoto Katsumi, "Zen shisō keiseishi no kenkyū," 201.

Other primary modes of hagiographic representation associated with noted Chan teachers from the Tang era include those of a thaumaturge, a popular religious figure, and a poet.<sup>16</sup> As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, the first of these is applicable to Mazu (and is examined in more detail in chapter 3). A prime example of the Chan teacher as a poet can be found in the records of Mazu's lay disciple Pang Yun 龐蘊 (d. 808?). Widely esteemed by later generations of Chan/Zen adherents across East Asia for his poetry, Pang Yun was also celebrated for his unique role as a model Chan layman.<sup>17</sup>

### *Chan Stories*

Arguably the best-known elements of traditional Chan literature and popular lore are the many brief vignettes or stories that depict the seemingly eccentric acts and puzzling statements of various Chan teachers. Stories of this sort form a distinct cluster of religious imagery that is commonly associated with a "classical" Chan tradition that, according to conventional explanations, is traceable back to Mazu and his Hongzhou School. They exemplify a particular type of iconoclastic ethos, which by the Song period came to be regarded as a central element of Chan orthodoxy. In numerous stories of this type, Mazu and other noted Chan teachers from the Tang era engage their students in a broad array of ostensibly spontaneous interactions, supposedly meant to directly point to the timeless and all-pervasive nature of reality, which is revealed amid ordinary things and realized in the course of everyday life. Here is an example of that kind of story, featuring Guizong Zhichang 歸宗知常 (dates unknown), a disciple of Mazu, taken from his biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu*.

師上堂云、吾今欲說禪。諸子總近前。大眾進前。師云、汝聽觀音行、善應諸方所。僧問、如何是觀音行。師乃彈指、云、諸人還聞否。僧曰、聞。師云、一隊漢。向遮裏覓什麼。以棒趁出。大笑歸方丈。

Having ascended the (Dharma) hall to preach, Guizong said (to his congregation), "Now I would like to talk about Chan. All of you, come closer together in front (of my seat)."

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16. Poceski, "Monastic Innovator, Iconoclast, and Teacher of Doctrine," 10.

17. For more on Pang Yun and his place in Chan history, see Mario Poceski, "Lay Models of Engagement with Chan Teachings and Practices among the Literati in Mid-Tang China," 87–92. For select translations from his poetry, see Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *A Man of Zen: The Recorded Sayings of Layman Pang*.

The congregation moved forward. Guizong (then) said, “You have heard about the (salvific) activity of Guanyin, who skillfully responds at all kind of places (to help people in distress).”

One of the monks asked, “What is Guanyin’s activity?”

Thereupon Guizong snapped his fingers, and asked, “All of you, did you hear that?”

“We heard it,” replied the monks.

Guizong said, “What a bunch of (clueless) people. What are you hoping to find here?” (Then) he chased them out with his stick. (Afterwards) he went back to the abbot’s quarters, laughing heartily.<sup>18</sup>

The informal Chan canon contains a profuse amount of stories or anecdotal accounts of this kind, which feature a large number of Chan teachers, primarily from the Tang and Five Dynasties eras. They are preserved in a variety of texts that purport to describe how various Chan teachers guided their students along a path of practice and realization that, we are told, led to a far-reaching spiritual transformation. In these stories, charismatic Chan teachers such as Mazu and his prominent disciples instruct their eager students—usually by means of a variety of unusual or inventive methods—how to abandon entrenched mental habits and other impediments to spiritual realization, including dualistic thoughts and conceptual attachments. According to normative (or traditionalist) interpretations, that kind of unconventional method of spiritual training is supposed to open the door for an intuitive or nonconceptual insight into the true nature of reality, which is initially catalyzed via a sudden experience of awakening.

Sometimes stories of this type also provide brief information about the physical settings and circumstances that frame the main dialogues. For instance, there might be a brief description of a scene from medieval monastic life, which serves as a backdrop for the actual dialogue. In that context, the basic communication between the main interlocutors becomes fully meaningful in relation to the circumstantial background.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, invariably the author of the story is all but absent, and we are left without any clues about its origins. We can hardly guess the identity of the seemingly transparent author, who in some instances seems to be privy to private conversations involving

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18. CDL 7, T 51.256b1-5; cf. Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 142.

19. Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation*, 148.

only two long-departed individuals. Similarly, we can only wonder about the implicit intentions or the agenda behind the conscious act of writing down the story, which can be based on hearsay or a rumor, or perhaps might be a product of the author's literary imagination.

The disciples featured in these stories, who pose the initial questions or are on the receiving end of the peculiar form of religious tutoring, can be other well-known Chan teachers, generally depicted during the formative years of their monastic training. Examples of that kind include the various exchanges between Mazu and his famous disciples, several of which are translated later in this chapter (as well as in part II of this volume). In many other instances, the questioners or interlocutors are anonymous monks (as is the case with the last quotation). Some of the stories also feature lay followers, typically literati or members of the official bureaucracy.

Some stories or exchanges of this kind can be very pithy, as little as two sentences. Others are more elaborate and provide additional information about the setting in which the main verbal exchanges or animated actions supposedly took place. In a number of instances, there is an evident penchant for the bizarre or the flamboyant, perhaps with a dash of dramatic flair. Here is an example of a fairly dramatic story that features Mazu and his disciple Deng Yinfeng 鄧隱峰 (dates unknown). According to tradition, the story is supposed to reveal enlightened behavior of some sort. Nonetheless, if we move beyond normative interpretative paradigms, which presuppose that classical Chan stories inevitably reveal instances of enlightened activity, the story seems to be showcasing a peculiar form of stubborn and petulant behavior. Besides being rather senseless, at times this kind of seemingly immature or bizarre behavior can, according to the story, potentially escalate into violence, even if of a (mostly) symbolic kind.

峰一日推土車次、祖展脚在路上坐。峰云、請師收足。祖云、已展不收。峰云、已進不退。乃推車碾過祖脚損。歸法堂、執斧子。云、適來碾損老僧脚底出來。峰便出、於祖前引頸。祖乃置斧。

Once, as Yinfeng was pushing a cart of soil, (he encountered) Mazu sitting on the pathway, with his legs stretched out. Yinfeng said, "Master, please fold together your legs (so that I can pass)."

Mazu said, "They are already stretched out, and I am not going to fold them together."

Yinfeng said, "I am already moving forward, and I am not going to step back." Then he pushed the cart and run over Mazu's legs, thereby injuring them.

Later Mazu went back to the Dharma hall, holding an ax in his hands. He told (the congregation), “The person who earlier injured my legs, (I want you to) come out.”

Yinfeng stepped out, came in front of the Mazu, and stretched out his neck. Mazu then put the ax away.<sup>20</sup>

On the surface, stories of this kind usually seem to involve spontaneous interactions, grounded in actual circumstances, perhaps echoing the mental states of the main protagonists. At the same time, there are basic verbal and behavioral patterns that tend to be repeated over and over again. They include asking formulaic questions and performing seemingly peculiar but oft-repeated symbolic or nonverbal acts, such as beating and shouting. In essence, elocutions or behaviors that at first sight might look eccentric, unconventional, or extemporaneous are turned into fairly conventional and predictable tropes, as they are reiterated time and again, with some variations.

### *The Encounter Dialogue Model*

The copious stories that, according to tradition, depict the Chan teachers’ ingenious displays of wisdom and their imaginative styles of instruction usually assume the format of a dialogic interchange or encounter with a disciple (or a group of disciples), even though at times only a few words, or even no words at all, are exchanged. In them, the Chan teachers respond to their disciples’ often formulaic questions, and to the peculiar circumstances they encounter, in a variety of illogical, oblique, or quirky ways. They also make frequent use of everyday events or concrete situations as opportunities to impart religious instruction, often of an unconventional kind. Consequently, this kind of literary format is sometimes referred to in the scholarly literature as the “encounter dialogue” model (J: *kien mondō* 機緣問答; C: *jiyuan wenda*), following a usage introduced by Yanagida Seizan in his influential studies of Chan literature.<sup>21</sup> As we will see at the end of the chapter, the same format is also mischaracterized as a unique method of spiritual instruction, or a path of practice, following traditionalist views on the subject.

20. MY, X 119.814b15-18; cf. Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 75.

21. For a helpful definition of *encounter dialogue*, see John McRae, “The Antecedents of Encounter Dialogue in Chinese Ch’an Buddhism,” 47–48. For additional discussion, see McRae, *Seeing through Zen*, 74–100.

To shake their disciples out of a pervasive sense of spiritual complacency, as well as to enable them to eliminate deeply seated psychological fixations and ingrained patterns of thought, Mazu and other Chan teachers are said to have invented a number of unconventional pedagogical techniques, used in accord with actual circumstances and in response to the spiritual needs of individual disciples. Their wide-ranging repertoire of instructional methods, as depicted in the encounter dialogue stories, includes the aforementioned array of idiosyncratic acts and unorthodox behaviors, which are frequently at odds with conventional Buddhist practices and established monastic mores. Examples of such iconoclastic styles of instruction include various kinds of nonverbal acts, such as beatings or enigmatic gestures, to which one can impute all sorts of symbolic meanings.

While stories composed in the encounter dialogue format typically feature a dialogue between a Chan teacher and a student, they need to be distinguished from conventional dialogues, which can be found in many other types of Buddhist sources, including canonical texts. The lines of demarcation that separate the two are not easy to establish, and often there is an overlap between them. Nonetheless, taken as a whole, the encounter dialogues represent a peculiar type of narrative format that is rather unique to the Chan School. Not all of them follow a fixed model of writing, but the encounter dialogues tend to share some common characteristics. These include the incorporation of these stories in texts that are clearly marked as Chan records and a general sense of historical authenticity, namely, their presentation as actual records of exchanges that feature prominent Chan teachers. Furthermore, and perhaps most important, they incorporate various irrational, paradoxical, and iconoclastic elements, and eschew logical or straightforward conversations of any kind, including conventional discussions of Buddhist doctrine and practice.<sup>22</sup>

The deployment of physical violence—which can be either real or symbolic—is an especially striking feature of this corpus. That sort of extreme behavior not only affronts prevalent social values and basic ethical codes about appropriate behavior, but also contravenes essential monastic mores and ideals. When employed on a large scale, it also runs contrary to what we know about the religious and social context of monastic life, as it actually unfolded across a broad spectrum of monastic institutions. At the extreme end, which admittedly is rare and exceptional, in some instances even killing seems to be condoned. A prime example of that is the famous story about Nanquan's killing

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22. McRae, *Seeing through Zen*, 77–78.

of a cat.<sup>23</sup> Allegedly, Nanquan performed the gruesome act in front of the whole congregation at his monastery in order to teach the monks a lesson, despite the fact that nonviolence has always been a foundational principle of Buddhism.

Furthermore, when speech or an alternative form of communication is used, often it assumes a peculiar form, such as an inscrutable or paradoxical statement, a play of words, a sudden calling out of the interlocutor's name—or perhaps simply a scream or a shout. The somewhat clichéd deployment of a shout is especially evident in the record of the sayings of Linji, where the word “loud shout” (*hè* 喝) appears a total of forty-five times. Here is a representative example from the text, which as a bonus also adds some beating at the end of the exchange between Linji and the anonymous monk:

問、師唱誰家曲、宗風嗣阿誰。師云、我在黃蘗處、三度發問、三度被打。僧擬議、師便喝。隨後打云、不可向虛空裏釘橛去也。

(A monk) asked (Linji), “Master, whose tune do you sing? Whose style of Chan do you transmit?”

Linji said, “When I was at Huangbo's place, I went three times to ask him a question, and (all) three times he beat me up.”

As the monk was pondering how to respond, Linji shouted at him. Then Linji hit him, and said, “You cannot drive a nail or a stake into empty space.”<sup>24</sup>

When taken at face value, this sort of story seems to suggest that the prevalent forms of Buddhist discourse that were major elements of medieval Chinese Buddhism, including canonical exegesis and thoughtful analysis of doctrinal tenets, were eschewed within Chan circles. The same can be said of conventional contemplative practices, ethical observances, and monastic rituals. Basically, we are dealing with the kind of material that is behind familiar depictions of the Chan School as a unique movement within Chinese Buddhism that rejected or subverted established religious norms and traditions. According to this interpretative scheme, the Chan movement was led by an unusual brand of spiritual virtuosi with a penchant for strange or iconoclastic behavior, which now and again moved in the direction of unbridled antinomianism. Namely, we are faced with the fantasy of a supposedly vibrant and functioning monastic

23. CDL 8, T 51.258a; see also BYL 7, T 48.194c–95b, and *Cong rong lu* 1, T 48.232b–33a. The CDL version of the story is translated in Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 9.

24. T 47.496b20–23; cf. Ruth Fuller Sasaki and Thomas Yūhō Kirchner, *The Record of Linji*, 3–4.

institution in which monks spend much of their time walking around and engaging in all sorts of eccentric or inappropriate behaviors.

Ever since D. T. Suzuki first introduced his unduly romanticized and ahistorical version of Zen during the early part of the twentieth century, packaged in a manner that resonated with the intellectual horizons and cultural sensibilities of his readers, popular perceptions of Chan/Zen in the West have revolved around the dramatic imagery derived from this kind of materials. Notwithstanding the recent availability of alternative interpretations, once one steps out of the narrow circle of scholars specializing in Chan/Zen studies, these stories still shape the popular image and understanding of the classical Chan tradition.

### *Mazu as an Emblematic Iconoclast*

Mazu appears in a number of encounter dialogue stories, although none of them can be traced back earlier than the middle part of the tenth century. Like many other leading Chan teachers from the Tang period, he is depicted as an iconoclast par excellence, a paradigmatic embodiment of a unique Chan ethos. Some of the stories are situated during his early years, portraying specific events or revealing aspects of his formative monastic training. In most of the stories, however, he plays the role of a charismatic and indomitable Chan teacher, challenging his students and guiding them toward the rarefied realm of awakening, or so it seems. The disciples featured in the stories include some of the most famous and influential Chan teachers of the subsequent generation—including Baizhang, Xitang, Dazhu, and Nanquan—who joined Mazu's congregation during the middle and mature stages of his monastic vocation.

Let us have a look at a couple of well-known examples, starting with a version of the story about the awakening of Shuilao 水老 (or Shuiliao, according to an alternative rendering of the monk's name), which is depicted as taking place at (as well as by means of) the feet of Mazu.

洪州水老和尚、初參祖。問、如何是西來的的意。祖云、禮拜著。老纔禮拜、祖便與一蹋。老大悟。起來撫掌、呵呵大笑。云、也大奇、也大奇。百千三昧、無量妙義、只向一毛頭上、便識得根源去。便禮拜而退。後告眾云、自從一喫馬師蹋、直至如今笑不休。

Reverend Shuilao of Hongzhou came to see Mazu for the first time. He asked, "What is the true meaning of (patriarch Bodhidharma's) coming from the west?"

Mazu said, “Bow down!”

Just as Shuilao was bowing down, Mazu gave him a kick.<sup>25</sup> Thereupon Shuilao had great awakening. He rose up, clapping his hands and laughing heartily.

Shuilao exclaimed, “How wonderful! How wonderful! The source of myriad samādhis and limitless subtle meanings: they can all be realized on the tip of a single hair.” He then paid his respects to Mazu and went away.

Later Shuilao told the assembly (at his monastery), “Ever since the day Master Ma kicked me, I have not yet stopped laughing.”<sup>26</sup>

The dramatic exchange featured in this story has most of the main features that characterize the mature encounter dialogue format. It is told by an anonymous narrator, who allegedly gives the reader a firsthand account of actual events he seems to have witnessed in person. The two participants assume familiar roles: Mazu is the sagacious but unconventional Chan teacher, and Shuilao fits the part of an eager student in search of religious instruction, which he hopes will lead him to a spiritual breakthrough. The general setting, Mazu’s monastery in Tang China, will also be readily recognizable to readers familiar with Chan stories of this kind.

The same can be said of the initial question posed by Shuilao, about the meaning of Bodhidharma’s coming to China. The same question appears in other records about Mazu,<sup>27</sup> as well as in the records of disciples such as Yanguan 鹽官 (752–841) and Damei 大梅 (752–839).<sup>28</sup> In addition, this stock question is repeated in the records of later generations of disciples and many other Chan monks, including Guishan, Linji, Yunmen, Dongshan 洞山 (807–869), and Yangshan 仰山 (807–883), to mention a few.<sup>29</sup> Here is an example from the record of Dongshan, in which the question is posed by his

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25. The Chinese character *ta* 蹋 can also have the meaning of “to tread on” or “to step on” (someone or something).

26. MY, X 119.815a14-18; the same story (with minor variations) can also be found in CDL 8, T 51.262c. The translation is adapted from Cheng-Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 76. There is a shorter version of the story in GZY 46, X 118.794a8-11; see also Cheng-Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 92, n. 58.

27. See the relevant sections in Text 3 and Text 6.

28. CDL 7, T 51.254a19-20.

29. For additional examples of the question about Bodhidharma’s coming from the west, see *Linji yulu* 臨濟語錄, T 47.502a8; *Dongshan yulu* 洞山語錄 (A), T 47.512a10; *Yunmen guanglu* 雲門廣錄, T 47.545b29-c1; and *Yangshan yulu* 仰山語錄, T 47.584c29-585a2.

leading disciple, Yunju 雲居 (830–902), who later in life established a famous Chan monastery at the eponymous mountain:

雲居問、如何是祖師西來意。師云、闍黎他後有把茅蓋頭。忽有人問、如何祇對。雲居云、道膺罪過。

Yunju asked (Dongshan), “What is the meaning of the Patriarch (Bodhidharma’s) coming from the West?”

Dongshan said, “You, reverend (S: *ācārya*), will later be provided with a thatched hut by others. If suddenly a person were to ask you (about it), how exactly are you going to respond?”

Yunju said, “It is all my fault.”<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the question about the meaning or purpose of Bodhidharma’s coming from India to China is repeated ad nauseam throughout Chan literature, although it is uncertain if it was in vogue during the Tang era. That includes the various *gong’an* collections, such as *Bi yan lu*, where it is featured prominently in several cases.<sup>31</sup> The question is about as formulaic and clichéd as it is possible to imagine. That much for the Chan School’s vaunted creativeness and originality.

Going back to Mazu’s animated response to Shuilao’s request for instruction, in other contexts it might come across as creative or unique, even if a bit outlandish. However, it is pretty much along the lines of what one would expect in this kind of narrative. The same can be said of the peculiar form of instruction—or the seemingly unique pedagogical technique—employed by Mazu, which in a dramatic fashion catalyzes Shuilao’s sudden experience of awakening. The kick itself is a new take on a recurring theme, namely, the Chan teachers’ deployment of symbolic—or real—acts of physical violence. The sudden experience of awakening is, of course, among the most common motifs in this kind of narrative.

On closer examination, the content of Shuilao’s supposed awakening, as revealed by his spontaneous exclamation, also turns out not to be particularly original.<sup>32</sup> His jubilant statement is a simple paraphrase of a well-known

30. *Dongshan yulu* 洞山語錄 (B), T 47:522a4-6. Daoying 道膺, which appears in the last sentence of the Chinese text, is Yunju’s ordination name.

31. BYL 2, T 48:157a19-20; BYL 3, T 48:167b6-7; BYL 5, T 48:180b18-19; BYL 8, T 48:200c15-24; BYL 10, T 48:221c6.

32. For an alternative and expanded version of Shuilao’s statement, which is somewhat different in its overall tenor, see ZJL 98, T48. 944a12-16.

canonical metaphor that is linked with a central Huayan idea, namely, the mutual inclusion and interpenetration of all things (or phenomena) in the cosmos. The distinct notion that a single hair pore on the Buddha's body—which in the Chan text somehow morphs into a tip of a hair—can include or manifest innumerable worlds is evoked in many passages throughout the *Huayan Scripture*, as well as in the commentarial literature produced by noted Huayan exegetes such as Fazang 法藏 (643–712) and Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839).<sup>33</sup> Here is one example, from a verse that appears in the fourth chapter of the eighty-fascicle version of the scripture:

一毛孔內難思剎、等微塵數種種住、一一皆有遍照尊、在眾會中宣妙法。

Within a single hair pore there are unimaginable lands, with various bases that are as many as the atoms (in the universe).

Within each one of them there is an honored one (Buddha) of universal illumination, expounding sublime teachings amidst crowds (of beings).<sup>34</sup>

The final part of the story, where at a later date we find Shuilao addressing his own monastic congregation, is also a recurrent theme in encounter dialogues of this kind. Besides reiterating the validity and durability of Shuilao's awakening, it also helps establish him as a direct spiritual descendant of Mazu. That is an important point within the overall genealogical structure of the larger texts, especially the transmission chronicles such as *Jingde chuan deng lu*, into which this and other similar stories are integrated.

The second example of a story that depicts Mazu as an archetypal iconoclast also appears in Mazu's record of sayings. It shares many similarities with Shuilao's story. The initial staging is similar to the one in the previous story: a monk comes to see Mazu and asks him the same clichéd question about the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming to China. The monk featured in this story is Fahui 法會 (dates unknown), another disciple of Mazu. Once more, Mazu resorts to a seemingly odd behavior. We have

33. For example, see *Huayan jing shu* 華嚴經疏 11, T 35.577a1-3.

34. HYJ 7, T 10.36b11-13; cf. Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, 190. There are dozens of similar passages throughout the scripture. The same notion is also mentioned in a number of Chan texts from the Song era. For instance, see *Wu deng huiyuan* 15, X 138.579a.

another depiction of an act of physical violence, although this time Mazu deploys a blow with his hand instead of a kick. As one would expect by now, all of a sudden the previously hapless monk experiences an awakening at the hands of Mazu, although the contents and meaning of his experience are not entirely clear. At the end of the story, Fahui leaves the monastery in a dramatic fashion. The same story also appears in Fahui's very brief biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, which is the version of the story I have translated here.

洪州泐潭、法會禪師、問馬祖、如何是西來祖師意。祖曰、低聲、近前來。師便近前、祖打一攔。云、六耳不同謀。來日來。師至來日猶入法堂。云、請和尚道。祖云、且去。待老漢上堂時出來、與汝證明。師乃悟。云、謝大眾證明。乃繞法堂一匝、便去。

Chan teacher Fahui of Letan, in Hongzhou, asked Mazu, "What is the meaning of Patriarch (Bodhidharma's) coming from the west?"

Mazu said, "I will tell you quietly. Come forward closer (to me)."

Fahui then moved closer to Mazu, who gave him a blow.

Mazu then said, "This is not something to be discussed in the presence of others. Come back tomorrow."

The next day Fahui entered the Dharma hall again. He said, "Please, revered sir, tell me (about the question I asked yesterday)."

Mazu said, "Go away now. Wait until I ascend the hall (to preach), and then I will testify for you."

Thereupon Fahui had an awakening. He said, "I want to thank the great assembly for the testimony." He then proceeded to encircle the Dharma hall once, after which he departed.<sup>35</sup>

Once again, we have a story that can be viewed as idiosyncratic and unconventional or predictable and conventional—depending on one's understanding or point of view. In the end, to make a sense of it, we have to look beyond the narrow contents of the story itself. Namely, we need to go back to the broad developmental trajectory and general character of the Chan tradition and its literary creations, as they evolved over the pertinent historical time frame.

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35. CDL 6, T 51.248a. See also the similar version of the story in MY, X 119.813b4-8, translated in Cheng-Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 70-71.

### *Novel Style of Teaching and Practice?*

Although stories of this kind feature numerous monks from the Tang era, they do not involve prominent Chan figures from the earlier generations that preceded Mazu. That includes Huineng and the other monks who were retroactively recognized as the putative six patriarchs of early Chan, as well as Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (684–758) and the main representatives of the Northern and Niutou 牛頭 schools, which flourished before the advent of Mazu's Hongzhou School. Some scholars have attempted—unconvincingly, I think—to trace the antecedents of the encounter dialogue model back to text and lineages that are representative of early Chan.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, on the surface at least, it appears that Mazu and his disciples were its earliest proponents.

Consequently, it has been suggested that the introduction of the encounter model as a novel style of religious instruction and praxis was among the key elements that marked Mazu's creation of a radically new approach to Buddhism. That, in the opinion of Yanagida Seizan, was tantamount to the actual formation of the Chan School as a distinct tradition that stood in sharp contrast to the rest of Indian and Chinese Buddhism.<sup>37</sup> Within this interpretative scheme, the direct and spontaneous interactions depicted in the encounter dialogue stories became the primary foci of religious training, replacing contemplative praxis and other traditional forms of Buddhist discipline.<sup>38</sup> That made everyday life the actual ground of Chan practice and realization. Such a novel mode of Chan training—or rather antitraining—was accompanied with a shift away from the teachings of canonical Buddhism, which were replaced by the enigmatic words and actions of Mazu and the other prominent Chan teachers who followed in his footsteps.<sup>39</sup>

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36. For instance, see John R. McRae, "The Antecedents of Encounter Dialogue in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism."

37. Yanagida Seizan, "Baso zen no sho mondai," 33; also quoted in Mario Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 237.

38. For an example of a publication that treats the encounter dialogue model as an actual path of practice, see John R. McRae, "Encounter Dialogue and the Transformation of the Spiritual Path in Chinese Ch'an." On the whole, McRae's analysis resonates with conventional views on the subject, which are fairly representative of Japanese scholarship. Examples of similar perspectives can also be found in Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China*, and in Buswell, "The 'Short-Cut' Approach of K'an-hua Meditation," 334–343.

39. See Yanagida, "Chūgoku zenshū shi," 53–56; Yanagida, "Zenshū goroku no keisei," 40; Yanagida, "Basozen no sho mondai," 37–38; and Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China*, 161–64, 166. For a critique of Yanagida's views about Mazu and the Hongzhou School, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 235–38.

The provenance of the texts that contain the various encounter dialogues, as well as their usefulness and relevance as sources for the study of Mazu's life and teachings, are addressed in more detail later on, especially in chapter 6. To give a brief preview, the simple answer to the question posed by the heading of this section is: not really. Namely, the encounter dialogues are perhaps useful as sources of information about the ways in which later Chan writers and adherents reconstituted or reimagined Mazu's religious persona, but these kinds of materials might have little to tell us about Mazu and his teachings, or about his disciples and the broader Chan tradition with which they were associated.

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## *Further Communal Remembrances*

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, I explored key aspects of the best-known image of Mazu—a Chan iconoclast who spontaneously dispenses his peculiar wisdom in seemingly unconventional ways and engages in various kinds of ostensibly odd or eccentric behaviors. Such depiction tallies with the hagiographic representations of many other noted Chan masters from the late Tang era. As we saw, in a number of sources Mazu comes across in the familiar mold of an indomitable Chan master, embodying a radical image of spiritual virtuosity that forms the linchpin of much of popular Chan lore. This chapter continues that discussion by examining additional portrayals of Mazu preserved in the extant primary sources, with a focus on two major representational models.

First, there are the stories and related materials that depict Mazu as a thaumaturge, or miracle worker, and by extension a popular religious figure. Second, there is the representation of Mazu as a sophisticated teacher of Buddhist doctrine and contemplative practice, primarily embedded in the transcribed sermons. These two kinds of portrayal are preserved in some of the earlier sources, although they have largely been glossed over in both traditional accounts and modern studies of Tang Chan. In addition, at the end of the chapter, I provide a brief summary of a bundle of scattered references, primarily preserved in local gazetteers, which link Mazu with various monasteries and other religious sites.

This and the previous chapter are closely integrated. When read together, they cover the three major hagiographic portrayals of Mazu—iconoclastic Chan master, thaumaturge (and popular religious figure), and teacher of doctrine (and contemplative practice). Although from an analytical

perspective the three modes of representation are distinct—and are thus threatened separately—within most extant sources there are no discrete boundaries that separate them, and at times there might be some overlap among the three.

### *Marvelous Occurrences and Supernatural Powers*

In describing Mazu's activities at the time of his arrival at Gonggong Mountain in Jiangxi, the biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Song [Era] Biographies of Eminent Monks) tells us that "he was unimpeded wherever he went, teaching those that came to him."<sup>1</sup> The text then goes on to describe how after entering the mountain Mazu tamed a group of malevolent demons that resided there, who until then had terrorized the local populace. The people living in the area were apparently so afraid that they did not venture to go to the mountain, while those who affronted the demons encountered various misfortunes or calamities. But once Mazu entered the mountain to meditate, we are told, the demons submitted to him. Then they promptly left the mountain, and peace was restored to the whole area. Mazu went on to establish a monastery at the mountain, which before long grew in size, as many talented disciples from all over the Tang empire came to study under his guidance.

Mazu's arrival at Gonggong Mountain supposedly brought additional benefits to the area. The *Song gao seng zhuan* account adds, "From then on, ferocious birds and poisonous creatures (also) had a change of mind and became tamed." Moreover, "those prone to avarice and hatred (were transformed), becoming honest and modest as they responded to circumstances."<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, this kind of thaumaturgic image of a sagely monk pacifying local divinities or transforming an area has numerous canonical precedents, and fits well within a larger tradition of hagiographic writing that reflects the general worldview of medieval Chinese Buddhism. The story's general theme, of a contemplative monk with thaumaturgic powers subduing supernatural creatures or taming wild animals, is not particularly new or unique. It also appears in the hagiographies of other Chinese monks,<sup>3</sup> as well as in the record of other Buddhist traditions, including Theravāda. Moreover, numerous stories with

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1. SGS 10, T 50.766a. The whole story is translated in part II; see Text 5.

2. SGS 10, T 50.766a-b; also included in Text 5.

3. See Eric Zürcher, "Perspectives on the Study of Chinese Buddhism," 171.

similar themes can be found in the writings of other religions, including Christianity and Daoism.

An example of a similar motif can be found in *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Record from the Taiping Era)—a large collection of stories, many with supernatural elements, compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) in 978—which tells the story of a monk pacifying a mountain spirit at Chicheng Mountain 赤城山 (Zhejiang). The monk's name is Bai Daoyou 白道猷. Originally he is from a foreign land, having arrived in China during the Taiyuan period (376–396) of the Eastern Jin 東晉 dynasty (317–420).<sup>4</sup> As the monk settles around one of the tallest peaks, the mountain spirit tries hard to scare him off by dispatching wolves and creatures with mysterious appearances and by making strange noises. As the monk remains unperturbed, the mountain spirit respectfully approaches him to inform him that he will concede the mountain to the monk. Before leaving the mountain by rising upward into the air, the mountain spirit also tells the monk that originally he was a scion of the royal house of the semimythical Xia dynasty and has lived at the mountain for over a thousand years.<sup>5</sup>

One can also find similar stories in Daoist or popular religious literature, where we encounter numerous accounts of local gods and spirits responding protectively or violently to incursions into their domains, or to challenges to their authority.<sup>6</sup> On a basic level, a story of this kind points to the ways Buddhist monks and monasteries establish their presence and position within the local landscape. At the outset, the undomesticated mountain does not represent a homogeneous space. Frequently it is already claimed by other powers, including local spirits and other divinities, as well as dangerous animals. Accordingly, the newly arrived monk has to stake a claim to the new territory. At times that involves contestation or struggle with the local spirit(s), who in other stories are not as willing to graciously surrender their territory as the ones who appear in Mazu's story.

This kind of prototypical depiction of saintliness continues all the way into the modern period, in China and elsewhere. For instance, popular accounts about the life of Ajahn Mun (1870–1949), a leading monk in the Thai forest tradition, are full of miracles and include a number of stories about his

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4. Although not much is known about this monk, he is also credited with the establishment of a monastery at Tiantai Mountain. See *Tiantai shan ji* 天台山記 1, T 51.1054b15-16.

5. For the original Chinese text, see <http://ctext.org/taiping-guangji/294/baidaoyou/zh>; retrieved 9/2/2014. The author identifies the original source of the story as *Shu yi ji* 述異記, a fifth-century collection that has not survived in its original form.

6. Company, *Strange Writing*, 369–370.

encounters with tigers—the most ferocious of all beasts living in the forests of Northeast Thailand, where Ajahn Mun meditated and practiced austerities for many years—as well as other ferocious beasts.<sup>7</sup> A similar motif also appears in the “autobiography” of Xuyun 虛雲 (1840?–1959), arguably the most famous Chan master in modern China, which mentions tigers (and wolves)—as well as demons and spirits—in a number of places.

For instance, Xuyun’s text recounts an extraordinary event that supposedly took place in 1934, after he had accepted an invitation to go to Guangdong to rebuild the famous Nanhua Monastery, which had become dilapidated. At a ceremony for the transmission of the bodhisattva precepts, in which a number of local notables participated, a tiger suddenly appeared in the monastery. While everybody got very scared, the master went on to calmly administer the Buddhist refuges to the receptive tiger. The tiger became tame in front of the master, we are told, and then it quietly went away.<sup>8</sup>

This and other Buddhist stories with the same motif evoke comparisons with similar accounts presented in Christian literature. An especially fecund point of comparison is the well-known story about Saint Jerome (c. 347–420) and the lion. According to traditional accounts, the famous theologian, translator, and ascetic tamed a lion who appeared at his monastery by removing a thorn that was imbedded in the wild animal’s paw. The grateful lion refused to leave the monastery and ended up living there along with the other monks. The lion dutifully performed the chores assigned to him by the monastic community, faithfully remaining by the saint’s side.

Similar power is also attributed to the historical Buddha. That is exemplified by the well-known story, told in the *Cullavagga* of the Pāli canon and often reproduced in Buddhist art, about his taming of a violent elephant called Nālāgiri.<sup>9</sup> The elephant was sent on a deadly rampage by Devadatta, the Buddha’s cousin and archenemy, with the aim of killing the Buddha while he was out for alms. Devadatta’s malicious scheme turned unsuccessful because the elephant became tame as soon as he approached the Buddha, and ended up bowing in front of the great sage. In the end, the violent animal is overpowered and pacified by the Buddha, who has perfected the virtue of

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7. See Boowa Nāṇasampanno and Dick Silaratano, *Venerable Ācariya Mun Bhūridatta Thera: A Spiritual Biography*. The book contains a number of stories featuring tigers; the word *tiger* appears over 200 times in the book.

8. Xuyun, K’uan Yü Lu, and Richard Hunn, *Empty Cloud: The Autobiography of the Chinese Zen Master, Xu-Yun*, 162–163.

9. T. W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg, *Vinaya Texts*, vol. 3, 247–250.

lovingkindness (S: *maitrī*; P: *mettā*; C: *ci* 慈). This sort of story also resonates with two interwoven themes found in much of Buddhism, especially in its Indian forms: first, the deployment of positive mental attitudes, especially the virtue of lovingkindness, as a means of self-protection, especially when dealing with the dangers posed by deadly animals and other types of threatening creatures; second, the use of magic for the same purpose.<sup>10</sup>

Like other religious traditions, fascination with marvelous occurrences and supernatural powers (C: *shentong* 神通, S: *abhijñā*) has always been an integral part of Buddhism, going back to the earliest Buddhist communities in ancient India. Canonical texts refer to an array of supernatural or magical powers, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, knowledge of previous lives, ability to read other people's minds, and proficiency in predicting the future. A broad spectrum of such powers are attributed to the Buddha and his leading disciples, as well as to many other Buddhist sages associated with a range of Buddhist traditions. With the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism, we also encounter numerous depictions of supernatural powers ascribed to various celestial bodhisattvas, such as Guanyin 觀音 (S: Avalokiteśvara), the embodiment of compassion. In such contexts, special powers and miracles are often used for salvific purposes, as part of the bodhisattvas' selfless efforts toward benefiting others and helping those who experience various forms of danger or distress.

The various supernatural powers described in Buddhist literature are said to be byproducts of spiritual practice, particularly the attainment of meditative absorptions (C: *channa* 禪那; S: *dhyāna*; P: *jhāna*). At the same time, canonical texts contain warnings against the cultivation of supernatural powers for their own sake, which can often lead to their misuse. They also include caveats about the dangers they pose, especially when they become objects of fixation and attachment. Moreover, in many contexts, miraculous events and supernatural abilities are perceived as being indicative of the superior power of Buddhism, as well as the exceptional potency of its teachings and practices. Accordingly, in some Buddhist texts, such as *Lidai fa bao ji*, the competition between the Buddhists and the Daoists is sometimes framed in terms of a magical contest, which pits representatives of the two religions in an antagonistic struggle for prestige and authority.<sup>11</sup>

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10. For Buddhist attitudes toward the dangers of nature, especially those posed by deadly or life-threatening animals, see Lambert Schmithausen, *Maitrī and Magic: Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude Toward the Dangerous in Nature*.

11. T 51.179a22-b12; Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission*, 240–241.

### *Chinese Precedents*

In medieval China there was a widespread fascination, evidenced among monks and laypeople alike, with the mysterious domain of the occult, where miraculous events and supernormal abilities became manifest. Beliefs and attitudes of this sort were not necessarily unique to Buddhism. They were also prevalent in Daoism and popular religion, being essential parts of traditional Chinese religion and culture. Widespread attitudes toward miracles, omens, visions, celestial beings, and mystical powers reflected deeply ingrained religious beliefs, which found resonance with key elements of ancient Chinese mythology and popular cultural traditions. They also shaped common patterns of engagement with a rarefied divine or suprahuman realm, richly populated with a variety of gods and spirits who time and again interfered with or influenced the course of human affairs.

An important part of this rich lore, much of which predated the introduction of Buddhism into China, were stories about the magical exploits of ancient sages and adepts who have perfected various spiritual techniques or have reached mastery of certain forms of esoteric art. Many of these materials were written down, forming a genre known as “records of the strange” (*zhiguai* 志怪).<sup>12</sup> This literary genre encompasses a variety of texts that describe all sort of strange or anomalous phenomena, including the character and activity of numerous spirits, deities, and other beings that populate the unseen world. There are also depictions of the topographies and wonders of various mysterious lands and the peculiar creatures that inhabit them. Above all, these types of narratives indicate a deeply ingrained concern with the relationships between the human and the supernatural realms, and focus attention to the alleged encounters between human individuals and a variety of supernatural beings, powers, and places.

In view of such overarching interest and anxiety about the supernatural, it is not surprising that the possession of special powers and the mastery of thaumaturgy are frequent motifs in the hagiographies of Buddhist monks. Monks renowned for their magical abilities or thaumaturgic prowess were even assigned a separate category in the official collections of biographies of eminent monks.<sup>13</sup> In Huijiao’s *Gao seng zhuan*, the section dedicated to them is titled “divine wonders” (*shenyi* 神異). Later Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), the compiler of *Xu gao seng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Continued Biographies of Eminent

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12. See Campany, *Strange Writing*.

13. For the role of thaumaturgy in these hagiographies, see John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*, 67–111.

Monks), renamed the category “spiritual resonance” (*gantong* 感通).<sup>14</sup> In addition, in his late years Daoxuan compiled a collection of hagiographies of monks with supernatural powers, *Shen seng gantong lu* 神僧感通錄 (Record of the Spiritual Resonances of Divine Monks), based on materials collected from several sources, including Daoshi’s 道世 (596–683) *Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林 (Grove of Pearls from the Garden of Teachings, compiled in 668).<sup>15</sup>

Following canonical precedents, these texts frequently make a connection between occult powers and meditative expertise. Often the accomplished meditator and the consummate thaumaturge are one and the same person. In addition, extracanonical Buddhist literature also contains a number of texts that explicitly focus on miracles, not all of which are preserved in their original form. Pertinent examples include Wang Yan’s 王琰 (fl. ca. 450–400) *Ming xiang ji* 冥祥記 (Record of Signs from the Unseen World),<sup>16</sup> as well as various collections of miracle tales centered on the salvific powers, miraculous manifestations, and supernatural responses of bodhisattva Guanyin, such as Fu Liang’s 傅亮 (374–426) *Guanshiyin ying yan ji* 觀世音應驗記 (Record of the Responses and Manifestations of Guanyin) and Zhang Yan’s 張演 (fl. ca. 520s) *Xu guanshiyin ying yan ji* 續觀世音應驗記 (Continued Record of the Responses and Manifestations of Guanyin).<sup>17</sup> These texts represent Buddhist adaptations of an established literary genre. They also shed light on popular manifestations of Buddhist piety and point to some of the strategies used in medieval China to propagate Buddhism.

### *Chan and Thaumaturgy*

Thaumaturgy played a noteworthy part in the popularization of early Chan. It was especially associated with monks who belonged to the Northern School, including Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706) and Puji 普寂 (651–739), the leading

14. Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 8–9. For Huijiao’s brief essay on the category of divine wonders, see GSZ 10, T 50.395a-b; for Daoxuan’s corresponding essay on spiritual resonance, see *Xu gao seng zhuan* 26, T 50.677a–78a.

15. See Koichi Shinohara, “Dao-xuan’s Collection of Miracle Stories about Supernatural Monks (Shen-seng gan-tong lu): An Analysis of Its Sources.”

16. For a study and translation of this text, see Robert Ford Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China*.

17. See Campany, *Strange Writing*, 68–69, 77–78 (also 85–86); and Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, *Kanzeon ōkenki no kenkyū: Rikuchō koitsu* 觀世音應驗記の研究: 六朝古逸. These are two of the three records of miracle tales discovered at a monastery in Kyoto in 1943. Makita’s volume contains recensions and studies of all three texts.

figures within the Northern School. For instance, Shenxiu is credited with an uncanny ability to predict the future, and Pujī's magical feats are said to have included the taming of a large snake.<sup>18</sup> Magical powers are also attributed to Wuxiang 無相 (684–762), an influential figure within Sichuan's Chan circles, with whom Mazu met during his formative monastic years.<sup>19</sup> The earliest extant record about Mazu, his stele inscription composed in 791, also includes several passing references to mystical or numinous elements. That includes Mazu's premonition about his impending passing away and various uncanny occurrences that purportedly accompanied his burial procession and funerary rites, including the sudden appearance of mists of heavenly fragrances.<sup>20</sup>

However, the subsequent Chan tradition came to be characterized by the ascendancy of a rationalistic viewpoint and a humanistic predisposition, which in some respects come across as being agnostic or modern in their basic outlook (although, truth be told, all sorts of miracles and superstitions remain integral parts of modernity). That included a tendency to demythologize spiritual beliefs and experiences, and to de-emphasize miracles and occult events. Strictly speaking, such attitudes were not necessarily unique to the Chan School. There was always a certain ambivalence toward thaumaturgy within the larger Buddhist tradition, especially at the elite level.

The compilers and editors of the main Chan chronicles—exemplified by *Jingde chuan deng lu*—seem to have been inclined to partially demythologize the lives of noted Chan teachers, primarily by divesting them from ostensibly occult or “superstitious” elements. That paralleled similar inclinations among some segments of the Song literati, many of whom had close connections with noted Chan monks. Furthermore, the Chan School's low-key critique of miraculous occurrences and magic powers was presumably directed in part toward non-Buddhist traditions in which such things played central roles, especially Daoism and popular religion. We can also postulate that, to some degree at least, they were also extended toward particular strains of Buddhism known for their embrace of magic and thaumaturgy, especially the Tantric tradition that flourished during the Tang period.<sup>21</sup>

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18. Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 98–99.

19. Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission*, 215.

20. See Text 1, in part II.

21. Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 106–109.

### *Redefining Thaumaturgy*

A parallel approach to downplaying thaumaturgy was its redefining, which at times led to it being understood in a radically new way. Within such a context, a new form of symbolic Chan thaumaturgy—which was not thaumaturgy at all, at least not in a conventional sense—was presented as being superior to traditional modes of magic or supernatural activity. Such symbolic reformulations—or rather deflections—of thaumaturgy are observable in the records of Shenhui and Linji. In Shenhui's case, there is his response to a question posed by a monk identified as Dharma teacher Yuan, about the overt display of the kinds of supernatural powers that, according to canonical texts and popular traditions, are typically ascribed to advanced bodhisattvas. The question is prompted by Shenhui's not very humble assertion, made in public, that he has attained the tenth stage of the bodhisattva path. That is almost the highest level of spiritual attainment, just before the final realization of Buddhahood.

When he is pressed as to why, then, he is unable to display even the kinds of basic supernatural powers that are attributed to bodhisattvas at the lower stages of the path, Shenhui compares himself to Cunda, the humble person who according to tradition gave the last meal to the Buddha, thereby accruing boundless merit. According to him, despite their physical differences, the mind of Cunda—and by extension of Shenhui—and the mind of the Buddha are exactly the same. In the end, Shenhui deflects the critique of his lack of supernatural powers by making the rather outrageous claim—which is completely against the monastic code of discipline—that he has attained the mental state of a tenth-stage bodhisattva, even though he is not in possession of the conventional powers associated with it.<sup>22</sup>

An even better-known example of the redefinition or domestication of thaumaturgy is Pang Yun's oft-cited poem, which proclaims his dedication to Mazu's teaching about ordinary mind. Here are the first two and the last two lines of the poem:

日用事無別、唯吾自偶諧。  
神通并妙用、運水及般柴。

My daily activity is not different,  
It is only that I am spontaneously in harmony with it. . . .  
Supernatural powers and wonderful activity:  
Fetching water and carrying firewood.<sup>23</sup>

22. For the original text, see Yang Zengwen, *Shenhui heshang chanhua lu* 神會和尚禪話錄, 24.

23. CDL 8, T 51.263b9-12; see also *Pang jushi yulu* 龐居士語錄 1, X 120.55a9-11. I have omitted the middle four lines of the poem for the sake of brevity. For translations of the whole poem,

This kind of deft interpretative move presumably reflected a real shift in perspective, and was related to the broader doctrinal and soteriological outlooks adopted by Mazu and his disciples. There are reasons to assume that Mazu and other monks associated with the Hongzhou School were not that much interested in traditional beliefs about supernatural powers and magical occurrences. That does not mean, however, that such beliefs were completely absent from their communities, as can be seen from Quan Deyu's mention of miraculous events in his description of Mazu's funeral (noted earlier). It also does not mean that later on such events or powers were not imputed to the religious legacies and reimagined personas of Mazu and other Chan monks related to him. One such example is the well-known story about Baizhang saving a fox spirit that appears in the guise of an old monk, which is featured as a major *gong'an* in influential Chan collections such as *Wumen guan*.<sup>24</sup>

To some extent, though, the move away from an explicit acknowledgment of the place of thaumaturgy within the Chan movement paralleled the growing popularity of the encounter dialogue stories as central elements of traditional Chan lore, especially during the Song era. In effect, one might say that old forms of magic and mythology were replaced by different forms, at least in the spheres of literary production and ideological posturing. Namely, the types of magic associated with traditional thaumaturgy were substituted with the new magic of sudden awakening. In the new kind of Chan literature that developed during the post-Tang era, the abrupt burst of insight experienced by a Chan adept is typically occasioned by a close encounter with an accomplished master, or perhaps by some fairly prosaic event, such as hearing the sound of a rock hitting bamboo, as supposedly happened to Xiangyan 香巖 (d. 898), a student of Guishan.<sup>25</sup>

Often this sort of story, which at first sight seems to lack any ostensible preternatural element, is credulously taken to be a realistic depiction of an actual event or experience. Nonetheless, it can be also seen as a particular form of miracle or magic, namely, the magic of instant enlightenment. A spontaneous gesture, word, sound, or action, and presto—the miracle of sudden awakening, along with an entry into the timeless realm of enlightenment! It is a new kind of magic, of sorts, which to a large degree supersedes and obviates the

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see Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 138; Poceski, "Lay Models of Engagement with Chan Teachings and Practices among the Literati in Mid-Tang China," 89; and Sasaki, *A Man of Zen*, 46.

24. For an extensive analysis of this story, see Steven Heine, *Shifting Shape, Shaping Text: Philosophy and Folklore in the Fox Koan*.

25. CDL 11, T 51.284a9-11.

need for traditional forms of magic. Why bother to beseech the bodhisattvas or engage in difficult practices, when a short encounter with a Chan master can solve the basic problem of human existence? Even so, I would venture to propose that, notwithstanding these critiques and perplexities, at the level of everyday life and popular practice, the belief in magic and the attraction to thaumaturgy never went away.

### *Mazu as a Thaumaturge and a Popular Religious Figure*

In light of the discussion about the changing relationship between Chan and thaumaturgy, perhaps it should not come as too much of a surprise that the scholarly literature—traditional and modern—have completely ignored Mazu's image as a thaumaturge, traces of which are preserved only in a few (relatively) early texts. The same can be said of his disciples and other Chan monks from the late Tang period. The examination of Mazu's portrayals as a thaumaturge and popular religious figure appears only in the three earliest sources, which are made available for the first time in English translation in part II of this book. The most useful in that respect are Mazu's biographical entries in *Zu tang ji* and *Song gao seng zhuan*, the latter of which was already cited earlier in this chapter. To a smaller extent, as already noted, similar echoes can also be discerned in parts of Mazu's stele inscription, especially the last section that depicts the miraculous occurrences that accompanied his funeral.

These sources are noteworthy because they represent rare instances in which miraculous elements creep into the official biographies of Mazu and his disciples. Among these texts, an especially rich source of this kind of material is *Zu tang ji*. None of the stories in *Zu tang ji* that contain this kind of hagiographic motif were reproduced in later Chan chronicles or records of sayings. They represent a unique cluster of religious imagery, only preserved in this one text, which was lost for many centuries.<sup>26</sup> They seem to have effectively disappeared from the Chan School's communal memory—or at least from its literature—perhaps in part because they did not fit into evolving notions of orthodoxy and dominant patterns of hagiographic representation, in which thaumaturgy was no longer an integral part of the religious persona of a Chan teacher such as Mazu.

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26. The provenance and importance of ZTJ is discussed in part II of this volume; see the introduction to Text 3.

### *Saving the Abbot of Da'an Monastery*

The aforementioned story about Mazu's subduing of malevolent demons at Gonggong Mountain points to the existence of popular lore centered on Mazu's thaumaturgic exploits, important elements of which are best preserved in his biographical entry in *Zu tang ji*. The most pertinent example of that type of hagiographic representation is the story about the knowledgeable but hypocritical abbot of Da'an monastery in Hongzhou, who was saved by Mazu from being taken to the netherworld by the demon's messengers (or the messengers of death).<sup>27</sup> The story is unique in a number of ways, including its form and contents. It is also notable for its considerable length, which stands in sharp contrast to the kinds of pithy tales that are associated with the encounter dialogue format, which first appear during the middle part of the tenth century.

We are told that the abbot of Da'an monastery was a learned man, who for a long time had lectured on the Buddhist scriptures and treatises. However, he was also arrogant and insincere—a fairly typical Buddhist hypocrite, one might say. Merely talking about the wonders and subtleties of Buddhist doctrine, the abbot did not engage in actual practice, nor was he genuinely concerned about the spiritual well-being of his followers. To make it worse, the abbot also slandered Mazu, perhaps because he was jealous of Mazu's renown and success.

The story starts in a dramatic fashion, on a dark night at Da'an monastery. The messengers of the demon of death—presumably a reference to King Yāma, the judge of the dead and the ruler of the netherworld—unexpectedly appear before the abbot and tell him that they have come to take him away. The abbot is petrified, knowing that the final judgment, which awaits him upon his departure from this world, is not going to be a positive or auspicious one. He readily admits his shortcomings and asks the demon's messengers for a temporary reprieve. He tells them:

For forty years I have lectured on the Buddhist scriptures and treatises, concerned with the growth of the congregation. I have merely been indulging in disputations. (Consequently,) I have not yet engaged in actual practice. I beg you to give me one more day and one more night.

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27. ZTJ 14.304–05. The whole story is translated in Text 3, part II. Consequently, here I do not include the Chinese text, nor do I provide additional comments and relevant citations.

The messengers are initially reluctant to grant him a one-day extension, telling him that it is pointless to postpone his impending departure for the netherworld. He will not have enough time to engage in any meaningful practice, and at any rate, that is something he should have done long ago. In short, his condition is pretty hopeless. To make the whole situation even graver, we are told that his pending demise and departure to the netherworld serve as a prelude to his approaching rebirth in one of the hells, where among other things he will be sliced and diced alive for a very long period.

At the core of the abbot's unfortunate predicament is his failure to dedicate himself to the pursuit of spiritual cultivation, which is supposed to be the focal point of monastic life. That is made even worse by the fact that over many years he has disingenuously pretended to be a Buddhist teacher, despite his lack of genuine spiritual attainment and dedication to practice. It is too late to do anything about the abbot's heavy karmic burden, accumulated over a lifetime marked by selfishness and greed, the demon's messengers tell him, just as "there is no sense in starting to dig a well when you get thirsty."

As they expose the abbot's hypocrisy, the demon's messengers also subject him to a formidable barrage of scriptural quotations. The quotations are derived from the *Huayan Scripture*, which in Tang China was seen as a rich repository of sophisticated doctrine and sublime symbolism, as well as an authoritative guidebook for traversing the path to Buddhahood. The messengers come across as fairly well versed in Buddhist doctrine. Apparently, they have even committed to memory a number of lengthy scriptural passages. Here is an excerpt from the long arguments and copious canonical quotations—which revolve around the proverbial and interwoven themes of karmic recompense and spiritual cultivation—that they communicate to the scared abbot.

(According to the *Huayan Scripture*.) "The teaching that is communicated by means of words is wrongly discriminated by those with slight wisdom. Consequently, they engender obstacles (to proper understanding), not comprehending their own minds. If one does not comprehend one's own mind, how can one know the correct path? Among such individuals, because of their confused wisdom, there is increase in all sorts of vice." For the last forty years you have been producing (bad) speech karma, so what else can you expect but to enter hell?

Eventually, perhaps because they have internalized the Buddhist virtues of kindness and compassion, the demon's messengers accede to grant the abbot a one-day reprieve, so that he can prepare for his impending death and

journey to the afterlife. The abbot is in a state of panic and out of his wits, initially unsure about how to deal with the situation. Then, without waiting for the arrival of dawn, he decides to go directly to Mazu's monastery, presumably because he understands that Mazu is the only person who can save him. Finally, as we approach the end of the story, Mazu enters the picture as an actual protagonist. The abbot throws himself in front of Mazu and begs the great master to save him from his "cruel destiny." Moved by compassion, Mazu decides to help the abbot, despite the slanderous comments and the negative attitude that the abbot has previously shown toward him. He tells the abbot to remain standing by his side.

The next day, when the demon's messengers go to Da'an monastery to get the abbot, they cannot find him there. Then they go to look for him at Mazu's monastery, but they are unable to see either the abbot or Mazu, even though the two monks are able to see the demon's messengers. In the end, the messengers have no choice but to return to the netherworld without the abbot. Mazu thus saves the abbot, at least for a while, from his terrifying predicament—a seemingly happy ending to a story that revolves around a grim life-and-death situation.

It is apparent that in this story the abbot is saved by Mazu's thaumaturgic power and his spiritual charisma, even if it is not immediately clear how that happens. For the most part, the story communicates a fairly conventional understanding of morality and the workings of the law of karma, especially in reference to dying and rebirth. Its ending, however, is somewhat abrupt, and it is not without some ambiguity. For instance, it is not clear if Mazu imparted any teachings to the abbot. That is what one would normally expect in a story that features a prominent Chan teacher such as Mazu. If this was a conventional Chan story, of the kind that appears in Song-era compilations, Mazu's instructions could have caused the abbot to gain a sudden insight into reality, which would affect his immediate destiny. It seems apparent, however, that the abbot is saved from his impending demise primarily—or perhaps solely—by virtue of his physical proximity to Mazu. It is as if there is a protective circle around Mazu, and the abbot is able to enter into it.

Having supposedly achieved mastery over the cycle of birth and death, the story implies, Mazu is able to extend his salvific power and offer protection to those around him. He basically saves the abbot by making him invisible to the demon's messengers. Accordingly, it is Mazu's thaumaturgic prowess, grounded in his realization of reality, rather than any particular action performed by the abbot, that saves the day. However, the story seems to indicate that Mazu's thaumaturgic power is not of a conventional kind. Nor is it directly linked with his mastery of meditative absorptions, which according

to canonical sources is the usual route for the acquisition of supernatural abilities. In the final analysis, his power cannot be divorced from his insight into the ultimate truth, which transcends all dualism and is not bound by the everyday workings of the law of karma.

This kind of interpretation echoes certain canonical formulations about the unlocalized nature, and by extension the invisibility or untraceability, of a person who has attained liberation. This kind of idea is not unique to Chinese Buddhism. For instance, it can also be found in the Pāli canon of the Theravāda tradition. One such example is this verse from the “Devatāsaṃyutta” section of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, where the ideal practitioner, described as someone who is perfectly detached and free from the hindrances, is said to be impossible to find anywhere, either by the gods or by his fellow humans:

He abandoned reckoning, did not assume conceit;  
 He cut off craving here for name-and-form.  
 Though devas (gods) and humans search him  
 Here and beyond, in the heavens and all abodes,  
 They do not find the one whose knots are cut,  
 The one untroubled, free of longing.<sup>28</sup>

A similar idea is expressed in verse 57 of the Pāli version of the *Dhammapada*. According to it, Māra, the personification of evil, cannot find or trace a person with abundant virtue, who lives with true awareness of reality and is liberated via his realization of truth.<sup>29</sup> Echoing the contents of our story, this and other canonical sources suggest that an adept who has perfected the Buddhist path becomes invisible or untraceable to the dark forces of evil and destruction.

### *Wisdom and Miracles*

In Mazu’s biographical entry in *Zu tang ji*, there is another interesting story that, in a roundabout way, also touches upon the human connection with the supernatural realm, even though the whole notion of thaumaturgy is perhaps not the most central element of it. At a basic level, the story depicts a *pratyeka-buddha*, in the appearance of a monk, visiting Mazu’s monastery.

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28. Bhikku Bodhi, trans., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 100.

29. John Ross Carter and Mahinda Palihawadana, trans., *The Dhammapada: The Sayings of the Buddha*, 11.

One day, after the noon meal, a mysterious monk with impressive presence suddenly appears at Mazu's monastery. The monk goes directly to the Dharma hall to have an audience with Mazu. After learning that the monk had not yet eaten, Mazu sends him to the kitchen to have some food. There the visiting monk is received by Baizhang, who at the time is in charge of the kitchen. Baizhang offers the monk a meal, after which the mysterious monk leaves the monastery.

Later Mazu tells Baizhang that he will receive immeasurable merit for his offering of food, because the visiting monk is a *pratyeka*-buddha. This kind of sentiment is very traditional, fitting well into established beliefs about merit and customary models of Buddhist piety. *Pratyeka*-buddhas—also known as solitary Buddhas—form a distinct class of saintly or otherworldly beings, and the making of offerings to them is supposed to lead to the procurement of religious merit. In this context, it might be best to interpret the visiting monk as a manifestation of a celestial being, roughly in the same manner as what we find in the numerous stories about various celestial bodhisattvas manifesting in different guises amid ordinary people.

The image of the monk also evokes descriptions, found in popular miracle stories, of mysterious figures sometimes labeled as “divine monks” (*shen seng* 神僧), who often appear uninvited at vegetarian feasts or other ritual observances. These enigmatic monks are usually depicted as special beings endowed with unique spiritual powers, who during their fleeting manifestations amid ordinary humans can offer advice, protection, or inspiration.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Mazu alone is able to recognize the unusual character and high spiritual status of the visiting monk, presumably because of his possession of superior wisdom, which entails mastery of truth and insight into reality. In contrast, others, including Baizhang, are only able to perceive the visitor as an ordinary monk.

When Baizhang enquires as to why Mazu allowed a holy being—presumably one manifesting from a different realm of reality—to worship him, Mazu replies: “It is true that he has attained magical powers and the ability of spiritual transformation. But when it comes to uttering even a single sentence of the Buddhist teaching, he is not my equal.”<sup>31</sup> In this context, the *pratyeka*-buddha has the usual supernatural powers associated with Buddhist divinities, along the lines of those described in canonical literature. However, Mazu is superior to the *pratyeka*-buddha, because the power of Mazu's spiritual

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30. Company, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 55–56.

31. The whole story is also translated in Text 3, part II.

charisma is based in his superior grasp of the Buddhist teaching. Such mastery of the teaching, or rather of its essential purport, stands in sharp contrast to the kind of purely intellectual knowledge that is displayed by the abbot featured in the previous story. Mazu's superior ability to elucidate the Buddhist teaching is ostensibly born out of his personal realization of the underlying truth—ineffable and supraconceptual—that sustains and permeates it, and to which it points.

These stories feature many traditional Buddhist motifs, including readily recognizable canonical themes and key doctrinal concepts. On the whole, they adopt an intermediate position vis-à-vis the supernatural realm and the mastery of thaumaturgy. At a basic level, they convey an explicit acknowledgment of marvelous occurrences and superhuman beings, as well as different realms or dimensions of reality. On the other hand, Mazu's subduing of malevolent demons, his triumph over the demon's messengers, and his assertion of spiritual superiority vis-à-vis the *pratyeka*-buddha are all predicated on his possession of superior wisdom.

What makes Mazu special, in the eyes of the creators of these stories, is his intimate knowledge and personal insight into reality, which trumps the possession of conventional supernatural powers. At the same time, like many other Buddhist saints, he has access to mysterious powers, albeit of the kind that were deemed to be suitable for an enlightened Chan teacher at the time when these stories were created. Furthermore, in accord with the altruistic ethos of the bodhisattva ideal, Mazu can use those powers for the benefit of others, including dubious characters such as the hypocritical abbot of Da'an monastery.

### *Mazu as a Teacher of Buddhist Doctrine*

As the stories with thaumaturgic elements were pushed to the sidelines and eventually ignored by the compilers of the influential collections that during the Song era came to be regarded as principal records of Chan orthodoxy, the depictions of Mazu as an emblematic iconoclast came to occupy a place of prominence in traditional Chan lore. Nonetheless, in a number of classical Chan texts, this is not the only kind of representation of Mazu's religious persona. The portrayal of Mazu as a paradigmatic iconoclast often goes together with a contrasting image of him: an accomplished teacher of Buddhist doctrine, albeit of a peculiar kind that was related to a contemplative approach to spiritual life.

For instance, in this excerpt from one of his sermons, Mazu describes the all-pervasiveness of reality: inexpressible and beyond conceptualization, yet

near at hand, readily accessible to those who can make a sudden leap of faith and enter a numinous realm of detachment and transcendence. Buddhahood, within this conceptual framework, is all-pervasive and permeates everything, being identical to the very nature of reality. Liberation, then, is not something far off, to be attained after an arduous program of practice or the application of specific contemplative technique. In the final analysis, it cannot be separated from the ubiquitous nature of reality.

(As stated in the *Zhao lun*,) “It is not true that there is a place to stand where one departs from reality. The actual place one stands upon is identical with reality.”<sup>32</sup> All of it is one’s essential being. If (someone were to assert) that not being the case, then what kind of person is that? “All things instantiate the Buddhist truth” (Buddha-dharma). All things are identical with liberation. As to liberation, it is identical with suchness. All things (never) depart from suchness. (Whatever one might be doing), whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, all of it is inconceivable function, without having to wait for a suitable occasion to arise. The scripture states that whatever place there might be, there is a Buddha there.<sup>33</sup>

When he is portrayed as a learned and astute teacher of Buddhist doctrine, which presumably goes together with his mastery of contemplative practice, Mazu comes across as a much more conservative or conventional figure than the iconoclastic image we are used to. Nonetheless, one could argue that this wise and enthusing figure, along with the subtle yet direct teachings he articulates, is more compelling than the more familiar iconoclastic caricature of traditional Chan/Zen lore, which is uncritically reproduced and embellished in numerous books on Zen. That does not necessarily mean that key aspects of Mazu’s Chan teaching are not distinctive or inventive. However, on the whole, they are ingenious variations on established doctrinal themes and resonate with some of the essential aspects of a dominant tradition of Buddhist learning that flourished in Tang China.

Within that context, Mazu comes across as someone who is closely related to the Buddhist mainstream of Tang China, rather than the militant rebel of popular imagination, bent on subverting established institutions

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32. This sentence is a verbatim quotations from *Zhao lun*, the famous philosophical work composed by Sengzhao 僧肇 (378–414?). See *Zhao lun* 肇論 1, T 45.153a3-4.

33. MY, X 119.812b3-7; also CDL 28, T 51.440a21-26a; TGL 8, X 135.654a11-15. This is part of the sermon translated in Text 7, in part II.

and challenging the religious status quo. Or to put it another way, he and his teachings raise important questions about the scope and nature of the Buddhist path of practice and realization. They also pose serious challenges to many aspects of popular Buddhist beliefs and practices, as well as question prevalent values and institutions. Nonetheless, they do not accomplish that in the same manner as the romanticized Zen accounts would lead us to believe. Mazu might be, in a way, an uncompromising radical (of sorts) who espouses a lofty version of Buddhist spirituality, but that is far removed from the familiar image of an iconoclastic revolutionary, bent on subverting canonical Buddhism or rejecting core monastic mores and ideals.

A major reason for the imbalanced and historically problematic understanding of Mazu and his legacy—prevalent in both popular and scholarly publications, with a few exceptions—is a pervasive tendency to primarily (or solely) evoke and celebrate his iconoclastic image. That is accompanied with a tendency to gloss over the more conventional portrayals of him as a teacher of Buddhist doctrine, even though those portrayals might be more relevant to our understanding of Mazu as a historical person. Some of the blame for that can be placed on Song-era texts that contain numerous encounter dialogues, including *Jingde chuan deng lu* and *Mazu yulu*. But even there the two images of Mazu—trenchantly iconoclastic and fairly conventional—are juxtaposed in a manner that suggests, at least on the surface, that they represent two discrete sides of a multifaceted religious persona.

The historical image of Mazu presented by the earliest sources (including his stele inscription)—examined in much more detail in my *Ordinary Mind as the Way*—is essentially that of a dynamic and saintly leader of a large religious community with contemplative inclinations that, in an institutional sense, is an integral part of the monastic mainstream.<sup>34</sup> During the last couple of decades of Mazu's life, his congregation is based at Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou, which is part of a state-supported network of official monasteries. He spends a good part of his time instructing the large number of monks who come to study under his guidance, who hail from virtually all corners of the vast Tang empire. Mazu is also adept at cultivating good relationships with key members of the officialdom, including the successive civil governors of Hongzhou, who become important supporters of his monastic community.

As revealed by the relevant sources, Mazu is well versed in two major aspects of elite monastic Buddhism: doctrinal learning and contemplative practice. He is familiar with a broad range of canonical texts, which he often

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34. See Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, especially chapters 1 and 3.

quotes or alludes to. He seamlessly integrates an array of scriptural passages into his sermons, almost as if they are integral parts of his inner thought processes, or as if they infuse his natural speech patterns. He is also prone to using technical Buddhist vocabulary of the kind that was in vogue among the monastic elites of Tang China, who were versed in canonical texts and immersed in hallowed monastic traditions. That includes concepts and ideas we usually associate with other Buddhist traditions, such as Huayan.

At the same time, Mazu rearranges or reinterprets a variety of terms, themes, metaphors, and tenets—derived from canonical texts and other sources—in creative and ingenious ways. He also integrates them into a peculiar style of teaching renowned for its directness and vigor, expressed in a Chan idiom that is distinctive of him and his Hongzhou School. The end result is evident in the extant sermons, which constitute a peculiar *mélange* of overlapping perspectives and diverse doctrinal elements that, notwithstanding their unique expression, in the end can be traced to a variety of sources. Most of them are broadly familiar, especially to those steeped in the elite circles of Tang Buddhism; yet, they are woven together into unique patterns and elucidated in imaginative ways.

### *Chan Sermons*

According to the sources that deal with Mazu's life and teachings, especially the transcribed records of his public lectures, among the main instructional mediums he and his disciples employed was the formal Buddhist sermon. We do not have firsthand information about the exact ritual elements that framed Mazu's sermons, although it seems apparent that they entailed a variation on the general category of Chan preaching rituals known as the "ascending the (Dharma) hall" (*shang tang* 上堂).<sup>35</sup> In fact, the exact term is used at the beginning of some of the extant sermons of Mazu and his disciples, which start with the formula "Chan master so-and-so ascended (the high seat) in the Dharma hall and addressed the assembled congregation," or a variant thereof. The sermons and the accompanying rituals, which were not radically different from their conventional (i.e., non-Chan) counterparts, were presumably performed at fairly regular intervals. As central fixtures in the monastic calendar, they were integrated into the overall structure and the everyday routine of monastic life.

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35. For a historical survey of the "ascending the hall" rituals, see Mario Poceski, "Chan Rituals of Abbots' Ascending the Hall to Preach."

The use of sermons as a major medium of religious instruction has a long history, and this sort of traditional practice is by no means unique to Chinese Buddhism. As can be seen from many of the earliest Buddhist scriptures and other relevant sources, including those preserved in the Pāli canon of the Theravāda School, the sermon was one of the main forms of religious instruction practiced by the early Buddhist communities, presumably since the religion's inception in ancient India. During the medieval period, sermons of eminent monks often drew large audiences and were a ubiquitous feature of Chinese Buddhism. Often the sermons consisted of the exegesis of popular Mahāyāna scriptures, delivered by erudite monks identified as *jiangshi* 講師 (lecturer), or by some similar title.<sup>36</sup> A stereotypical example—or perhaps a caricature—of such a monk is the abbot of Da'an Monastery in Hongzhou, whose dramatic story is presented earlier in this chapter.

Perhaps somewhat closer to the teaching format used by Chan monks were the sermons of a class of Buddhist monks called *changdao shi* 唱導師 (preacher), who propagated Buddhist teachings without relying on a specific text.<sup>37</sup> In some instances, the sermons of Buddhist preachers were presented in a simple language, meant to be accessible to the common people. Other times, common Buddhist teachings were articulated in intellectually sophisticated ways that appealed to the tastes and expectations of the educated elites, lay and monastic.

Mazu's monastic disciples presumably were the main audience for the sermons, but from what we can tell, sermons were also open to the laity. That included some of the officials and literati who became key supporters of Mazu and his monastic community. During this kind of public lecture, Chan teachers such as Mazu would address various aspects of Chan teaching and training, offering guidance about a path of practice that purportedly leads to an insight into reality and an attainment of spiritual freedom. At times, the formal sermons also provided the resident congregation with opportunities to ask questions about a range of topics related to Chan doctrine and practice.

According to a number of sources associated with notable Hongzhou School figures, at such formal occasions it was not uncommon for individual monks to frame their questions by recourse to well-known passages derived from the scriptural corpus. Here is a representative example of such a question from the record of Baizhang. The same question is also featured in the records of other Chan teachers from the late Tang era, including Huangbo,

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36. See Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, 240–241.

37. Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, 243–244.

Linji, and Caoshan Benji 曹山本寂 (840–901).<sup>38</sup> The question is posed by an anonymous monk and points to a famous passage in the *Lotus Scripture*, about a mythical Buddha who sat for a very long time at the verge of final enlightenment, without quite being able to realize it:

僧問、大通智勝佛、十劫坐道場、佛法不現前、不得成佛道、如何。

A monks asked (Baizhang), “How is it that the Buddha (called) Excellence of Great Universal Wisdom sat at the sanctuary of (supreme) awakening for ten eons, without the ultimate truth manifesting to him, and without him being able to attain Buddhahood?”<sup>39</sup>

In addition to its basic function as a principal medium or method of instruction, we can surmise that the Chan sermon also performed other important ritual and social roles in the monastic communities led by Mazu and his disciples. Although in their form and content the sermons were grounded in a common Buddhist heritage, they also communicated and nurtured a distinctive sense of communal identity. They conveyed an innovative approach to Buddhist practice and doctrine that was at the core of the Hongzhou School’s self-understanding and self-representation. On the whole, Mazu and his disciples formed a distinctive group within the broader Chan movement, which in turn was an integral part of the larger Buddhist tradition. Accordingly, they partook in several overlapping identities, even though, from the perspective of the basic philosophical stance they espoused, those identities lacked fixed boundaries and were not to be reified.

As far as we can ascertain, the sermons of Mazu and Baizhang represented a peculiar amalgamation of familiar and new elements: readily comprehensible within existing doctrinal, ritual, and institutional frameworks, yet exuding a sense of originality, freshness, and directness. That peculiar combination perhaps helps explain the popularity of these teachings among segments of the monastic community and their lay supporters, which helped bolster the Hongzhou School’s decisive rise as the main representative of Chan orthodoxy. At the same time, the contents of the sermons represent a distinctive

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38. For examples of the same scriptural quotation appearing in the records of other Chan teachers, see *Linji yulu* 1, T 47502a; *Caoshan yulu* 1, T 47530a, and T 47540a; *Wumen guan* 1, T 48.294a; CDL 23, T 51.396b; and GZY 11, X 118.283b.

39. BGL, X 118.171b; translation adapted from Cleary, *Saying and Doings of Pai-chang*, 52. See also the relevant canonical passage, in FHJ 3, T 9.22b.

conception of spiritual life that is fairly rarefied and unabashedly elitist. In that sense, this sort of presentation of essential aspects of Buddhism constitutes a lofty vision of a path of practice and realization that, on a basic level, has limited appeal and does not necessarily resonate with the intellectual abilities and religious needs of ordinary people.

### *Transmitting the Teaching*

In my book on the history and doctrines of the Hongzhou School, I provide an extensive analysis of Mazu's teachings, primarily as they are presented in the extant transcripts of his sermons. I also examine in some detail the teachings of his noted disciples, especially Baizhang. Consequently, here it will suffice to simply give a couple of additional examples, selected from Mazu's sermons, and reiterate a few key points that are relevant to the present discussion. The first example is an excerpt from a well-known sermon that appears in several Chan sources. Here I present a translation based on a later version of the sermon, since the earliest version, preserved in *Zu tang ji*, is translated in part II of this volume.<sup>40</sup> The variant versions differ only in minor details.

祖示眾云、汝等諸人、各信自心是佛、此心即佛。達磨大師、從南天竺國來至中華、傳上乘一心之法、令汝等開悟。又引楞伽經、以印眾生心地、恐汝顛倒不信。此一心之法、各各有之。故楞伽經、以佛語心為宗、無門為法門。

When preaching to the congregation, Mazu told them: "Each one of you, you should believe that your own mind is the Buddha, that this mind is identical with the Buddha. The great master Bodhidharma came from India to China, and transmitted the One Mind teaching of the supreme vehicle, in order to cause you to realize awakening. He also quoted the *Lañkāvatāra Scripture*, in order to imprint the minds of living beings, fearing that they are perturbed and lack faith themselves. The truth of this One Mind is something that each and every one of you possesses. Therefore, according to the *Lañkāvatāra Scripture*, the Buddha's teaching asserts that the mind is the essential principle, and that the lack of a particular point of entry is the (very essence) of the (true) teaching."<sup>41</sup>

40. See Text 3, in part II. The two other texts that include similar versions of the same sermon are CDL and MY. Here I follow the last one.

41. MY, X 119.810b18-811a4; cf. Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 62.

Without going into details, let me point out two noteworthy things about this short sermon excerpt. First, in this short passage Mazu resorts to a large number of concepts and ideas that can be traced back to canonical sources. For instance, the sermon starts with a call, directed toward Mazu's audience, to believe that the true Buddha is to be found within the mind of each one of them. "Mind is Buddha" is a well-known adage that is commonly attributed to Mazu, but the basic notion of an essential identity between the Buddha mind and the human mind can be traced back to the *Huayan Scripture* and other canonical texts.<sup>42</sup> Other familiar concepts with canonical origins include "one mind" and "supreme vehicle," which are employed alongside other basic Buddhist terms, such as faith, awakening, and essential principle. The main concepts and ideas presented in this passage are pretty much basic parts of a common Buddhist heritage, even though the passage has a distinctive Chan flavor. That is partially due to the invocation of Bodhidharma as a uniquely Chan source of religious authority.

The second point I would make about this quotation, which is closely related to the first one, has to do with Mazu's dual evocation of religious authority. To start with, he evokes the legendary persona and legacy of Bodhidharma, the mysterious monk and putative patriarch who, according to tradition, brought Chan from India to China. To that he adds another layer of authority, namely, that of the Buddhist canon. That is represented by the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*, a prominent canonical text that was popular within early Chan circles. The two sources of authority are closely interwoven and complement each other, since according to tradition the *Lankāvatāra* was the scripture transmitted by Bodhidharma.

In effect, we have a close linkage of the burgeoning Chan movement with the dominant tradition of canonical Buddhism, a feature we also find in a number of early Chan sources, including those associated with the Northern School and its direct predecessor, the East Mountain Tradition. It is interesting to note that here Mazu is promoting an earlier connection between the two sources of authority, centered on the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*, which was especially in vogue among monks associated with the Northern School. That implies a rejection of the alternative view, initially propounded during the middle part of the eighth century by Shenhui and his followers. According to that version, the teaching of the Southern School of Chan, with which Mazu is supposed to be connected, is associated with the *Diamond Scripture*.

Let me end this section with another quotation from Mazu's record, which is simply a continuation of the same sermon featured in the last quotation. I already

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42. See Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 168–169.

highlighted this sermon excerpt—along with several similar passages—in my earlier book on the Hongzhou School, but it is perhaps germane to quote it again. This short but telling passage exemplifies Mazu’s—and by extension the Hongzhou School’s—general attitude toward canonicity, and his skillful use of a variety of scriptural sources. Note that the information about canonical quotations, paraphrases, and allusions—here presented in parentheses—in not included in the original text. Consequently, when read by someone not well versed in canonical literature, the passage might be misunderstood as a unique statement of Chan doctrine, rather than as an ingenious string of scriptural quotations and allusions, seamlessly integrated into the overall narrative structure of a Chan sermon.

夫求法者、應無所求。心外無別佛、佛外無別心。不取善不捨惡、  
淨穢兩邊、俱不依怙、達罪性空。念念不可得、無自性故。故三界唯心、  
森羅及萬象、一法之所印。

(The *Vimalakīrti Scripture* says) “Those who seek the truth should not seek for anything.” (As it is taught in the *Huayan Scripture*.) Outside of the mind, there is no other Buddha; outside of the Buddha, there is no other mind. (The *Mahāsamnipata Scripture* and the *Huayan Scripture* teach about) Not attaching to good and not rejecting evil, without reliance on either purity or defilement, one realizes that “the nature of offense is empty” (as explained in the *Scripture of Buddha Names Spoken by the Buddha* and other Buddhist texts). (The *Mahāratnakūta Scripture* indicates that) “It cannot be found in each thought” because (as pointed out in numerous Mahāyāna scriptures and treatises) “it is without self-nature.” Therefore, (the *Huayan* and *Lankāvatāra* scriptures explain that) “the three realms are mind-only,” and (as stated in the *Fa ju jing*) “all phenomena in the universe are marked by a single truth.”<sup>43</sup>

It is simply astounding how many canonical quotations and allusions are crammed into such a short passage.<sup>44</sup> That does not mean, however, that the sermon is not creative or innovative, in its own way. The choice of sources

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43. MY, X 119.811a4-7; translation adapted from Cheng-Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 62, and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 143.

44. For a table that summarizes the canonical quotations found in Mazu’s records, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 145.

and quotations and the manner they are all linked and integrated together into a larger Chan sermon are, in fact, quite resourceful and ingenious. The same could also be said about the general tenor and essential message of the sermon. The rest of Mazu's sermon continues in a similar vein, with additional quotations from *Fajie guanmen* 法界觀門 (Contemplation of the Realm of Reality), a seminal treatise on Huayan doctrine attributed to Dushun 杜順 (557–640), the putative first patriarch of the Huayan School, and other Huayan texts.

### *Canon and Authority*

These quotations and other similar passages from Mazu's extant sermons reveal him as a learned monk who is steeped in canonical literature. On a doctrinal level, he is prone to incorporate a range of concepts and tenets connected with major strands of Mahāyāna Buddhism, including those commonly associated with the Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha traditions. Often distinctive concepts or viewpoints associated with separate doctrinal systems, such as the Madhyamaka teaching of emptiness and the Yogācāra notion that phenomenal reality is in some way constructed by the mind, are juxtaposed or brought together in all sorts of interesting and innovative ways (or, a proponent of doctrinal integrity and consistency might argue, in selective and indiscriminate ways that point to a lack of fidelity to "orthodox" doctrinal formulations). As portrayed in these sources, Mazu also seems to be well versed in the teaching of the dominant philosophical traditions of Tang Buddhism, especially Huayan, which was at the apex of its influence during Mazu's lifetime.

The same can be said of Baizhang, Dazhu, Huangbo, and other monks associated with the Hongzhou School. For instance, Dazhu's *Dun wu ru dao yaomen lun* 頓悟入道要門論 (Treatise on Entering the Path via Sudden Awakening) is a rich repository of medieval Buddhist doctrine.<sup>45</sup> The text conveys religious orientations and doctrinal perspectives that were in vogue during the mid-Tang era, along with an excellent formulation of a Chan path of practice and realization. In addition, the text is full of scriptural quotations and allusions—from important canonical texts such as the *Lotus Scripture*, the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*, and the *Huayan Scripture*, as well as from less-known sources—and its contents are indicative of an ongoing engagement with some

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45. X 110.840a18-852b12. For a (rather dated) English translation, see John Blofeld, *The Zen Teaching of Instantaneous Awakening*. For a Japanese translation, see Hirano Sōjō 平野宗淨, *Tongo yōmon* 頓悟要門.

of the major religious and philosophical trends that at the time were prevalent in elite Buddhist circles. That includes some of the ideas that circulated in early Chan milieus, including those enunciated by Shenhui.<sup>46</sup> The same can be said of the records of Baizhang and Huangbo, which despite some differences, share a similar format and articulate complementary visions of a Chan approach to spiritual cultivation.

In these monks' sermons, we find skillful integration of canonical concepts, allusions, and quotations, along with a frequent recourse to scriptural language and related imagery. That points to an active engagement with a cumulative Buddhist tradition, the origins of which go back to ancient India. The "words of the Buddha," as well as those ascribed to other noted Buddhist thinkers and patriarchs, are seamlessly combined with the rarefied vistas and evocative statements of the Chan master. This kind of fusion of horizons represents a delicate balancing act. At a basic level, it involves an amalgamation of two sources of religious authority: the authority of the cumulative Buddhist tradition, primarily represented by its canon, and the authority of the nascent Chan School, of which Mazu and other prominent Chan teachers are the leading representatives.

The extant sermons of Mazu and his leading disciples, especially those of Baizhang, epitomize a unique and compelling form of religious discourse, even if the basic ideas that underlie their vision are grounded in a shared Buddhist tradition. They give the impression of being ancient and new at the same time, distinctly Chan and yet pan-Buddhist, in form as well as purport. The blurring of sharp boundaries that separate Chan from the rest of Buddhism is symbolized by the lack of explicit markings that separate the copious canonical quotations from Mazu's or Baizhang's ideas about Chan theory and praxis. We need not assume, however, that such blurring of distinctions was the result of a calculated act or that it involved an overtly conscious effort. Far from subverting hallowed canonical models or rejecting traditional sources of Buddhist authority—as one would expect on the basis of Mazu's prevalent image as a staunch iconoclast—in this context he is portrayed as the living embodiment of age-old values and ideals, presented in a new form. Accordingly, his teachings are meant to point to the essential truths of Buddhism, divested of superfluous trappings, dogmatic assertions, and superficial embellishments, even if, in the final analysis, they end up being just another form of expedient means, albeit of a supposedly exceptional kind.

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46. See Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木 哲雄, *Tō-godai zenshū shi* 唐五代禪宗史, 359–369.

### *Patriarch Ma Was Here*

In addition to the three main modes of hagiographic representation examined in the preceding pages, in local historical records, a number of scattered references link Mazu with particular Buddhist establishments or familiar points in China's sacred geography. Mazu's name is associated with a remarkable number of sites and locales, spread throughout a large geographical area, probably more so than any other Chan teacher from the Tang era. That includes the main sites related to his life, especially his monasteries at Gonggong and Shimen mountains, and his monastery in Hongzhou, discussed in some detail in my earlier study of the Hongzhou School's history.<sup>47</sup> These monastic establishments are also mentioned in the texts translated in part II of this volume (with additional information provided in the comments).<sup>48</sup>

There are also a number of records about other monasteries or Buddhist sites that claimed connections with Mazu, even though in several instances the historical evidence of his personal ties with them is either tenuous or nonexistent. In many cases, this kind of reference seems to point toward communal memories or oral traditions, which probably emerged as part of local lore centered on a cultic image of Mazu. Such local traditions presumably coalesced around religious sites that claimed real or imagined links with Mazu. In them, in addition to the familiar image of Mazu as a prominent Chan teacher, he was also envisioned as a popular religious figure. Assorted literary and historical sources echo the existence of such oral traditions, as evidenced by local gazetteers from Sichuan and various parts of south China, the two main areas linked with Mazu's early and late life, respectively.

For instance, in Mazu's native Sichuan there was a monastic establishment called Mazu Monastery 馬祖寺, located in Guanzhou county, close to Mazu's birthplace. The monastery had a sixty-foot-high pagoda that supposedly contained Mazu's relics.<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere in Sichuan there was a Buddhist establishment called Majue Monastery 馬覺寺 (Ma's enlightenment), which apparently received its name because Mazu once passed there.<sup>50</sup> Moreover,

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47. Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 30–35.

48. See the original sources and the relevant comments in part II, especially in Texts 1, 2, 3, and 5.

49. *Sichuan tongzhi* 四川通志 38.1551b; also quoted in Nishiguchi Yoshio 西口芳男, "Baso no denki" 馬祖の伝記, 120–121.

50. *Sichuan tongzhi* 38.1547b.

Luohan Monastery 羅漢寺, located in Mazu's native county, claimed to be the site of his ordination.<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, Changsong Monastery 長松寺—located in the vicinity of Chengdu, on a mountain with the same name—was said to have been established by Mazu.<sup>52</sup> That is probably an error, arising from a mix-up of Mazu with another Chan monk who was his approximate contemporary. Called Changsong Ma 長松馬 (dates unknown), this monk is sometimes also referred to as Mazu. It is plausible that the later monastic congregations at Changsong Monastery might have considered the rather shaky claim of historical connection with the famous Patriarch Ma to be more appealing or advantageous for their establishment. That makes even more sense if we consider that, on the whole, Changsong Ma's fame and stature never approached those of Mazu, and before long, his name become little more than a minor footnote in the annals of Chan history. By the time the local gazetteer was compiled, we may surmise, the flawed connection between this monastery and Mazu was already established.

As we move to Jiangxi, the area where Mazu spent most of his adult life, comparable references about particular sites' links with him become even more numerous. Let me give a few examples. Monasteries that claimed to have been established by Mazu include Xinkai Monastery in Douchang county. Mazu supposedly established this monastery during the Kaiyuan era (713–741).<sup>53</sup> This dating is evidently faulty, since that was before Mazu's arrival in Jiangxi. At any rate, there is little historical evidence that Mazu had any direct connection with this monastery.

In Nankang 南康, there were apparently no fewer than four monasteries that claimed to have connections with Mazu.<sup>54</sup> In a similar vein, the main claim to fame of Longmen Monastery 龍門寺, located in Fengcheng 豐城 county, was that Mazu once stayed there.<sup>55</sup> We also learn that Mazu established a hermitage at Shigong Mountain 石鞏山.<sup>56</sup> This reference is probably connected with the well-known story about Mazu's dramatic conversion

51. *Sichuan tongzhi* 38.1558b.

52. *Sichuan tongzhi* 38.1556b.

53. *Jiangxi tongzhi* 江西通志 113; also quoted in Ishikawa Rikizan 石川力山, "Basozen keisei no ichi sokumen" 馬祖禪形成の一側面, 106.

54. Ishikawa, "Basozen keisei no ichi sokumen," 110, n. 11.

55. *Jiangxi tongzhi* 50.1080b.

56. See Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, 168.

of Shigong Huizang 石鞏慧藏 (dates unknown), who was a hunter at the mountain before deciding to become a monk and join Mazu's congregation.<sup>57</sup>

In addition, distant echoes of Mazu's impact on the Buddhist milieu and the sacred landscape of Lushan 廬山, the famous mountain in northern Jiangxi, became embedded in the local geography. There is no record of Mazu ever visiting the mountain, although that might be plausible, given that it is not that far from Hongzhou (modern Nanchang). We do know, however, that some of his disciples established monastic communities there soon after Mazu's death. The most notable among them was the congregation led by Guizong Zhichang, who during the early ninth century was influential in turning the mountain into one of the Chan School's regional strongholds. One of the monasteries in the northern part of Lushan was named Mazu Monastery. Moreover, the mountain where it was located, which was part of the larger Lushan range, was called Mazu Mountain.<sup>58</sup>

Some of these scattered references probably have only a tenuous or questionable basis in historical reality. Nonetheless, they bear testimony to popular beliefs and local traditions, which revolved around communal memories or legends about Mazu's compelling presence and high accomplishments. Taken as a whole, these dispersed references indicate how individual Buddhist sites and communities were eager to highlight or engender connections with the famous monk. As such, they provide additional evidence about Mazu's enduring renown and his lasting influence on local religious communities in various parts of China.

To some degree, the same pattern continues to the present day. I already discussed the conspicuous celebration of Mazu's legacy at Youmin Monastery in Nanchang and at Baofeng Monastery on Shimen Mountain (both in Jiangxi), two monastic sites that have strong historical connections with Mazu.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, on Hengyue (Nanyue) Mountain in Hunan there is at present a Buddhist establishment called Mazu an 馬祖庵 (Mazu's hermitage). In addition to its rich religious history as one of China's main sacred mountains, Hengyue is also said to be the site where the young Mazu practiced meditation and met his main Chan teacher, Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744).<sup>60</sup> Other pertinent examples include the rebuilt Foguang Chan

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57. See CDL 6, T 51.248b; MY, X 119.813b–14a.

58. For more information about the monastery, see *Lushan zhi* 廬山志, 315–317. For a map that shows the location of the monastery and the mountain, see Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, 363.

59. See the early part of chapter 1.

60. The meeting between Mazu and Huairang, one of the best-known stories in Chan literature, is mentioned in several of the sources translated in part II.

Monastery 佛光禪寺, on Tianzhu Mountain 天柱山 in Anhui 安徽, formerly named Mazu an, which also claims a connection with Mazu as a central part of its heritage.

### *Shifts in Emphasis*

The three main hagiographic transformations of Mazu's religious persona examined in this and the previous chapter—an iconoclastic Chan teacher, a thaumaturge, and a learned teacher of Buddhist doctrine—are indicative of notable changes and transitions in Chan Buddhism. Elements of some of these representations, especially the last one, can be traced back to Mazu's lifetime, as evidenced by the earliest records about his life and teachings. In that sense, they can be directly linked with Mazu and his historically significant role in the development of Chan Buddhism. The earliest text where we find these three hagiographic modes of portraying Mazu brought together is *Zu tang ji*, which was compiled 164 years after Mazu's passing away. This text contains certain materials, most notably fairly lengthy—for Chan texts, at least—stories of a rather conventional type. As we saw, some of these materials preserve the kind of thaumaturgic elements that were almost completely expunged from later records about Mazu and his disciples.

Later texts, including Mazu's record of sayings and the various collections of hagiographies composed in the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre, tend to combine the other two images of Mazu, namely, an iconoclast and a teacher of doctrine. However, with the passage of time, there was a discernible tendency to highlight the iconoclastic image of Mazu. That was by no means an isolated development. Instead, it was part of a larger historical process that, to a large degree, was driven by a notable soteriological shift and an ideological repositioning that unfolded during the Tang-Song transition, as well as an ongoing reassessment of the Chan School's essential character and its relationship with the rest of Buddhism. The whole process culminated with the emergence of the *gong'an* collections during the Song era. In these influential texts, the primary focus is on the assorted eccentricities, paradoxical statements, and dramatic exchanges attributed to well-known Chan teachers such as Mazu, as featured in popular stories composed in the encounter dialogue format.

To shed further light on the development and dissemination of the distinct modes of hagiographic representation examined in the preceding pages, we need to understand the beliefs, values, and agendas of the individuals and communities that created and disseminated them. To that end, we also need to examine carefully the provenance, structure, function, transmission, and

historical impact of the various types of texts where those images of charismatic Chan teachers appear. Judicious analysis of the various sources reveals that the contrasting images of Chan teachers such as Mazu can be traced to discrete textual layers, which have their own peculiar features and unique origins. Those kinds of concerns inevitably lead us to the larger issue of literary genres, the main topic of the next chapter.

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## *Formation of Chan Genres*

THIS CHAPTER CONTINUES the study of Chan literature—particularly the discussion of the primary modes of hagiographic representations, as presented in the last two chapters—by focusing on the formation of distinctive Chan genres. Grasp of the provenance and function of the diverse textual records associated with the Chan School, and the images of exemplary Chan masters conveyed by them, is closely linked with understanding the genesis and key characteristics of the literary genres in which they were composed. As we read and interpret the contents of specific texts, it is helpful to be aware of the peculiar circumstances that surrounded their initial creation and the agendas of their creators. It also behooves us to pay close attention to their formal features, especially their literary form and structure, as well as the ideological underpinnings and sociopolitical milieus that shaped their creation. All these elements can, to a certain degree, be placed in relation to the unique qualities and characteristics of the pertinent Chan genres, as evidenced in specific texts.

The gradual formation of distinctive forms or categories of writing, with their particular contents and procedures, as well as shared thematic and organizational features, was among the major developments that marked the evolution of Chan as a distinct tradition within Chinese Buddhism. That led to the creation of discrete Chan genres, such as the record of sayings and the *gong'an* collection. These genres were formed in large part by the emergence of a broad consensus about the main literary formats and narrative styles that lent themselves to telling or systematizing Chan history, teachings, and institutions. The formation of distinctive genres served to codify normative literary formats and popularize narrative styles that, with some modifications, served as established models for the majority of Chan texts that (in due course) were included in the Buddhist canon. Consequently, tracing their development can shed light on the historical contexts, social milieus, religious suppositions,

and narrative templates that shaped the creation and dissemination of an informal and loosely defined Chan canon (or, perhaps more accurately, the Chan portion of the Buddhist canon).

This chapter covers some of the general aspects of Chan literature as they pertain to our understanding of the development of individual genres. That includes some of the problems associated with defining genre boundaries, the broad processes of genre formation and transformation, the classification of genres, and the frequent overlaps or intersections among different Chan genres. For the most part, the four main Chan genres—covered in the next chapter—assumed their fully developed forms during the Song era, even though some of them had a long history of development, and there are a number of literary precursors from the Tang and the Five Dynasties eras.

Although texts composed in the main Chan genres cover much of classical Chan literature, they do not exhaust all sources that are relevant for the study of Tang Chan. In fact, much of the pertinent information about Mazu's life, teachings, and legacy is preserved in documents that, strictly speaking, do not belong to any of the standard categories of Chan texts. Consequently, this chapter ends with a brief survey of some of the relevant types of sources that cannot be subsumed under the main genre categories. That includes other kinds of Chan texts composed during the Tang era, as well as two types of pan-Buddhist sources that contain copious information about the lives, ideas, and ideals of Chan monks: the stele inscriptions and the collections of biographies of eminent monks. This chapter is closely related to chapter 5, which provides more detailed discussion of each of the four main Chan genres. The two chapters can be read together as a single thematic unit that deals with the formation and characteristics of the main Chan genres.

### *Textual Proliferation*

Notwithstanding its frequent association with rarefied insights into reality and its well-known identification as a wordless transmission of an ineffable truth, over its long history the Chan School produced a huge body of religious literature, more than any other school or tradition of Chinese Buddhism. Much of that profuse textual output, including the various texts dealing with Mazu that are at the center of this study, was eventually integrated into various editions of the Buddhist canon, produced in China and other parts of East Asia. At a basic level, that served as a potent reminder of the Chan School's central position within the Buddhist mainstream. It also reinforced the Chan School's

close connection with the cumulative canonical tradition, regardless of some of the radical rhetorical flourishes we encounter in Chan texts, including the occasional denunciations of intellectual learning, literary activity, or scriptural authority.

It is somewhat of a cliché in Chan/Zen studies to note how Chan was a tradition that was immensely prolific in its literary production, even as it affirmed its exceptional status apart from the established canonical tradition and to a substantial degree based its quasi-sectarian identity on the thorny notion of nonreliance on the mediums of words and letters. With the gradual emergence of Chan to the forefront of Chinese Buddhism during the Tang and the Five Dynasties eras, an increasing number of Chan texts, often with convoluted provenance, were created and put into circulation. While some of these texts were lost, others survived in complete or partial form. The surviving texts challenge us to put them to good use, as we seek to improve our understanding of Chan and its place in Chinese religious life.

Among the surviving texts, some were initially lost and recovered only during the modern period, at the Dunhuang cave library and at several monastic collections in East Asia. During the Tang-Song transition, some of the surviving texts continued to circulate as independent works, and the contents of other texts were integrated into larger collections, with or without major editorial modifications. The complex processes of textual production, diffusion, and canonization accelerated during the Song dynasty, as the Chan School became firmly entrenched as the main tradition of elite Chinese Buddhism, with backing from the Chinese state and strong bases of support among the sociopolitical elites.

### *Genre Boundaries*

A literary genre can be viewed as “a constellation of systematically related, co-occurring formal features and structures that serves as a conventionalized orienting framework for the production and receptions of discourse.”<sup>1</sup> As framing conventions grounded in literary precedents and historical realities, in part genres are shaped by audience expectations, in addition to the ideas and agendas of the writers, compilers, and editors of specific texts. While they facilitate the creation of new texts, genres also guide the ways in which the audience approaches and interprets those texts.<sup>2</sup> In that sense, genres function

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1. Richard Bauman, “Genre,” 84.

2. Peter Seitel, “Theorizing Genres: Interpreting Work,” 279.

as “multidimensional frameworks of expectation,” which at the outset imply common knowledge shared by the author and his or her audience.<sup>3</sup>

Generally, genres tend to be products of certain social and cultural circumstances. Newly formed genres are apt to resonate with prevalent mores and ideals, and to some degree, they reflect the general tenor or zeitgeist of the age that produced them. As these change over time, that leads to changes in the features and conventions that characterize particular genres. The same applies to the growing or diminishing popularity, or even the disappearance, of certain genres, as well as to the peculiar ways they are perceived or consumed at different times and places.

As is the case with other classificatory systems, defining genres can be a challenging scholarly exercise, as it involves dealing with somewhat unstable, provisional, or contestable taxonomies. Genre categories are not necessarily fixed, and they can change or evolve over time. In fact, often genres are defined fairly loosely, and the distinctions among genres can be somewhat flexible and open to interpretation. In addition, the fit between a specific text and the particular generic form on which it is based is almost always inexact. There are always a number of factors that shape textual production, including social settings, deliberate or unconscious agendas, and all sorts of situational exigencies that interact with the orienting structure or literary framework provided by the relevant genre. Operating in conjunction, these factors end up impacting the production and the reception of the things that are written down.<sup>4</sup>

Often the confluence of these kinds of factors can lead to the adaptation, reconfiguration, or transformation of existing genres. Another possibility is the blending of genres and the creation of hybrid forms of texts that incorporate elements from two or more existing genres. Consequently, genre classification tends to be an interpretative exercise. Ideally, to be done well, it should involve a balanced and judicious consideration of all evidence, as presented within as well as outside of the texts themselves.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, notwithstanding all challenges, the failure to distinguish among different genres can be quite problematic and have all sorts of negative consequences for fruitful Chan research.

Until fairly recently, there tended to be a lack of precision and clear criteria for defining what constitutes a particular Chan genre, even though terms that refer to particular genres were widely used in the scholarly literature. Due to

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3. Seitel, “Theorizing Genres,” 290.

4. Richard Bauman, *A World of Others' Words: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality*, 7.

5. See Company, *Strange Writing*, 22.

the shortage of precise definitions, often there has been an insufficient differentiation among the different genres, along with an inadequate appreciation of the diverse origins, contents, and formats of particular Chan texts. All too often, texts written in different genres, and at different times, are indiscriminately mixed together and interpreted as elements of a homogeneous body of literature, which supposedly reflects the unique features of Chan teaching and practice. Consequently, a purported discussion of the evolution of a specific genre, such as the record of sayings, might be undertaken without an adequate attempt to distinguish key differences among the main Chan genres.

For example, in an earlier study that exemplifies that trend, *Jingde chuan deng lu*, which belongs to the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre, and *Bi yan lu*, a *gong'an* collection composed during the Song era, are both labeled as a record of sayings. Furthermore, the record of sayings genre is essentially reduced to only one of its elements, the (mostly) fictional encounter dialogue stories.<sup>6</sup> Such an approach glosses over significant differences in form and content, which are often related to differences in dating and circumstances of composition. These, in turn, signal that texts that are often lumped together, by both traditional writers and modern scholars, are in fact largely unrelated products of distinct religious milieus. In many instances, such texts are complex hybrid narratives, composed from various types of earlier written and oral sources, each of them with a particular historical origin or doctrinal background.

The tendency to blur distinctions among different Chan genres is perhaps most readily evident in the varied and often nebulous uses of the term *record of sayings*. That is the name of arguably the best-known Chan genre, but the same term is often used in inexact or vague ways, roughly functioning as a synonym for “Chan literature” or “Chan texts.”<sup>7</sup> A pertinent example of such imprecise usage is the name of the renowned *Zen no goroku* 禅の語録 (Chan’s Records of Sayings) series published in Japan. The series consists of annotated Japanese translations of classical Chan texts, presented alongside the Chinese originals. Most of the books in the series are of high quality, and they constitute valuable contributions to Chan scholarship. They include reliable translations done by

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6. For an example of that tendency, see Judith Berling, “Bringing the Buddha Down to Earth: Notes on the Emergence of *Yü-lu* as a Buddhist Genre.”

7. For an example of the tendency to use the *yulu* designation rather loosely, as a general name for Chan literature, see Yanagida Seizan, “The ‘Recorded Sayings’ Texts of Chinese Chan Buddhism.”

leading Japanese scholars, such as Yanagida Seizan and Iriya Yoshitaka. Taken as a whole, the series might be seen as a mini Chan canon of sorts.<sup>8</sup>

At the surface, the series' name suggests that all texts included in it are Chan records of sayings. However, most of the texts included in the series do not belong to the record of sayings genre. Moreover, in some instances even their status as "Chan texts" is quite problematic. For instance, the series includes a collection of Hanshan's 寒山 poetry, even though the connection between the historical hermit-poet to whom the poems are attributed and the Chan School is rather questionable, at best. Other volumes in the series include Dahu's collection of letters, Guifeng Zongmi's 圭峰宗密 (780–841) essays on Chan teachings and their relationship with canonical Buddhism, Dazhu Huihai's treatise on Chan doctrine, Wumen Huikai's 無門慧開 (1183–1260) *gong'an* collection, and a few early Chan texts that were precursors of the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre.

The series also includes a volume dedicated to *Xin xin ming* 信心銘 (Inscription to Faith in Mind), the edifying poem that was (probably mistakenly) ascribed to Sengcan 僧璨 (d. 606?), the putative third Chan patriarch. This text has tenuous connections (at best) with the early Chan movement, which at any rate hardly existed during Sengcan's lifetime. In the end, only four of the volumes included in the series, out of the eighteen that were eventually published, can accurately be identified as translations of texts that belong to the record of sayings genre. What is binding all these texts together, it seems, are modern Japanese assumptions about what constitutes a representative or authoritative Chan canon, along with the kinds of practical considerations that guide the creation of book series of this kind. To some degree, at least, the selection process seems also to have been influenced by sectarian Zen views current in Japan, mixed together with a genuine concern about presenting the literature of Chan Buddhism as it evolved in China. This sort of tendency still remains prevalent in many quarters, but it is also worth pointing out that recent publications on Chan history and literature, including the aforementioned works by Albert Welter and Morten Schlütter, are more careful in their use of specific terms and categories.

### *The Illusion of Homogeneity*

The lumping together of dissimilar Chan texts, compiled during different historical periods—especially when done under an inadequately defined rubric, such as the record of sayings—usually seems to be premised on the notion

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8. The series was published by Chikuma Shobō, Tokyo. Originally, it was conceived as comprising twenty volumes.

that there was (and still is) a homogeneous Chan/Zen tradition. According to this common interpretative paradigm, setting aside the occasional sectarian squabbles and doctrinal disagreements, over the centuries the broad Chan/Zen tradition espoused a set of shared ideals, teachings, and experiences, which with some modifications were transmitted not only in China but also in the rest of East Asia. That is reflected in the tacit assumption that a thirteenth-century *gong'an* collection such as *Wumen guan*, for example, is somehow comparable or intimately related to a late-eighth-century doctrinal treatise such as *Dun wu ru dao yaomen lun* (often abbreviated to *Dun wu yaomen*). But is such an assumption about the homogeneity of Chan/Zen really based on firm historical grounds, and does it reflect a sound understanding of the Chan School developmental patterns and historical trajectories? Or it is just an illusion, which in an unconscious or unreflective manner replicates some of the normative beliefs and ideological biases of later Chan/Zen traditions, including those of modern Japan and Korea?

Once we move beyond traditionalist views about the putative homogeneity of Chan teachings, along with ingrained notions about the authenticity of an unbroken Chan lineage and the essential invariability of the experience of awakening, it seems fairly obvious that the life of a Tang-era monk like Dazhu Huihai, the author of *Dun wu yaomen*, unfolded in a very different socioreligious milieu from that of a late Song monk like Wumen Huikai, the author of *Wumen guan*. Based on the available sources, we can also safely assume that the two monks had different attitudes and ideas about the Buddhist path of practice and realization, as well as about the relationship between Chan and the rest of Buddhism. More important, they had fairly different conceptions of the Chan tradition, which had changed considerably over the course of the Tang-Song transition, even though, from what we know, Wumen considered himself to be a spiritual descendant of the Chan lineage with which Dazhu was associated.

These notable differences between the religious worlds and the ideas of the two monks, and by extension between the Chan traditions they represent, are reflected in the starkly dissimilar texts they composed. The two texts differ greatly not only in terms of their literary styles and formats, but also in regard to their substantive contents, including the basic visions of Chan doctrine they articulate and the models of Chan soteriology they advocate. At a basic level, the two texts exemplify fairly dissimilar or divergent views about many, if not most, essential aspects of Chan Buddhism. To make sense of them, especially in the context of the times and communities that produced them, we might want to reconsider the illusion of Chan homogeneity, notwithstanding its rootedness in normative views and sectarian traditions that continue to this day.

## *Genre Classification*

The formation of distinct types of Chan texts was a complex and drawn-out process that already started during the early Tang period, with the initial emergence of Chan as an idiosyncratic movement within Chinese Buddhism. As we will see later on, some of the main Chan genres had early prototypes and a long history of development that takes us back to the Tang era. Nonetheless, on the whole, the fully developed Chan genres listed here, exemplified by the kinds of influential texts that circulated among the monastic elites and their cultivated lay followers, assumed their mature forms from the tenth century onward. The process of genre formation culminated during the Song dynasty with the compilation of a number of influential texts, such as *Jingde chuan deng lu*, that until quite recently were widely used as the main sources for the study of Chan history and doctrine. In that sense, the Chan School developed the whole range of familiar genres, with the stylistic forms and discursive properties we typically associate with classical Chan literature, during the Song period.

Traditional Chan sources do not provide many explicit classificatory schemes of Chan literature in terms of the literary format or content of specific groups of texts. A rare example of a genre taxonomy can be found in Shoboku Gitaï's 聖僕義諦 (fl. 1693–1716) *Zenseki shi* 禪籍志 (Annals of Zen Works), compiled in Japan during the early part of the Edo period (1615–1867).<sup>9</sup> There he lists the following ten types or categories of texts, which can be construed as Chan/Zen genres (of sorts):

1. Texts featuring *gong'an* (*hadan kōan* 把斷公案).
2. Comprehensive Chan collections (*shūmon zensho* 宗門全書).
3. Texts about monastic etiquette (*sōrin raihan* 叢林禮範).
4. Individual records of essential Chan teachings (*tanroku zenyō* 單錄禪要).
5. Abridged histories of Chan (*shūmon ryakushi* 宗門略史).
6. General histories of Chan and the (canonical) teaching (*zen-kyō sōshi* 禪教總史).
7. Informal Chan writings (*shūmon zuihitsu* 宗門隨筆).
8. Miscellaneous essays about Chan and the teaching (*zen-kyō zassetsu* 禪教雜說).
9. Scriptural commentaries written by Chan teachers (*shūshi chūkyō* 宗師註經).
10. Various texts not included in any of the other categories (*shūi* 拾遺).

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<sup>9</sup> *Zenseki shi*, in *Dainihon bukkyō zensho*, vol. 1, 271–320.

The criteria used by Gitai in the creation of his taxonomy of Chan/Zen literature are not entirely clear, and his work seems to indicate a somewhat vague understanding of the concept of literary genre. Moreover, his work includes texts that cover a considerably longer time period than the one we are now concerned with, as well as literary developments that might be unique to Japan. One could also argue that the list includes some kinds of texts with only tentative connections with the Chan/Zen tradition. Even so, Gitai's classification overlaps with the fourfold taxonomy of Chan genres introduced next. It is also indicative of ongoing efforts to come to terms with the profuse volume and variety of Chan/Zen literature that existed at the time.

Generally speaking, as we look at classical Chan literature as a whole, we can distinguish the following major genres:

1. Transmission of the lamp chronicle (*chuan deng lu* 傳燈錄); also sometimes referred to by Japanese scholars as “lamp history” (*tōshi* 燈史).
2. Record of sayings (*yulu*).
3. Monastic code, or manual about monastic life and discipline, typically associated with the “rules of purity” (*qinggui* 清規) attributed to Baizhang.
4. *Gong'an* collection.

Each of the four main Chan genres is described in more detail in the next chapter. Before we move to that, however, it might be helpful to briefly consider some of the textual processes and historical backdrops that shaped the formation and transformation of distinctive Chan genres, as well as look at some of the other sources that do not fit into the main genre categories.

### *Formation and Transformation of Genres*

The creation of distinctive Chan genres was a gradual process of codification of discursive properties characteristic of the Chan School that took place over an extended period of time, with major developments taking place during the Tang-Song transition.<sup>10</sup> This prolonged process involved the transformation—through “combination, displacement, or inversion”—of one or more earlier genres.<sup>11</sup> Each new genre, including the record of sayings and the transmission of the lamp chronicle, grew out of or was influenced by what existed before it. Prominent models included earlier Chan texts,

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10. For the process of codification, see Tzvetan Todorov, “The Origin of Genres,” 162.

11. Todorov, “The Origin of Genres,” 161.

as well as other types of Buddhist texts, such the influential collections of biographies of eminent monks. In that sense, the production and reception of new types of texts was negotiated via intertextual relationships with prior texts.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, texts composed in specific genres were not completely independent creations, but existed within relational nexuses with other texts.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, the Buddhist prototypes used by Chan writers were influenced by various non-Buddhist models of writing. For instance, the collections of monastic biographies, exemplified by Huijiao's *Gao seng zhuan* and Daoxuan's *Xu gao seng zhuan*, were inspired and influenced by a rich and prominent tradition of Chinese biographical writing, which in its early form predated the introduction of Buddhism into China. Especially important in that respect was the *lie zhuan* (arrayed biographies) style of biographical writing. As noted in chapter 2, the biographies of prominent persons written in this style were first introduced in Sima Qian's seminal *Shi ji* during the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–24 C.E.), and they exerted enormous influence on the subsequent development of biographical writing in China.

By adapting or combining elements from existing categories of texts, and by introducing new types of contents and models of narrative form and structure, the Chan School slowly developed original kinds of literature that reflected its continuously evolving religious outlooks, ideological orientations, and institutional concerns. Therefore, comprehending the process that led to the creation of a specific Chan genre and its subsequent institutionalization is of great help in understanding, to use Tzvetan Todorov's terminology, the "models of writing" utilized by the ancient authors of Chan works. It also sheds light on the "horizons of expectation" of their medieval readers,<sup>14</sup> which included both the monastic and the secular elites.

The protracted crafting of a discrete style and identity for each genre was not necessarily an overt or conscious process, even if in practical terms it was predicated on a pragmatic need to introduce new and distinctive forms of Chan discourse. These processes involved positioning the new types of Chan texts in relation to the broader field of canonical literature and establishing differences that set them apart from other related genres. At a basic level, the creation of texts composed in the main Chan genres was meant to facilitate the codification and transmission of Chan teachings, presented

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12. Bauman, "Genre," 84.

13. Bauman, *A World of Others' Words*, 5.

14. Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," 163.

in readily recognizable forms that came to be accepted as orthodox. At the same time, the various texts were closely linked with the particular modes of social existence and religious life that obtained at the time of their creation,<sup>15</sup> and they performed a variety of other roles, some of which were polemical or quasi-sectarian in nature.

Like firmly rooted institutions, established genres transmit assemblages of religious outlooks and social attitudes by which they are shaped, and which in turn they act to have an effect upon.<sup>16</sup> Genres, akin to institutions, are to some degree reflections of a dominant ideology, and they tend to reveal the major constitutive traits and values of the social groups or religious traditions that have created them. Understanding the formation and function of specific Chan genres thus sheds light on the multitude of forces that shaped the historical development of the tradition(s) that produced them.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, critical study of the development of Chan literature can help illuminate many other aspects of Chan history. As was already noted, that includes the spiritual concerns and the institutional dynamics that obtained within various Chan communities, but also their position within the wider religious, cultural, social, and political milieus of Tang and Song China.

### *Overlap among Genres*

One of the peculiar features of classical Chan literature is the considerable intersection or overlap among the various genres, or at least among some of their constitutive parts. The same can be said of other types of texts with relevant information, such as the stele inscriptions. This tendency is especially evident in the record of sayings and the transmission of the lamp chronicle genres. To a smaller degree, the same holds true of the *gong'an* collections, even though that genre contains a number of elements that are unique to it. That points to the iterability of the various types of materials included in these sources, which are often extracted from particular text(s) and then reproduced and recontextualized in other text(s).<sup>18</sup>

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15. See Paul A. Bové, "Discourse," 50–51.

16. Heather Dubrow, *Genre*, 4.

17. See Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," 162.

18. See Bauman, *A World of Others' Words*, 5. At a basic level, iterability refers to the repeatability or replicability of particular parts of texts. It can take a number of forms, including citations, allusions, and references.

The biographical entry of a particular Chan teacher included in a transmission of the lamp chronicle, for example, is probably going to be based on the same or similar kinds of materials as those used by the compiler(s) of his record of sayings. Nonetheless, those materials are going to be arranged and used in different ways, following the distinct requirements and conventions of each genre. For instance, let us consider the famous exchange about Mazu's final illness, which appears in several sources:

師明晨遷化、今日晚際院主問、和尚四體違和、近日如何。師曰、日面佛、月面佛。

As Mazu was about to pass away on the following morning, late in the day the head monks asked him, "You, reverent sir, seem unwell; how are you (feeling) today?"

Mazu said, "Sun-face Buddha; Moon-face Buddha."<sup>19</sup>

The earliest version of this exchange (presented here) appears in Mazu's biographical entry in *Zu tang ji*. The same exchange can also be found in a number of other texts composed in different genres, including:

1. *Mazu yulu*, a record of sayings.<sup>20</sup>
2. *Bi yan lu* and *Cong rong lu* 從容錄 (Record of Serenity), both *gong'an* collections.<sup>21</sup>
3. *Tiansheng guang deng lu* and *Wu deng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (Compendium of the Five Lamp [Chronicles]), both transmission of the lamp chronicles.<sup>22</sup>

These are only some of the most prominent examples, as the same story also appears in many other sources.<sup>23</sup> This is far from an isolated example. For instance, pretty much everything that is included in Mazu's biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu* can also be found in his record of sayings. In effect, we are often dealing with what can be viewed as modular designs

19. ZTJ 14.308. See also Text 3, in part II.

20. X 119.810b.

21. BYL 1, T 48. 142c10-12; translated in Cleary and Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*, 18. *Cong rong lu* 3, T 48.251b20-22.

22. TGL 8, X 135.654b; *Wu deng huiyuan* 3, X 138.86b-87a.

23. For instance, see GZY 1, X 118.161b.

that are highly flexible. Smaller units, such as particular stories, exchanges, or bits of biographical information, are used as constitutive elements in the construction of larger texts, in accord with the conventions that govern the pertinent genre, as well as the objectives and judgments of the compilers or editors of those texts.

### *Other Chan Texts*

Notwithstanding their prime importance and emblematic character, texts composed in the main genres do not exhaust the whole field of traditional Chan literature, nor do they cover all relevant sources for the study of Chan history and doctrine. To begin with, most early Chan texts do not fit neatly into the four main categories. That is unsurprising, given that the development of distinctive Chan genres mirrored the maturation of the Chan School and its gradual growth into a distinct tradition within Chinese Buddhism. Instead, most early Chan texts follow or adapt traditional literary formats that were prevalent at the time of their composition. In addition to the early prototypes of the transmission of the lamp chronicles discussed in the next chapter, most common among them are the various treatises or essays on Chan doctrine and practice. While these kinds of texts introduce what may be deemed to be distinctive Chan ideas and perspectives, generally they can be situated within the broader literary, theoretical, and soteriological frameworks of Chinese Buddhism.

Early Chan sources often feature the term *lun* 論 (treatise or discourse) at the end of the title. Representative examples of such texts, composed by or attributed to noted monks associated with the nascent Chan movement, include Hongren's 弘忍 (601–674) *Xiuxin yaolun* 修心要論 (Treatise on the Essentials of Mental Cultivation),<sup>24</sup> Shenxiu's *Guan xin lun* 觀心論 (Treatise on Mind Contemplation), the Northern School's *Yuan ming lun* 圓明論 (Treatise on Perfect Illumination),<sup>25</sup> Dazhu's *Dun wu ru dao yaomen lun*, and *Jue guan lun* 絕觀論 (Discourse on the Transcendence of Cognition), traditionally attributed to Farong.<sup>26</sup> We can also add the seminal *Erru sixing lun* 二入四行論

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24. For a translation of this text, see McRae, *The Northern School*, 121–132.

25. See McRae, *The Northern School*, 149–171.

26. For more about this text, see John McRae, “The Ox-Head School of Chinese Ch’an Buddhism: From Early Ch’an to the Golden Age,” 211–217; and Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, “Zekkanron to sono jidai” 絶観論とその時代.

(Treatise on Two Approaches and Four Practices), attributed to Bodhidharma, to this category.<sup>27</sup>

As we move into the late Tang and the Five Dynasties eras, we find additional texts written by Chan masters, as well as other works that deal with Chan doctrine or other related topics, which do not fit into any of the main genres. Prime examples include Zongmi's writings about Chan, which include a number of sections or passages that deal with Mazu and his Hongzhou School:

1. *Chan yuan zhu quan ji duxu* 禪源諸詮集都, purportedly a "preface" for a collection of Chan literature, namely, a Chan canon, the contents of which are not known.
2. *Zhonghua chuan xindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu* 中華傳心地禪門師資承襲圖, also known as *Pei xiu shiyi wen* 裴休拾遺文, an essay on various Chan doctrines and lineages composed on behalf of Pei Xiu, who at the time was an influential lay supporter of Zongmi.
3. *Yuan jue jing dashu chao* 圓覺經大疏鈔, although meant to be a commentary on an apocryphal scripture, contains fairly detailed discussions of the teachings of various Chan schools/lineages.<sup>28</sup>

Another pertinent example of a somewhat similar type of text is *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄 (Record of Reflections of the Essential Truth), Yongming Yanshou's 永明延壽 (904–975) vast compendium of Buddhist doctrine, which explores the relationship between Chan and the teachings of canonical Buddhism.<sup>29</sup> More information about this text, which contains a number of sections that deal with Mazu, is provided in the introduction of Text 4, in part II.

We can also mention Chan poetry. Notable examples include the long didactic poems of the kind that were popular in early Chan circles. They are exemplified by Yongjia Zhenjue's 永嘉真覺 (665–713) widely read *Zheng dao ge* 證道歌 (Song about Realizing the Truth).<sup>30</sup> Other pertinent examples include Shitou's two poems: *Can tong qi* 參同契 (Harmony of Difference and Sameness) and *Cao an ge* 草庵歌 (Song of the Thatched Cottage).<sup>31</sup> Fascicles 29

27. For this and other texts attributed to Bodhidharma, see Jeffrey L. Broughton, *The Bodhidharma Anthology: The Earliest Records of Zen*.

28. For Zongmi's writings about Chan, see Jeffrey L. Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, and Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*.

29. See Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*.

30. T 48.395c–396c.

31. CDL 30, T 51.459b; CDL 30, T 51.461c.

and 30 of *Jingde chuan deng lu* contain many other examples of Chan poems, the majority of which are from the Tang era.<sup>32</sup> There are also the occasional collections of Chan poetry, represented by Pang Yun's collected poems, which helped solidify his status as an emblematic Chan layman.<sup>33</sup>

### *Non-Chan Sources*

Poems that deal with themes, ideas, ideals, or experiences connected with Chan were also written by individuals situated outside of the Chan School. That includes a number of Tang poets and intellectuals. The two best-known examples are Wang Wei 王維 (701–761) and Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846, also known as Bai Juyi), who rank among the greatest poets of the Tang dynasty, the golden age of Chinese poetry. Both poets were personally involved with Chan teachings and practices, and their corpuses contain many poems that either implicitly or directly deal with Chan subjects and related ideas. For instance, much of Wang's poetry is infused with a sense of transcendence and detachment. It also echoes a penchant for withdrawal into solitude, even if for the most part Chan (or Buddhism) is not mentioned explicitly.<sup>34</sup> In contrast, in numerous poems and other writings, Bo writes about his personal visits and involvement with Chan monasteries, as well as his interactions with Chan monks, who included some of Mazu's prominent disciples. In many places, his poems also contain personal reflections on Chan teachings, as well as depictions of his own experiences with Chan practice.<sup>35</sup>

Other important sources about Tang Chan are the numerous stele inscriptions and other types of commemorative writings. Normally these texts are not included in the various editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, even though they contain all sorts of valuable information about individual monks, monastic communities, established beliefs, prevalent practices, patterns of interaction between monks and literati, and much more. These types of sources are pan-Buddhist in terms of their basic form and structure, and follow a number of entrenched

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32. The contents of these two fascicles are discussed in the introduction to Text 7, in part II.

33. See Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *A Man of Zen: The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang*.

34. For more on Wang Wei's poetry and its connections with Buddhism, including Chan, see Fu Shaoliang 傅紹良, *Shengtang chanzong wenhua yu shifo wang wei* 盛唐禪宗文化與詩佛王維; Pauline Yu, *The Poetry of Wang Wei: New Translations and Commentary*, 113–154; Marsha L. Wagner, *Wang Wei*, 119–149, and Sun Changwu 孫昌武, *Tangdai wenxue yu fojiao* 唐代文學與佛教, 64–99.

35. See Poceski, "Lay Models of Engagement with Chan Teachings and Practices among the Literati in Mid-Tang China," 77–87.

conventions that guided their creation. They are closely related to established types of funerary or memorial writings that were very common in medieval China. Typically, these texts were commissioned upon the death of prominent persons to provide records of their lives and accomplishments. Then they were written in nice calligraphy and carved into stele or memorial monuments, which were situated at or in close proximity to the tombs.<sup>36</sup> Some of them, especially those written for famous and influential persons, were also reproduced in other documents, including dynastic histories and literary collections.

Typically, the stele inscriptions for notable Chan masters and other influential monks were composed by noted officials and literati, such as Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759–818), who wrote the text for Mazu's stele inscription in 791 (discussed and translated in part II),<sup>37</sup> and Bo Juyi, who in 817 wrote the memorial inscription for Weikuan, a prominent disciple of Mazu.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, they reflect not only the communal memories of the monastic communities that commissioned them, but also the perspectives and concerns of their lay authors. That includes an emphasis on the close connections between prominent monks and high officials, as can be seen in Mazu's stele inscription. These texts are among the most valuable sources of information about the lives and legacies of noted Chan teachers like Mazu, Baizhang, Weikuan, Guishan, and Yangshan.<sup>39</sup> Notwithstanding their inherent limitations, they are also extremely helpful for the study of various aspect of Chan (or more broadly Buddhist) history.

Important biographical information of a similar kind is also included in the collections of biographies of eminent monks, which are often based in part on earlier stele inscriptions.<sup>40</sup> The earliest extant example of this pan-Buddhist genre is Huijiao's *Gao seng zhuan*, compiled in 519 during the Liang 梁 dynasty (502–557). In this immensely influential text, the biographies (or hagiographies) of prominent monks are organized into ten broad categories. Some of the most prominent categories are translators, exegetes, miracle workers, meditators, and Vinaya experts.<sup>41</sup>

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36. Koichi Shinohara, "Two Sources of Chinese Buddhist Biographies: Stupa Inscriptions and Miracle Stories," 121–122.

37. See the introduction to Text 1, in part II.

38. See QTW 678.3069c-70a; WYY 866.4570b-71b; *Bo juyi ji* 白居易集 41.911-13.

39. For a listing of the stele inscriptions of leading Chan teachers from the Tang and Five Dynasties eras, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 242–244.

40. See Shinohara, "Two Sources of Chinese Buddhist Biographies," esp. 125–127, 183–188.

41. For the full list, see Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 8–9.

Next in terms of historical chronology is Daoxuan's *Xu gao seng zhuan*, compiled in 645 during the early decades of the Tang dynasty. While Daoxuan largely followed the main ten categories formulated by Huijiao, he also introduced some changes, including relatively minor modifications in the basic categories he deployed in his text, the ordering of the categories, and the ways he named some of them.<sup>42</sup> The ten main categories of eminent monks included in *Xu gao seng zhuan* are:

1. Translators (*yijing* 譯經), covering the first four fascicles.
2. Exegetes (*yijie* 義解), the largest of the ten categories, covering eleven fascicles.
3. Meditators (*xichan* 習禪), covering five fascicles.
4. Vinaya experts (*minglü* 明律), covering two fascicles.
5. Dharma protectors (*hufa* 護法), covering two fascicles, a new category introduced by Daoxuan.
6. Miracle workers, lit. "spiritual resonance" (*gantong* 感通), covering two fascicles; in *Gao seng zhuan*, this category is named "divine wonders" (*shenyi* 神異).
7. Those who perform self-sacrifice (*yishen* 遺身), covering one fascicle; in *Gao seng zhuan*, this category is named a bit differently (*wangshen* 亡身), although the meaning is pretty much the same.<sup>43</sup>
8. (Scripture) readers and chanters (*dusong* 讀誦), covering one fascicle; in *Gao seng zhuan*, this category is named chanters of scriptures (*songjing* 誦經).
9. Promoters of meritorious activities (*xingfu* 興福), covering one fascicle.
10. Miscellaneous category (*zake* 雜科), covering one fascicle.

In the present context, an especially relevant source of information is *Song gao seng zhuan*, compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) in 988. Chronologically, *Song gao seng zhuan* covers the lives of monks active after the compilation of Daoxuan's text—roughly from the 640s to the 980s—a period of almost three and a half centuries. This text contains biographical entries for Mazu, many of his disciples, and a number of other Chan monks from the Tang and the Five Dynasties eras. In it, most biographies of Chan teachers are included in the general category of meditators, although there are some Chan teachers whose biographies are placed in different sections. For instance, Yanshou's

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42. Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 9.

43. For the monks that belong to this category, see James A. Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism*.

biography is included in the promoters of meritorious activities section,<sup>44</sup> and Yaoshan Weiyao's 藥山惟儼 (745–828) biography is in the Dharma protectors section.<sup>45</sup> Zanning's text is discussed in greater detail in the introduction to Text 5, in part II of this volume. Together with the notably shorter *Ming gao seng zhuan* 明高僧傳 (Ming Biographies of Eminent Monks), compiled by Ruxing 如惺 in 1617, Huijiao's, Daoxuan's, and Zanning's texts are collectively known as the four dynastic collections of biographies of eminent monks.

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44. SGS 28, T 50.887b.

45. SGS 17, T 50.816a-c.

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## *Four Main Genres*

THIS CHAPTER DEVELOPS and elaborates on the general discussion about the formation, classification, and character of the various Chan genres presented in chapter 4. In a sense, it can be viewed as a continuation of the previous chapter. In it, I introduce and examine each of the four main literary genres: record of sayings, transmission of the lamp chronicle, *gong'an* collection, and Chan monastic code. In their fully mature forms, these Chan genres can be viewed as products of the Song era, although there are some important distinctions.

Texts composed in the first two genres contain a wealth of materials about Tang Chan, along with later textual strata. We can also trace a number of Tang-era texts that can be viewed as their precursors. In contrast, the contents of the texts composed in the latter two genres are best viewed as reflections of issues, concerns, and outlooks that were dominant in Song Chan, even if their authors repeatedly evoke the authority and legacy of important Tang monks such as Mazu and Baizhang. That is especially the case with the *gong'an* collections, which present a distinct vision of Chan teaching and practice—presented in a unique literary form—that is at great variance with anything that existed during the Tang era.

### *Records of Sayings*

The records of sayings constitute arguably the best-known and most representative Chan genre. In its fully developed form, this genre was a product of the early Song period, although (as we will see later) its earlier origins can be traced back to the Tang and Five Dynasties eras. Each text belonging to the record of sayings genre was meant to serve as a comprehensive record of the life and teachings of a noted Chan master. Generally speaking, works belonging to this genre are hybrid and multilayered texts, comprising

a variety of materials, typically gathered from a number of different sources. That includes various types of biographical information, such as the places of birth and death, and site of ordination. There are also assorted sermons or lecture excerpts, records of discussions with disciples, stories about particular events, and poems. These kinds of materials were ostensibly compiled to serve as normative templates for correct doctrine and authentic practice. Some parts of the records, especially stories written in the encounter dialogue model, are also traditionally taken to represent dramatic illustrations of enlightened conduct.

During the Song and Yuan eras (or even later, in some cases), a number of prominent Chan teachers from the Tang era, including Mazu, Zhaozhou, and Linji, were accorded their own records of sayings. Mazu's record of sayings, *Mazu yulu*, is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Examples of other records of sayings dedicated to major disciples of Mazu (covering the first three generations), which tend to be representative of the genre, include:

1. *Hongzhou baizhang shan dazhi chanshi yulu* 洪州百丈山大智禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Dazhi, from Baizhang Mountain in Hongzhou).<sup>1</sup>
2. *Mingzhou damei shan chang chanshi yulu* 明州大梅山常禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Chang, from Damei Mountain in Mingzhou).<sup>2</sup>
3. *Pang jushi yulu* 龐居士語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Layman Pang).<sup>3</sup>
4. *Tanzhou guishan lingyou chanshi yulu* 潭州為山靈祐禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Lingyou, from Guishan in Tanzhou).<sup>4</sup>
5. *Zhaozhou zhenji chanshi yulu* 趙州真際禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Zhenji, from Zhaozhou).<sup>5</sup>

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1. X 119.817b3-820b16. This Song-era text is not to be confused with BGL, which is a collection of transcribed sermons. For an English translation, see Thomas Cleary, *Sayings and Doings of Pai-chang*, 17–28.

2. This text is not included in the standard canonical collections. However, a Song-era (or Kamakura-era, in terms of Japanese chronology) manuscript copy, preserved at the Kanazawa bunko collection in Yokohama, is reproduced in *Kanazawa bunko shiryō zensho: Butten 1, zenseki hen* 金沢文庫資料全書、仏典、第一卷、禪籍篇, 13–18.

3. X 120.55a4-61b14. For an English translation, see Sasaki, *A Man of Zen*, 39–76.

4. T 47.577a7-582a3.

5. GZY 13 and 14, X 118.304a14-334b6. The texts is divided into two parts, included in fascicles 13 and 14 in GZY. For an English translation, based on a Japanese version, see James Green, *The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshu*.

6. *Yuanzhou yangshan huiji chanshi yulu* 袁州仰山慧寂禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Huiji, from Yangshan in Yuanzhou).<sup>6</sup>
7. *Zhenzhou linji huizhao chanshi yulu* 鎮州臨濟慧照禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Huizhao, from Linji in Zhenzhou).<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, during the same period we also see the compiling of records of sayings for Song masters, exemplified by *Dahui pujue chanshi yulu* 大慧普覺禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Dahui Pujue).<sup>8</sup> This large text (in thirty fascicles) contains a variety of materials, including the text of Dahui's stele inscription, various stories and anecdotes, verses, commentaries, informal addresses, formal sermons, and letters. It was published and included into the Buddhist canon under an imperial edict in 1171, only eight years after Dahui's passing away in 1163. This and other similar Song-era texts—such as *Hongzhi yulu* 宏智語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Hongzhi)—highlight a contrast between the records of sayings of Tang- and Song-era monks.<sup>9</sup> While the records of Tang monks were usually compiled centuries later, albeit on the basis of earlier materials, the records of Song monks were often compiled by their contemporaries, who were presumably concerned with preserving and controlling the legacy of the recently departed masters.

The growing popularity of the record of sayings genre during the Song era had a notable impact not only on Buddhism but also on other religious traditions. That includes Daoism and Confucianism, both of which adopted the genre for their own purposes. That tendency was especially prevalent in Neo-Confucian circles, as can be seen for the numerous records of sayings compiled for leading masters of the new Confucian movement. Pertinent examples include the records of sayings of Cheng Yi 程頤 (1032–1107), Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), and Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139–1193).<sup>10</sup>

At times, several records of sayings are grouped in a larger collection. For instance, *Sijia yulu* 四家語錄 (Records of Sayings of Four Masters), originally compiled during the Northern Song dynasty and preserved in a Ming-era edition, contains the records of Mazu, Baizhang, Huangbo, and Linji. In this case,

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6. T 47. 582a14-588a1.

7. T 47.494b14-506c25. For an English translation, see Ruth Fuller Sasaki and Thomas Yūhō Kirchner, *The Record of Linji*.

8. T 47.81b-943a.

9. For Hongzhi's record, see Morten Schlütter, "The Record of Hongzhi and the Recorded Sayings Literature of Song-Dynasty Chan."

10. Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy*, 72–75.

the reason for the selection of these four monks had to do with concerns about lineage, closely related to quasi-sectarian realignments that were peculiar to the Northern Song period.<sup>11</sup> From the perspective of the Linji School, which rose to dominance during that period, these prominent Chan monks formed the main line of orthodox transmission that led to Linji and, by extension, to later generations of monks associated with Linji's lineage. In that sense, the inclusion and arrangement of the four texts served to reinforce specific claims about Linji's spiritual ancestry—which was thereby traced back to Mazu—that were promoted by the compilers of the collection and their supporters. More will be said about this compilation in the next chapter.

An example of a much larger and more comprehensive collection of Chan materials, which incorporates a number of separate records of sayings, is *Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄 (Records of the Sayings of Ancient Monastic Elders). This massive work, originally compiled in 1267, has forty-eight fascicles. It contains the records of more than thirty well-known masters, covering the period from the mid-Tang to the beginning of the Southern Song era. Although the main focus is on the records of sayings of prominent Chan monks, the text also includes other types of sources, such as biographical sketches (*xing zhuang* 行狀) and memorial inscriptions. As is the case with other similar texts, the compilers drew heavily on a variety of earlier sources, including popular chronicles such as *Jingde chuan deng lu* and the records of sayings of individual monks. On the other hand, the compilers moved away from the inclusive approach evidenced in *Jingde chuan deng lu*. Like *Sijia yulu*, *Gu zunsu yulu* adopts a somewhat exclusivist approach in its demarcation of Chan orthodoxy, as it focuses on the Chan lines of transmission that go back to Mazu and his teacher Huairang.

Regarding the name of the genre, the exact designation does not appear in sources from the Tang era. The earliest appearance of the term *record of sayings*, used in the context of Chan literature, can be found in *Song gao seng zhuan*, which takes us back to the beginning of the Song era.<sup>12</sup> There the term appears in four different places: the biographical entries of Shenqing 神清 (d. 814?), Zhaozhou, Huangbo, and Tiantai Deshao 天台德韶 (891–972). The first of these four monks, who is best known as the author of *Beishan lu* 北山錄

11. Discussed in more detail in Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy*, esp. 118–121.

12. As pointed out by Yanagida, it also might be possible to trace the actual term *yulu* to a couple of non-Chan sources; see Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Chan Buddhism," 185–186.

(Record of the North Mountain), is listed under the category of exegetes.<sup>13</sup> The other three are noted Chan masters, although for some reason Huangbo is listed under the category of miracle workers. In Huangbo's entry, there is the statement that "his record of sayings circulated throughout the world."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Zhaozhou's biography states that "his record of sayings was widely circulated and was esteemed by the world."<sup>15</sup> In Deshao's case, we have an abbreviated version of the same statement: "his record of sayings was widely circulated."<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, similar or alternative terms appear in the titles of Tang-era texts, some of which served as early precursors or prototypes for the records of sayings compiled during the Song dynasty. In his extensive historical study of the Chan records of sayings, Yanagida Seizan identifies five terms that were used prior to the Song era to denote texts related to this genre: sayings texts (*yuben* 語本), oral teachings (*yanjiao* 言教), distinctive records (*bielu* 別錄), extensive sayings (*guangyu* 廣語), and sayings (*yu* 語).<sup>17</sup> As these terms appear in texts associated with the Hongzhou School, Yanagida speculates that the records of sayings genre was developed by the Hongzhou School.<sup>18</sup> He goes even so far to assert that having a *yuben* was a requirement among Mazu's disciples, even though there is no compelling evidence to support that. According to him, the main reason that some monks, who otherwise had no strong or personal connection with Mazu, supposedly came to be considered his disciples was because they had a *yuben*.<sup>19</sup>

Some of Yanagida's discussions about the provenance and uses of these terms during the Tang era, and the connection with Mazu and his disciples, are based on problematic conjectures. Still, the main point he makes is a valid one: there were a number of Tang-era texts that recorded the teachings of major Chan teachers. Nonetheless, in terms of their form, content, and structure, I would argue that technically these sources should not be placed under

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13. In Shenqing's brief biographical entry, the term *yulu* appears three times. See SGS 6, T 50.741a1-24.

14. SGS 20, T 50.842c23.

15. SGS 11, T 50.775 c17-18. Also see Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 229; and Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Chan Buddhism," 185.

16. SGS 13, T 50.789b7.

17. Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 229-246. The English translations of these terms come, with some adaptations, from John McRae's summary of this article, presented in his "Yanagida Seizan's Landmark Works on Chinese Chan," 82-84.

18. Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Chan Buddhism," 186-191.

19. Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 458, 465-466.

the category of records of sayings—at least not in the narrow sense, when the term is used to designate the mature form of the pertinent Chan genre. At the outset, probably these records primarily consisted of transcriptions of sermons, along the lines of those that constitute the core of Huangbo's two records (see later), compiled by the prominent official and literatus Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860) during the middle part of the ninth century. Some of them might have also included conventional dialogues or discussions between Chan teachers and their disciples, along the lines of those that appear in Huangbo's records and Baizhang's *Extensive Record* (*Baizhang guang lu*).

### *Precursors and Creation of the Records of Sayings*

Early precursors of the records of sayings include important Tang texts such as *Liu zu tan jing* 六祖壇經 (Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch), which exists in several versions, including the one that was discovered in Dunhuang.<sup>20</sup> The text's unidentified author(s) claimed to record the life and teachings of Huineng, the famous sixth patriarch of Chan in China. The same can be said of the collection of Heze Shenhui's 荷澤神會 (684–758) sermons, titled *Tan yu* 壇語 (Platform Sermons), discovered among the Dunhuang manuscripts.<sup>21</sup> These and other similar texts incorporate some of the major elements of the mature record of sayings texts from the Song era. They include biographical sketches, sermons, and dialogues, although they do not implement the encounter dialogue format, which first appeared during the tenth century.<sup>22</sup>

Also worth mentioning are the two records of Huangbo's teaching noted earlier: *Chuan xin fa yao* 傳心法要 (Essential Teachings on Mind Transmission) and *Wanling lu* 宛陵錄 (Wanling Record).<sup>23</sup> A collection of similar types of texts is included in fascicle 28 of *Jingde chuan deng lu*, discussed in the introduction to Text 7 in part II of this volume. Furthermore, there were a number of texts that contained sermons and sayings of Chan monks that are no longer

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20. Two versions of *Liu zu tan jing* can be found in T 48.337a–45b and T 48.345c–62b. For an English translation of the Dunhuang version, see Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 125–183. For more about the history of the text and the ideas communicated in it, see Morten Schlütter and Stephen F. Teiser, *Readings of the Platform Sutra*.

21. For the original Chinese text of *Tan yu*, see Yang Zengwen, *Shenhui heshang chan hua lu*, 3–14.

22. See Yanagida, “Goroku no rekishi,” 390–397, 417–425.

23. T 48.379b–87b; see also Iriya Yoshitaka, *Denshin hōyō*, *Enryōroku*.

extant, whose titles are listed in catalogues compiled during the Tang era. These include the titles of Chan texts that appear in Ennin's 圓仁 (799–852) and Enchin's 圓珍 (814–891) catalogues of books they brought back to Japan from their study-pilgrimages in ninth-century China.<sup>24</sup>

One could perhaps also look for possible sources of inspiration, or at least point to somewhat analogous types of narratives, outside of Buddhism. For example, the *Analects of Confucius* (*Lun yu* 論語), one of the most celebrated texts of Confucianism, shares some stylistic features with the Chan records of sayings. Like the later records of Chan masters, the venerable Confucian classic contains various types of biographical (or hagiographical) information about the great master, excerpts from his lectures and speeches, and discussions with disciples and other individuals. To some degree, the same could be said of *Menzi* 孟子 (*Mencius*), which at a basic level is a collection of conversations and anecdotes about Mencius (372–289 B.C.E.?).

The Song-era compilers and editors of the records of sayings drew on a variety of materials about particular Chan monks. They usually selectively utilized a range of sources available at the time of compilation, such as biographical information and other data contained in stele inscriptions and other commemorative compositions. They also made use of transcripts of sermons, dialogues, and other stories that allegedly expressed Chan teachers' lively interactions with their disciples, along with occasional poems. In addition, in a number of instances they probably drew on oral narratives and local lore. Therefore, in the process of establishing the formal standards for the record of sayings genre, the Song editors mixed several narrative forms and utilized a wide range of materials compiled at different times and under diverse circumstances. One of the notable features of their texts was the privileging of stories and vignettes composed in the encounter dialogue format, which, as previously noted, became the most recognizable element of classical Chan literature. The same feature is also applicable to the transmission of the lamp chronicles, as discussed later.

Earlier Chan/Zen scholarship for the most part glossed over the composite or hybrid nature of these texts. That involved a general failure to account for the important differences—in terms of contents, provenance, and literary format—among the several distinctive types of materials that comprise them. All too often there was a tacit assumption that there are no essential differences among the various parts, as presumably they are all just different

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24. For lists that contains some of the Chan titles found in Ennin's catalogues, see T 55.1095a and T 55.1106c. For a convenient listing of all Chan titles that appear in Enchin's two catalogues, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, 330–332.

records of the Chan teachers' enlightened acts and sagacious locutions, originally delivered in the everyday context of Chan monastic life. Recent scholarship has challenged these suppositions and suggested different ways of looking at these texts, with significant ramifications for the ways they are interpreted and used as sources of historical information.

Consequently, we are in a better position to appreciate the convoluted textual provenance and hybrid narrative structure of these sources. We also have a better sense of the various roles and agendas that key historical agents—monks, literati, and the imperial state—had in the course of their creation, diffusion, and canonization. Such a nuanced approach, which embraces the multilayered makeup and convoluted character of these texts, makes it possible to use them cautiously as sources of information about the multifaceted historical trajectories and religious transmutations that marked the Chan School's evolution during the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song eras.

### *Transmission of the Lamp Chronicles*

Texts that belong to the transmission of the lamp genre are basically large collections of biographical entries about noted Indian and Chinese patriarchs, arranged in a manner that highlights their membership or affiliation with the Chan lineage. Virtually all individuals included in these texts are also members of the monastic order. At a basic level, such an arrangement points to the close commingling or correlation between literary form and religious ideology. Namely, the basic structure of these texts, especially the manner in which the various biographical entries are integrated into them, is clearly grounded in the ideological supposition of a distinctive transmission lineage that conveys the quintessence of Buddhism. In that sense, the texts were meant to epitomize and promote the notion that Chan was a unique tradition that transmitted the living flame of the Buddha's awakening, and were thus construed a repository of the deepest truths of Buddhism.

In its fully developed form, the transmission of the lamp genre is perhaps best exemplified by the seminal *Jingde chuan deng lu*. That and other similar texts begin with a section that introduces the seven Buddhas of antiquity, the first six of which are mythical Buddhas. This section is followed with a biography of Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha who, from a Chan perspective, initiated the original transmission of Chan enlightenment. Then there are the biographies of the putative Indian patriarchs, which from the ninth century onward came to be represented as being twenty-eight in number. The last Indian patriarch, the legendary Bodhidharma, is also listed as the first Chinese patriarch. The numerous Chan patriarchs who come after him

are Chinese, although the Chan lineage was eventually extended to include Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese masters as well.

The bulk of the transmission of the lamp chronicles thus consists of many biographical entries that represent numerous generations of Chan masters, typically going all the way until the time of compilation. The biographies contain a variety of materials, which on the whole tend to overlap with those included in the records of sayings: biographical sketches, dialogues, stories, transcripts of short sermons, and poems. Usually prominent Chan teachers are accorded longer biographical entries, while the entries of less known or obscure monks are much shorter, often just a brief story or two. In some instances, only the monks' names are given, listed as disciples of particular Chan teachers within a fixed genealogical scheme.

The compilers and editors of the transmission of the lamp chronicles adopted a genealogical format in their organization of the various biographies. The biographies of individual Chan teachers are arranged according to predetermined lines of transmission, which form discrete branches of a sprawling genealogical tree. In that sense, each individual is assigned a fixed position in a predetermined genealogical grid. In terms of their basic arrangement, these texts somewhat resemble the kinds of clan genealogies that were popular among the aristocratic elites of late medieval China.<sup>25</sup> But it also seems probable that the original conception of a mystical Chan lineage was influenced by related Indian notions and other models of spiritual lineage, echoes of which can be traced to canonical sources and other traditions. Pertinent examples include the various Vinaya lineages and the Mahāsiddha lineages of Tantric (or Esoteric) Buddhism.<sup>26</sup>

The Chan teachers featured in these texts are all linked together by their common participation in the ancestral transmission of Chan enlightenment, which is implicitly construed as constituting the essence of the Buddhist tradition. The imaginary or mystic lines of transmission, which connect numerous monks from various generations—many of whom in fact had close personal connections—are inscribed and embedded into the peculiar literary structure of the text as a whole. Consequently, when we look at the overall narrative and the basic suppositions that underlie it, we can say that each transmission of the lamp chronicle functions as a form of spiritual genealogy. At the same

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25. See John Jorgensen, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch'an's Search for Legitimation in the Mid-T'ang Dynasty."

26. See Elizabeth Morrison, *The Power of Patriarchs: Qisong and Lineage in Chinese Buddhism*, 14–23.

time, traditionally these texts have also been understood to serve as (quasi or pseudo) histories of the Chan School, centered on the exemplary lives and edifying teachings of its leading figures.

Generally speaking, within that kind of literary form and structure, individual Chan teachers of various generations can be located at fixed positions within the Chan School's family tree, with Śākyamuni and the early patriarchs constituting its main trunk. The straight trunk of the tree represents the initial unilinear transmission of Chan, which according to tradition started in ancient India with the original transmission of the essence of enlightenment from Śākyamuni to Mahākāśyapa. The unilinear transmission, from a master to a disciple, purportedly lasted until the time of Huineng, the putative sixth patriarch in China. After that we see an increasing proliferation of branches, which represent the various lines of transmission that emerged over the centuries. As a kind of ecumenical gesture, in some instances the genealogical tree also includes several short branches that at particular points come out of the main trunk. These represent collateral Chan lineages such as those of the Northern and Niutou schools, which enjoyed their heydays during the early Tang era but became defunct before the end of the eighth century.<sup>27</sup>

The most influential text composed in the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre is the aforementioned *Jingde chuan deng lu*.<sup>28</sup> Initially compiled by Daoyuan 道原 (dates unknown), the text was subsequently revised by Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020), Li Wei 李維 (961–1031), and other prominent literati associated with the Song court at Kaifeng.<sup>29</sup> More detailed information about this text is provided in the introduction to Text 6 in part II. Other major transmission of the lamp chronicles produced during the Song period are:

1. *Tiansheng guang deng lu* (already mentioned several times), in thirty fascicles, compiled in 1029.<sup>30</sup>
2. *Jianzhong jingguo xu deng lu* 建中靖國續燈錄 (Continued Record of the Lamp [Transmission] from the Jianzhong Jingguo Era), in thirty fascicles, compiled in 1101.<sup>31</sup>

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27. For instance, see CDL 5, T 51.235b–45b.

28. T 51.196b–467a.

29. For a brief biographical excerpt about Daoyuan, see TGL 27, X 135.437a-b. For his life and work, see Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 29–30.

30. X 135.595a–902b.

31. X 136.1a–414b.

3. *Zongmen lian deng huiyao* 宗門聯燈會要 (Essentials of Chan's Unitary [Transmission of the] Lamp), in thirty fascicles, compiled in 1183.<sup>32</sup>
4. *Jiatai pu deng lu* 嘉泰普燈錄 (Universal Lamp Record from the Jiatai Era), in thirty fascicles, compiled in 1204.<sup>33</sup>

Traditionally these four collections, together with *Jingde chuan deng lu*, are collectively referred to as the “five lamp (chronicles).” The influence of *Jingde chuan deng lu*, the earliest of the five texts, is evident in several areas, including the number of fascicles: following Daoyuan's text, the later collections included in this list also comprise a total of thirty fascicles. These texts were created over a time span of about two centuries, during which we see a peak interest in the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre. To this list we can also add *Wu deng huiyuan*, compiled in 1256, which is based on the earlier five texts, as indicated by the first two characters in its title (lit. “five lamps”). The transmission of the lamp chronicle genre continued to be popular and influential during the subsequent centuries, all the way to the present.

### *Evolution of the Transmission of the Lamp Chronicle Genre*

The historical and literary evolution of the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre can be traced back to the Tang era, especially some of the early Chan texts rediscovered at the beginning of the twentieth century among the Dunhuang manuscripts. Early Chan documents with quasi-sectarian agendas, which adopted a genealogical model and attempted to establish the legitimacy of a particular Chan lineage, can be considered as early prototypes of the Song transmission of the lamp chronicles. A prime example of such a text is *Lengqie shi zi ji* 楞伽師資記 (Record of the Teachers and Disciples of the Lan̄kāvatāra), compiled by Jingjue 淨覺 (683–750).<sup>34</sup> This text, which contains biographical entries for twenty-four monks, tried to delineate an orthodox line of transmission centered on the Northern School. That meant presenting Shenxiu, the leader of the Northern School, as the sixth Chan patriarch and the main inheritor of the orthodox line of transmission from Hongren, the reputed

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32. X 136.415a–950a.

33. X 137.4b–438b.

34. T 85.1283c–90c. For a study of this text, see Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, 58–100; for a Japanese translation, see Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no zenshi I: Ryōga shijiki*, *Den hōbōki*, 49–326.

fifth patriarch. Another representative example of such a text is *Lidai fa bao ji* 歷代法寶記, compiled in Sichuan circa 774 to legitimize the Baotang School (or lineage), headed by Wuzhu 無住 (714–774).<sup>35</sup>

When compared with the Song-era chronicles, these early texts are more limited in terms of their length and scope, and they have a simpler structure. They include only the biographies of select Chan patriarchs, who form a singular line of transmission that their authors attempted to establish as the orthodox one. For instance, *Lidai fa bao ji* focuses on Wuzhu's putative line of transmission, arguing that he is the inheritor of the orthodox Chan lineage. It also highlights the supposed superiority of Wuzhu's teachings, which according to some critics were infused with an antinomian outlook and included radical views about the rejection of traditional Buddhist practices and observances. The limited contents and outlooks of these early texts contrast with the broad and relatively ecumenical coverage evidenced in *Jingde chuan deng lu*. In the Song text, all Chan lineages that trace their origins back to Huineng are considered to be authentic, and the early fascicles also include the aforementioned collateral or defunct lineages that disappeared well before the end of the Tang era.

The appearance of ecumenical attitudes, especially the willingness to acknowledge different Chan lineages as legitimate successors of Bodhidharma and to adopt a multilinear conception of the Chan lineage, is also discernible in two other prototypes of the Song chronicles: *Baolin zhuan* and *Zu tang ji*. *Baolin zhuan* was compiled by Zhiju 智炬 (dates unknown) in 801.<sup>36</sup> Among its distinguishing features was the construction of the "orthodox" lineage of twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese patriarchs, which eventually leads to Mazu via Huineng. Before long, this version of the early Chan lineage was adopted by the whole Chan tradition, as evidenced in a number of later sources. This text also is noteworthy for its inclusion of transmission verses, as well as for what it completely lacks: any materials composed in the encounter dialogue format.

The last three of *Baolin zhuan's* ten fascicles—which include the sections that cover the first two generations of Chan masters after Huineng, including Mazu—are no longer extant. Nevertheless, quotations from these fascicles

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35. T 51.179a–196b. For studies of the history and contents of this text, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, 278–334; Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmissions*; and Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi* and the Chan Doctrine of Sudden Awakening." Adamek's volume also contain a translation of the text, which in 2011 was issued as a separate book. Yanagida also published a Japanese translation of the whole text; see Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no zenshi II: Rekidai hōbōki*, 39–324.

36. The original text of BLZ can be found in Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Sōzō ichin Hōrinden, Dentōgyokuei shū*.

that appear in later texts have enabled Japanese scholars to arrive at a general idea about their contents.<sup>37</sup> About a century later, this text was followed by *Xu baolin zhuan* 續寶林傳 (Continued Baolin Biographies), which unfortunately is no longer extant. *Zu tang ji*, compiled in 952 in the area of present-day Fujian province, is discussed in more detail in the introduction to Text 3, in part II of this volume.<sup>38</sup> Although *Zu tang ji* became superseded by *Jingde chuan deng lu* and was eventually lost in China, it is the earliest example of a text that incorporates the major literary and ideological elements of the mature transmission of the lamp chronicle genre.

### Gong'an Collections

The *gong'an* collections were initially developed during the Northern Song dynasty. Representative texts that belong to this genre are formed around brief stories or exchanges, labeled “public cases” (*gong'an*). The core stories are typically composed in the encounter dialogue format and feature well-known sayings or dialogic exchanges of famous Chan teachers. Among the stories' main protagonists, especially prominent are leading monks from the second half of the Tang and the Five Dynasties, such as Mazu, Baizhang, Nanquan, Zhaozhou, Dongshan, Linji, and Yunmen. Most of these stories can be traced back to other sources, especially the transmission of the lamp chronicles and the records of sayings of the monks in question. For instance, the famous story about Mazu's peculiar response to a question about his final illness cited in chapter 4—which features his invocation of the names of two mythical Buddhas, Sun-face and Moon-face—forms case three in *Bi yan lu*, as well as case thirty-six in *Cong rong lu*.

Alternatively, in rare instances the main focus within certain sections of the text is on short excerpts from Buddhist scriptures, which tend to feature some resemblance or evoke points of comparison with the familiar type of Chan story. A pertinent example is the celebrated exchange between Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī about the doctrine of nonduality, originally told in the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*, which culminates with Vimalakīrti's silence.<sup>39</sup> In *Bi yan lu*, the relevant scriptural passage forms the core of case eighty-seven, and

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37. For the missing chapters of BLZ, see Shiina Kōyū's two articles: “*Hōrinden* itsubun no kenkyū” and “*Hōrinden* makikyū makijū no itsubun.” The sources for identifying quotations from the lost fascicles of BLZ are listed in “*Hōrinden* itsubun no kenkyū,” 238.

38. For the compilation and contents of ZTJ, see Shiina Kōyū, “*Sodōshū* no hensei,” 66–72; Yanagida Seizan, “*Sodōshū* no shiryō kachi,” 31–79 (published under his original surname, Yokoi); and Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 59–113.

39. WMJ 2, T 14.551c.

the whole story about the encounter between the two bodhisattvas is read and commented on as if it is a Chan *gong'an*.<sup>40</sup>

Within that context, the selection of the *Vimalakīrti Scripture* should not come as a total surprise. That canonical text was popular in Chan circles, as evidenced by the numerous citations and allusions in various Chan sources. The same goes for the specific scriptural passage, which is quoted or invoked in a number of Chan records, including a passing allusion to it in the text of Mazu's stele inscription, translated in part II.<sup>41</sup> The inclusion of such canonical sources, which supposedly contain some of the unique flavors or idioms associated with popular Chan stories, points to prevalent ideas about the essential compatibility between the teachings of Chan and the contents of the Buddhist canon (or at least parts of it).

The best-known examples of *gong'an* collections, which in general terms exemplify the genre as a whole, are:

1. *Bi yan lu*, compiled by Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–1135), in ten fascicles;<sup>42</sup> it is based on an earlier *gong'an* collection compiled by Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯 (980–1052), titled *Bai ze song gu* 百則頌古 (Verses on Hundred Ancient Cases), which consisted of verse commentaries on one hundred “cases” featuring ancient Chan masters, to which Yuanwu added extensive layers of further exegesis.
2. *Wumen guan*, compiled by Wumen in 1228, in one fascicle;<sup>43</sup> much shorter and simpler than *Bi yan lu*, it contains forty-eight cases, each accompanied by a prose commentary and a verse composed by Wumen.
3. *Cong rong lu*, initially compiled by Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 (1091–1157) and revised in 1223 by Wansong Xingxiu 萬松行秀 (1196–1246), in six fascicles; it is a collection of one hundred cases, similar in structure to *Bi yan lu*.<sup>44</sup>

Within each of these texts, the main story or exchange, typically featuring a prominent Chan master, forms the core of a separate “case.” Taken as a whole, each text can be seen as a collection of individual *gong'an* or cases, accompanied with multiple layers of prose and verse exegesis. Although ostensibly the primary focus is on the main cases, in fact the largest, most distinctive,

40. BYL 9, T 48.209b21–210b12.

41. See the section about Mazu's meeting with Huairang in Text 1, part II.

42. T 48.140a–224b; for an English translation, see Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*.

43. T 48.292a–99c.

44. T 48.227a–92a.

and legitimately creative portions of each collection are the exegetical sections, which often tend to stray from the contents of the original cases. The same can be said regarding the various voices of authority that are embedded into the text. On the surface, the main focus is on the words and deeds of the great sages of yore, whose imagined voices serve as primary sources of spiritual authority. Nonetheless, at a basic level, the final assessment or judgment about the meaning of the core story—as well as a host of other things, related or unrelated to it—is passed on by a Song-era master such as Yuanwu, who has the last word and seems to usurp the role of prime authority.

In representative texts such as *Bi yan lu* and *Cong rong lu*, to each principal story the author(s) of the collection have added expansive annotation and interpretation, which can include layers of statements, interlinear notes, main commentaries, and subcommentaries. These kinds of intricate layers of textual exegesis, written by distinguished Chan teachers such as Yuanwu and Wumen, are presented in both verse and prose formats. Taken together, all these elements make the *gong'an* collections prime exemplars of exceedingly complex exegetical literature. Nonetheless, the term *exegetical* should be used with an important caveat: in many instances, the actual contents of these texts do not really seem to indicate an overriding concern with explicating the basic topics or meanings featured in the original cases, at least not in an ordinary sense.

Accordingly, the prominent *gong'an* collections seem to operate on several different levels. They contain the voices of a number of people, who lived at different times and places. For instance, the main textual layers integrated into the narrative structure of *Bi yan lu*, contained in each separate section that is built around a single case, can be summarized as follows:

1. A pointer, which serves as a short introduction to the core case, composed by Yuanwu.
2. The main case, usually a short story or exchange extracted from a well-known Chan source such as *Jingde chuan deng lu*.
3. Interlinear notes, written by Yuanwu, which are embedded within the main case.
4. A commentary on the main case, written in prose format by Yuanwu.
5. A verse, written by Xuedou.
6. Interlinear notes, written by Yuanwu, which are embedded within the verse.
7. A commentary on the verse, written in prose format by Yuanwu.<sup>45</sup>

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45. This basic structure is clearly followed in the English translation; see Clearly and Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*. The only divergence from the original arrangement is that in the

Among the various sections, the two commentaries (on the main case and the verse) tend to be the longest, usually by far. As we look at their language and basic literary structure, it is apparent that when viewed as a whole, these texts are far from straightforward and accessible records of Chan teachings. Neither can we say that they serve as user-friendly collections of plain and direct words of ancient wisdom. In fact, their highly complex structure, their convoluted contents, and the ostentatious language they deploy are among the distinguishing features of *gong'an* collections such as *Bi yan lu* and *Cong rong lu* (although that is somewhat less the case with *Wumen guan*). Consequently, among other things, these texts seem to have been meant to showcase the literary talents and intellectual creativity of their authors, as well as focus attention on the peculiar brand of Chan they were promulgating.

### *Contemplative Endeavors and Literary Exchanges*

Traditional and modern sources usually depict the *gong'an* collections as primers or manuals for *kanhua* 看話 (observing the phrase) meditation, a style of contemplative practice that was developed during the Northern Song era. The foremost exponent of *kanhua* Chan was Dahui, a leading disciple of Yuanwu. Dahui popularized a relatively straightforward method of practice that revolved around single-minded meditation on key stories or statements featured in the *gong'an* collections, which also made use of a feeling of doubt.<sup>46</sup> Arguably, the best-known example of a *gong'an* that is widely used for such purposes is Zhaozhou's *wu* 無 (lit. "no"), which supposedly was his answer to the question of whether dogs have Buddha nature. Zhaozhou's oft-cited exchange is the very first *gong'an* in *Wumen guan*,<sup>47</sup> and it is also cited numerous times in the records of Dahui and other Chan masters from the Song (and later) eras.<sup>48</sup>

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English version the interlinear notes on the main case are separated and placed in a separate section that follows the main case. With some modification, the same goes for most modern Japanese and Chinese editions or translations of the text. For instance, see Wu Ping 吳平, *Xin yi bi yan ji* 新譯碧巖集. For additional information about the literary structure of this and other *gong'an* collections, see Griffith Foulk, "The Form and Function of Kōan Literature: A Historical Overview," 28–33.

46. For the practice of *kanhua* Chan, see Robert E. Buswell, "The 'Short-Cut' Approach of K'an-hua Meditation: The Evolution of Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," 343–356.

47. T 48. 292c23-24.

48. For instance, see *Dahui yulu* 大慧語錄 9, T 47.850b16-19; *Dahui yulu* 19, T 47.891b27-c2; *Dahui yulu* 21, T 47.899a13-14.

At a basic level, that kind of meditative praxis utilized only the core stories or exchanges featured in the main *gong'an* collections. As these materials were taken from earlier Chan sources, they were not exclusive or defining features of the texts composed in the *gong'an* collection genre. In fact, even the core exchanges were meant only to be used at the beginning of meditative training. Once the adept's practice matured, the main focus of meditation was to shift solely onto the crucial part of the exchange, the so-called critical phrase. In the case of Zhaozhou's famous *gong'an*, that was the word *wu*. Consequently, at the level of practical application, the rest of the text is largely irrelevant, especially when it comes to the basic concentration exercise that constitutes the essence of the *kanhua* technique.

Nonetheless, most traditional and modern authors have tended to interpret these texts, with their elaborate layers of exegetical materials—namely, the assorted notes and commentaries written by Song authors such as Yuanwu—as being directly and primarily concerned with the practice of Chan meditation. On the surface, that seems to make sense, especially when we consider that formal lectures on the contents of well-known *gong'an* collections such as *Bi yan lu* and *Wumen guan* are regular features of Zen training in Rinzai monasteries in Japan (and elsewhere). However, once we move beyond the realm of traditionalist apologetics and look clearly at the actual form and content of these texts, unencumbered by conventional explanations, the accepted view becomes largely untenable. At the end of the day, I am not sure if it makes sense to uncritically assume that there are close and meaningful connections between the literary expressions found in texts such as *Bi yan lu* and the actual practice of Chan meditation (which, needless to say, could be approached in a number of different ways).

Instead of interpreting the *gong'an* collections as manuals of meditation or guides for spiritual practice, it seems prudent to understand their genesis in the light of the complex patterns of interaction between the Chan teachers and the literati, which were among the distinctive features of elite culture in Song China. That can certainly be said of the best-known product of this genre, *Bi yan lu*, which is characterized by a complex narrative structure, profuse use of ornate language and refined vocabulary, and habitual recourse to opaque imagery and obscure metaphors. These prominent features of the voluminous text reflect the literary tastes and cultural predilections of the Song literati, who were major supporters of Chan monks like Yuanwu, but they make less sense within the contemplative setting of the meditation hall.

Consequently, it might be best to understand this kind of textual production within the context of the literary exchanges between the Chan masters and the literati. In that sense, these kinds of literary endeavors fall under the general rubric of “literary Chan” (*wenzi chan* 文字禪), a prominent trend that

at some level facilitated the integration of Chan into the cultural mainstream of Song China. Putting aside romanticized notions about the selfless pursuit of enlightenment, we need to be mindful that the writing of a text like *Bi yan lu* could greatly enhance the standing and reputation of its author. Presumably, it also gave a significant boost to his clerical career, which to a large extent depended on literati support and official patronage.

It is a bit less clear, to me at least, how the writing of such convoluted text was related to the spiritual exertions that were meant to take place within the meditation halls of Chan monasteries. Furthermore, even if texts composed in the *gong'an* collection genre were used in the context of public lectures held at Chan monasteries, usually their intellectual mastery, or even mere comprehension, required a classical education of the kind that was not available to most monks during the Song and subsequent eras. The genre was closely linked to specific ranks of taste and value, in which elite monks such as Yuanwu could be brought into the same rarefied milieu as the literati interested in Chan. That implied a “social regimentation of access,” which also applied to other similar texts composed in the same genre.<sup>49</sup>

These issues might be among the primary reasons behind Dahui’s alleged disavowal of Yuanwu’s *gong'an* collection. According to one account (of uncertain authenticity), Dahui supposedly even burned the woodblocks for *Bi yan lu*, his teacher’s magnum opus, to prevent its circulation.<sup>50</sup> According to a prevalent explanation, the main reason behind this dramatic act was Dahui’s concern that immature students might misunderstand or misuse Yuanwu’s text. However, there is an alternative reading of the moral of the story. Regardless of the historicity of the event depicted in the story, the main problem, one could argue, was the deep tension—perhaps even an irreconcilable difference or an essential incompatibility—between the sort of literary Chan represented by the contents of *Bi yan lu* and the actual practice of meditation.

### *Monastic Codes*

The Chan monastic codes, often referred to as the “Chan rules of purity” (*Chan qinggui* 禪清規), were primarily meant to codify a wide range of monastic practices, observances, and institutions that were supposedly unique or

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49. Bauman, *A World of Others' Words*, 8.

50. For Dahui’s story, see T 48.224c21-25; translated in Miriam Levering, “Ch’an Enlightenment for Laymen: Ta-hui and the New Religious Culture of the Sung,” 32–33. See also Buswell, “The ‘Short-Cut’ Approach of *K’an-hua* Meditation,” 345, and Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China*, 249.

distinctive of the Chan School. In essence, they systematized a discrete form of Chan monasticism—related to and yet somehow separate from other monastic institutions—that during the Song period came to dominate the elite Buddhist establishment. According to traditionalist readings of Chan history, these epoch-making developments were closely related to other significant processes that marked the Chan School's emergence as a unique and separate tradition within Chinese Buddhism. The rules of purity gave the Chan School its distinctive institutional moorings that allegedly included particular patterns of monastic life, based on ideals, mores, and practices that epitomized Chan's inimitable ethos and distinct identity.

The emergence of a new system of Chan monasticism is customarily linked with the well-known legend about Baizhang's initial codification of a set of rules for his monastery, which purportedly served as the basic template for later texts composed in the rules of purity genre. The long-lost text about Chan monastic rules, believed to have been authored or inspired by Baizhang, is sometimes referred to by Japanese scholars as the "Old Rules of Baizhang" (J: *Hyakujō ko shingi*). This legend was instrumental in establishing Baizhang's preeminent status as a leading Chan patriarch and solidified his role as a major figure in Chinese Buddhist history.<sup>51</sup> From the Song period onward, Baizhang came to be revered as the patron saint of Chan monasticism, while the compilation and institution of his monastic code became key motifs in traditional Chan lore. Now and again, Baizhang and his imaginary code were also used as potent symbols by those interested in highlighting distinctions or promoting a quasi-sectarian identity for the Chan School.

While the Baizhang legend continues to be accepted and promulgated in certain circles,<sup>52</sup> recent scholarship has shown no direct connection between Baizhang as a historical person and the elusive monastic code that is traditionally ascribed to (or linked with) him.<sup>53</sup> The very notion of an institutionally

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51. See Poceski, "Monastic Innovator, Iconoclast, and Teacher of Doctrine," 15–20.

52. See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 250, 472, and Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, 142–143. Other examples of publications that presume the existence of Baizhang's original text include Shohei Ichimura, *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*, xiii–xix; Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, 148–51; Kagamishima Genryū, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," 117–134; Kagamishima Genryū, *Yakuchū: Zennen shingi*, 1–3; Yanagida Seizan, "Chūgoku zenshū shi," 58–60; Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China*, 170–173; Sato Tatsugen, *Chūgoku bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū*, 479–489; and Tanaka Ryōshō, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, 469–476.

53. See Mario Poceski, "Xuefeng's Code and the Chan School's Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations," 35–41, and Ishii Shūdō, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," 15–53. Ishii rejects conventional views about Baizhang's direct involvement in the creation of a new system of monastic rules, even though he is not willing to completely deny

independent tradition of Chan monasticism that emerged during the Tang era is highly problematic and not supported by any sound historical evidence. That does not mean, however, that there was no awareness of the Chan School's distinctiveness, but its basic identity was integrated into (or grafted onto) the existing monastic order. Consequently, it seems prudent to consider the formulation and popularization of this genre primarily within the context of Song-dynasty Buddhism, with only minor relevance for the study of Tang Chan.

Among the earliest texts associated with the rules of purity corpus is the brief and somewhat ambiguous "Chanmen guishi" 禪門規式 (Rules for the Chan School), which is appended to Baizhang's biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu*.<sup>54</sup> The text highlights Baizhang's putative role in the establishment of new monastic rules that supposedly set the Chan School apart from both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna traditions.<sup>55</sup> It also provides information about the innovative features introduced by Baizhang, which included setting up a Dharma hall and a Sangha hall, instituting monastic offices, codifying rituals for the abbot's public sermons, and administering appropriate punishments to monks who are disorderly or break the monastic regulations.<sup>56</sup> However, upon close inspection, there is little in the text to justify the notion of a unique and independent Chan monastery that was truly separate from the main monastic order. For instance, most of the allegedly novel features of monastic life introduced by Baizhang turn out not to be that innovative or distinctive.

While naive acceptance of the Baizhang legend has had a negative impact on the development of Chan studies, that does not mean that Chan monks were not active participants in the evolution of Buddhist monasticism. Like other monks before them, some Chan teachers compiled sets of rules and regulations for their monastic congregations. One such example is "Shi guizhi" 師規制 (Teacher's Regulations), composed by Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存 (822–908) in 901, which is the earliest extant monastic code compiled by a noted Chan teacher.<sup>57</sup> As I have argued before, Xuefeng's code and other early

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Baizhang's role in the evolution of Chan monasticism. He also argues that some monastic rules were gradually codified by the later generations of abbots at Baizhang Mountain.

54. CDL 6, T 51.250c–51a. Part of the text is also quoted in Baizhang's biography in SGS 10, T 50.770c; see also the brief mention in Zanning's *Da song sengshi lue*, T 54.240a-b. For an English translation of "Chanmen guishi," see Martin Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule: *Ch'ing kwei* and the Shaping of Ch'an Community Life," 173–178.

55. CDL 6, T 51.250c28–251a6; Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule," 173–174.

56. CDL 6, T 51. 251a6-b3; Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule," 175–178.

57. For a study and translation of "Shi guizhi," see Poceski, "Xuefeng's Code and the Chan School's Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations." The original Chinese

collections of monastic rules created by Chan monks were parts of a larger body of monastic literature authored or compiled by Chinese monks. They were limited in scope and meant to supplement the Vinaya and other relevant regulations, not to replace them.<sup>58</sup>

The same can be said of the brief set of five rules that, according to a post-Tang source, were purportedly inscribed on the back of Baizhang's stūpa inscription. These rules are very narrow in scope, and essentially they represent conventional monastic guidelines, without anything uniquely Chan about them.<sup>59</sup> For instance, the second rule stipulates that nuns and laypeople should not be allowed to reside in the monastery, and the fifth rule specifies that the monks should not accumulate money or personal gain. Accordingly, Xuefeng and other monastic legislators affiliated with the Chan tradition were participants in a continuing transformation of monastic practices and institutions, but that took place within the broad confines of the mainstream monastic order. While they accepted the notion that Chan was a distinct tradition within Buddhism, there is no compelling evidence to suggest that they were rebels set on establishing a completely new institutional framework based on sharp sectarian divisions.<sup>60</sup>

The earliest text that serves as a full-fledged example of the Chan rules of purity genre is *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規 (Rules of Purity for Chan Monasteries), compiled in 1103.<sup>61</sup> Its author, Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗曠 (d. 1107), explicitly evoked the Baizhang legend and asserted that the presumed code composed by Baizhang served as a source and an inspiration for his code. In its overall scope, *Chanyuan qinggui* is fairly comprehensive, encompassing many aspects of monastic life and practice. It includes relatively detailed descriptions of various monastic practices, observances, and administrative offices. It also provides instructions about proper etiquette and ritual protocol

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text can be found in X 119.972b–73a, and Yanagida Seizan, *Zengaku sōsho*, vol. 3, 278–279. For a modern Japanese translation, see Ishii, *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa*, 480–482.

58. Poceski, “Xuefeng’s Code and the Chan School’s Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations.”

59. See *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 8, T 48.1157a; Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*, 34; and Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- through Tenth-Century China*, 97.

60. Poceski, “Xuefeng’s Code and the Chan School’s Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations,” 53.

61. X 111.875a–942a. For a Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering, see Kagamishima Genryū, *Zennen shingi: yakuchū*. The first seven fascicles of the text—which has a total of ten fascicles—are translated in Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*.

to be used for meal services, tea ceremonies, daily liturgies, formal reading of scriptures, public lectures, funerals, ordinations, and the like. There are also some instructions about formal meditation practice.<sup>62</sup> In contrast to traditional notions about the uniqueness of Chan monastic life, the actual contents of texts such as “Chanmen guishi” and *Chanyuan qinggui* reveal how the emergence of the Chan codes did not represent a radical break from established practices and canonical formulations of monastic discipline. In the end, the Chan codes were largely based on Vinaya rules and other traditional monastic regulations, along with common Chinese cultural practices and established ritual procedures.<sup>63</sup>

Another important text that is representative of the rules of purity genre is *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 勅修百丈清規 (Imperial Edition of Baizhang’s Rules of Purity), compiled by Dongyang Dehui 東陽德輝 in 1338, during the Yuan dynasty.<sup>64</sup> This text was widely used in Chinese monasteries throughout the late imperial period. It is considerably longer and more comprehensive than its precursors, which were among the main sources used by Dehui. Other examples of the genre include Wuliang Zongshou’s 無量宗壽 *Ruzhong riyong qinggui* 入眾日用清規 (Rules of Purity for the Congregation’s Everyday Use, often abbreviated to *Riyong qinggui*), compiled in 1209, in one fascicle; and Jinhua Weimian’s 金華惟勉 *Conglin jiaoding qinggui* 叢林校定清規 (Revised Rules of Purity for Public Monasteries), compiled in 1274, in two fascicles.<sup>65</sup> These and other similar texts were meant to codify specific rules for “Chan monasteries” (*Chan yuan* 禪苑), in light of the official designations of Buddhist monasteries introduced by the imperial government during the Song era.<sup>66</sup> However, in actual practice, the lines of demarcation between Chan and non-Chan monasteries were often not that clear, and in general Chan remained firmly entrenched as a central element of the monastic establishment.

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62. For a useful listing of the text’s main topics, see Theodore Griffith Foulk, “*Chanyuan qinggui* and Other ‘Rules of Purity’ in Chinese Buddhism.” A general overview of Chan monastic life during the Song era can be found in Theodore Griffith Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism.”

63. Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*, 53–98.

64. For an English translation, see Shohei Ichimura, trans., *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*.

65. See X 11. 943a–47b, and *Conglin jiaoding qinggui zongyao* 叢林校定清規總要, X 11. 1a–54b. For more about these and other similar texts compiled during the Song and Yuan eras, see Foulk, “*Chanyuan qinggui* and Other ‘Rules of Purity’ in Chinese Buddhism,” 297–306.

66. See Morten Schlütter, “Vinaya Monasteries, Public Abbacies, and State Control of Buddhism under the Song Dynasty (960–1279).”

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## *Protracted Makings of Texts and Patriarchs*

THE EVOLVING COMMUNAL memories and retrospective imaginings of Mazu's religious persona can be approached in terms of the several distinct patterns of hagiographic representation discussed in chapters 2 and 3. While in some texts the main modes of hagiographic portrayal—which in the case of Mazu involve a sophisticated teacher of Chan doctrine (and practice), a radical iconoclast, and a thaumaturge—are sometimes presented alongside each other, they are embedded and expressed via several types of distinctive narratives. As was already suggested, each of these materials, which eventually became building blocks for the larger texts composed in the main Chan genres, evolved at particular times, were influenced by distinct sets of circumstances, and reflected the religious beliefs and ideological orientations of the individuals and groups who produced them. To a large extent, that is reflected in the development of the distinctive Chan genres described in chapters 4 and 5. Each of the main Chan genres, as well as the other types of relevant sources, has its own conventions and orientations, which among other things point toward the multifaceted changes that the Chan School underwent during the Tang-Song transition.

In the end, we are dealing with varied conceptions of exemplary religiosity that are presented in different types of textual sources, composed at different times and in several different genres. Some of these materials are possible to trace back to the late eighth century—namely, to Mazu and his monastic communities in Hongzhou and Shimen—but there are also other types of materials that surface much later and have little to do with either Mazu or Tang Chan. Nonetheless, if we can put all that together and understand the protracted and interwoven processes of making texts and reimagining patriarchs, we can

perhaps arrive at a better understanding of the larger historical trajectories and multidimensional transformations that marked the Chan School's growth and change during the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song eras. Needless to say, given the limited sources at our disposal, all findings are somewhat tentative and open to further refinement and reinterpretation. Nonetheless, I think that with careful analysis and proper contextualization of all available data, we are in a position to ascertain the main developmental patterns and arrive at a better understanding of the history and the literature of Chan Buddhism.

In this chapter, I try to tackle these larger issues by focusing on arguably the main and most influential text that is behind most normative views about Mazu's life, teachings, and place in Chan history: *Mazu yulu*, or Mazu's record of sayings. Although this text was compiled quite late—about three centuries after Mazu's passing away, on the basis of earlier sources—it is probably the most widely used source for the construction of Mazu's popular image as a radical leader of a new Chan movement renowned for its iconoclastic ethos, which is further embellished in various romanticized presentations of Chan history and teachings, including those produced by Zen missionaries and other apologists. By examining the complex provenance and compound structure of this text, which contains three main parts, the chapter attempts to bring together the construction and retroactive restructuring of the religious persona of Mazu (and other leading Chan monks), the gradual evolution of distinct forms of literary representation, and the changing conceptions of Chan orthodoxy.

By extension, this chapter tries to show how these interwoven developments shaped the Chan School's communal memory and collective identity and influenced its broad historical trajectory during the Tang-Song transition. In the end, this chapter suggests some possible linkages and places of convergence, but even more important, it highlights notable discrepancies and points of rupture, especially when we compare Tang and Song Chan. On one hand, we have valuable textual artifacts that contain remnants or reflections of the historical personas of Mazu and other monks from the Tang era, which serve as windows into the richly textured world of an influential Chan tradition that was integral to Tang life, at the high point of Buddhist influence on Chinese society and culture. On the other hand, we have the retroactive imaginings and literary representations of the same monks found in later texts, including the *gong'an* collections, records of sayings, and transmission of the lamp chronicles composed during the Song era. By comparing and contrasting the different sets of data—which admittedly are not always easy to separate—we can arrive at a better appreciation and understanding of what was unique about both Tang and Song Chan, as well as account for some of

the striking differences between the two traditions (or perhaps the two dissimilar versions of the same Chan tradition).

### *Compilation of Sijia yulu*

*Mazu yulu*, usually regarded as the main record about Mazu's life and teachings, is a fairly late text. It was first published during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1126) as a part of *Sijia yulu*, a large collection of the records of four important Chan masters. Moreover, the extant edition of this influential compilation—which contains six texts, in six fascicles—is from the late Ming (1368–1644) period. As was already discussed (in chapter 5), in addition to Mazu's record (that comprises the first fascicle), the whole collection also includes the records of Baizhang (two texts, fascicles two and three), Huangbo (two texts, fascicles four and five), and Linji (fascicle six), who according to tradition represent the first three generations of Mazu's direct spiritual descendants.

The date of the compilation of *Sijia yulu* can be established on the basis of Yang Jie's 楊傑 (dates unknown) preface, a portion of which is preserved in the Ming edition of the text. This preface is dated the first day of the eleventh month of the eighth year of the Yuanfeng 元豐 period, which corresponds to November 20, 1085.<sup>1</sup> According to Yang, the collection was edited by Huanglong Huinan 黃龍慧南 (1002–1069), a noted Chan teacher in the Linji lineage.<sup>2</sup> If that is the case, then we can assume that the text was compiled in the late 1060s, almost three centuries after Mazu's passing away. Nonetheless, most of its contents can be traced back to several decades earlier, at the latest, as they overlap with the materials included in *Tiansheng guang deng lu* (compiled in 1029).<sup>3</sup>

The different texts incorporated into *Sijia yulu* have varied provenances and histories of transmission. Mazu's record of sayings does not have a documented history as an independent text prior to its inclusion in this collection. It is probable that it appeared as a whole text for the first time as a part of *Sijia yulu*, even if (as we will see) almost all of its contents can be traced back to earlier sources. Like Mazu's text, Linji's record of sayings, *Linji yulu*, is also of a relatively late date. The text seems to have existed independently before the

1. Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 474. See also Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy*, 118–126.

2. Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 476. For Huanglong's record of sayings, see T 47.629c–640a. He is also featured in a number of other Chan texts.

3. See Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy*, 69–70.

compilation of *Sijia yulu*, but it first appeared only during the Northern Song period, not that long before its inclusion in the collection.<sup>4</sup> The extant edition of Linji's record supposedly goes back to a version of the text produced in 1120 at Gushan (Fujian).<sup>5</sup>

Compared to the records of the sayings of Mazu and Linji, Huangbo's two records—*Chuan xin fa yao* and *Wanling lu*—are much older. The same goes for Baizhang's *Baizhang guang lu*. Although there are no surviving manuscripts from the Tang period, we know that large parts of Huangbo's two records were transcribed by the prominent official Pei Xiu during the late 840s. The two texts are based in Pei's personal notes, taken during two separate periods, when he served as a high government official in the area where Huangbo's monastery was located. During these official postings, Pei—who was already known for his interest in Buddhism and had close connections with other Chan monks—met with Huangbo and studied Buddhism with him.<sup>6</sup> The final versions of both texts seem to have been compiled from Pei Xiu's notes, along with materials based on the transcripts of other disciples, not long after Huangbo's passing away.<sup>7</sup> Although it is possible that some additional materials might have crept into later editions of the text, on the whole Huangbo's two records are clearly products of the ninth century. That assessment is also reinforced by their language, especially the conspicuous deployment of parallel prose (*pianwen* 駢文), as well as by their overall literary form and doctrinal content.

Similarly, there is compelling evidence to suggest that *Baizhang guang lu* was compiled soon after Baizhang's passing away, namely, around the beginning of the ninth century. This immensely interesting and revealing text, which consists of transcripts of Baizhang's talks and conversations with his students, is also representative of Tang-era records in terms of its form and content. In a number of respects, including the fundamental vision of Chan doctrine and practice presented in it, as well as its language and the deployment of scriptural quotations, it is comparable to Huangbo's records and other Tang-era texts, such as Dazhu's *Dun wu ru dao yaomen lun* (discussed in chapter 3). The compilation of Baizhang's record is mentioned in his stele inscription,

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4. For more on the textual formation of *Linji yulu*, see Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy*, 109–126.

5. See Akizuki Ryomin, *Rinzai roku*, 251.

6. For Pei Xiu's association with Huangbo, see Yoshikawa Tadao, "Hai Kyū den: Tōdai no ichi shidaifu to bukyō," 140–150. For the compilation of Huangbo's two records, see Yanagida's comments in Iriya Yoshitaka, *Denshin hōyō, Enryōroku*, 172–176.

7. Iriya, *Denshin hōyō, Enryōroku*, 172–176.

written by Chen Xu 陳誦 (dates unknown) shortly after his passing away.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, a text entitled *Baizhangshan heshang yaojue* 百丈山和尚要決 (Essential Teachings of the Reverent from Baizhang Mountain), probably an early version of this text, is listed in Enchin's 圓珍 (814–891) catalogues of texts he brought to Japan when he returned from a pilgrimage to China in the 840s.<sup>9</sup>

Although the three texts associated with Huangbo and Baizhang are usually referred as “records of sayings,” they were created before the evolution of the mature record of sayings genre. Consequently, they lack the whole array of features that are characteristic of the texts composed in that genre. For instance, there is a conspicuous omission of biographical sketches (or other related information), which are among the common elements of the record of sayings genre. Even more significant is the fact that all three texts do not contain any examples of stories or exchanges composed in the encounter dialogue format, which, as previously mentioned, is behind the conventional view of the Hongzhou School as an iconoclastic tradition that supposedly introduced radical modes of religious instruction and practice. No shouting, beating, or any other kind of eccentricity—just refreshingly direct and thoughtful explorations of the nature of mind and reality, as well as engaging depictions of a rarefied path of practice and realization that involves radical detachment and transcendence of all dualistic constructs.

In contrast, the second of Baizhang's two records included in the collection, the much shorter *Baizhang yulu* 百丈語錄 (Recorded Sayings of Baizhang), is clearly a product of the Song period. Its doctrinal contents and literary format are closer to large parts of Mazu's and Linji's records, and on the whole it is typical of the record of sayings materials from the Song era. Overall, the earlier of these texts—the two records of Huangbo, along with *Baizhang guang lu*—present noticeably more conservative formulations of Chan doctrine and practice than the later three texts included in *Sijia yulu*. At the same time, they are quite thought-provoking and innovative in their own ways and represent excellent examples of high-level intellectual discourse from the late Tang era.

As was noted in chapter 5, given that *Sijia yulu* was compiled and promoted by individuals associated with the Linji School, its main ideological function was to buttress the claim that Linji, the school's putative founder, was the orthodox heir of Mazu's spiritual lineage. By extension, it was meant

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8. QTW 446.2014a-b; *Chixiu baizhang qinggui*, T 48.1156b-57a.

9. T 55.1095a27, T 55.1101a6, and T 55.1106c1. See also Yanagida, “The ‘Recorded Sayings’ Texts of Chinese Ch’an Buddhism,” 191–192.

to reinforce the notion that the Linji School—which assumed a dominant position in the world of Song Chan—was the main inheritor of the authentic transmission of Chan awakening. The collection is quite important, given that it includes materials about four of the best-known monks associated with the Hongzhou School, or more generally with Tang Chan. Nonetheless, its late date of compilation, along with the diverse literary origins of the texts included in it, calls for caution when the collection is used as a historical source for the study of Tang Chan. That is especially the case with the contents of the three texts compiled during the Song era, namely, the records of the sayings of Mazu, Baizhang, and Linji. In the case of Mazu's record of sayings, the three-century gap between Mazu's passing away and the text's compilation is a very long time frame. That makes the authenticity of the text as a whole, or rather its relevance for the study of Mazu and Tang Chan, somewhat suspect. Nevertheless, the situation changes somewhat when the text is seen as a hybrid and multilayered narrative that incorporates a variety of sources.

### *Frames of Reference*

The late compilation of *Mazu yulu* and other similar texts should give us a pause, especially in regard to their relevance and value for the study of Chan history, doctrine, and practice. Nonetheless, it is ill-conceived to hastily or offhandedly dismiss them as works of fiction whose contents are inadmissible as sources of information about Chan doctrine or practice. Obviously, it is naive to accept the whole contents of these texts at face value or to assume that everything included in them represents an accurate record of the sayings or deeds of the prominent Chan teachers from the Tang era. These texts undeniably reflect beliefs and values prevalent at the time of their composition, and indirectly they provide information about the people and the traditions that compiled or edited them. Ideally, historical research on Tang Chan should primarily be based on the earliest strata of textual sources, including epigraphic materials. Fortunately, we have a number of relevant sources that fit into those parameters, including the numerous stele inscriptions and the other Tang-era texts mentioned earlier. Using Five Dynasties and Song-era compilations for the same purpose is trickier, but perhaps we will be remiss to gloss over them without a careful analysis and assessment of the materials they contain.

Notwithstanding the challenges posed by the available sources, we should be apprehensive about falling into the kind of unwarranted historical revisionism that, in a seeming effort to come up with a supposedly new interpretation of Chan history, is predicated on a false notion that all traditional

records about Chan teachers from the Tang era are mere products of Song Chan ideology. We should perhaps be cautious about making rushed judgments or blanket dismissals—as is sometimes done in American academic circles—especially if we do not have a good grasp of all the available sources. In the same vein, perhaps we should not blindly follow those who come up with these sorts of reckless or one-sided interpretations. For instance, it is unjustified to narrowly assert that all texts that purport to deal with Tang Chan merely constitute “a body of religious mythology, a sacred history that served polemical, ritual, and didactic functions in the world of Song Chan.”<sup>10</sup> It might also be somewhat shortsighted to deduce that the contents of these texts are only directly relevant for study of Song Chan and bear little (if any) relevance to the study of Tang Chan. By extension, it is a bit ridiculous to assert that Song Chan—primarily represented by the editors of these texts, along with other Chan masters and literati who were close to them—invented the mythical golden age ushered in by Mazu and his followers, supposedly to “draw attention away from its own creativity.”<sup>11</sup>

A prudent approach to the study of these kinds of texts should involve the adoption of multiple frames of reference. We should try to avoid both forms of reductionism: naive acceptance of their contents as accurate historical records, and their offhand characterization as mere products of Song-era Chan ideology and myth-making. While the compilation of individual records of sayings such as *Mazu yulu* was undeniably influenced by concerns and issues that were unique to the Chan milieu of eleventh-century China, in fact virtually all of the materials that were used by the text’s compiler can be found in earlier sources. The Song editor merely collected all materials about Mazu he could lay his hands on, perhaps excluding some materials that did not fit into his views or agendas. It also seems that he did not make any serious attempts to establish the provenance and historical accuracy of the various sources he was drawing from. Nonetheless, we need to remind ourselves that the editors of these texts participated in a literary culture in which scholarly notions of textual integrity and historical veracity were not as important as they might be in a modern context, and they also had other concerns to contend with.

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10. Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism,” 149–150.

11. Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism,” 149. Foulk asserts that both traditional and scholarly accounts of Tang Chan are erroneous because they solely rely on mythical accounts found in Song sources, from which we can deduce that Tang Chan is some sort of mysterious black box that cannot really be studied because of the lack of relevant and reliable sources.

## *Structure and Contents of Mazu yulu*

The structure and contents of *Mazu yulu* are representative of the record of sayings genre (discussed in chapter 5). As was already pointed out, a text composed in this genre was originally supposed to serve as a comprehensive record of the life and teachings of a noted Chan teacher such as Mazu, Zhaozhou, or Linji. Within that context, the words, gestures, and actions of the monk in question were presented as paradigmatic models of exemplary spirituality, which according to traditional interpretation was unique to the Chan School. Typically these texts include various pieces of biographical information, short sermons and conventional dialogues, and occasional poems. They also tend to incorporate numerous encounter dialogues or stories that illustrate the Chan teachers' seemingly spontaneous interactions with their students, as well as their alleged manifestations of extraordinary behavior and uncanny insight.

Although there are some variations in terms of their literary format and style among the various texts that belong to the record of sayings genre, for the most part those differences are relatively minor. For instance, in *Linji yulu* the biographical material about Linji's life is placed at the end of the text instead at the beginning, where it is usually found.<sup>12</sup> That kind of somewhat unusual placement of the *xinglu* 行錄 (lit. "record of activities") at the end can also be found in *Yunmen guanglu* 雲門廣錄 (Extensive Record of Yunmen), which was compiled at about the same time as *Linji yulu*.<sup>13</sup> (Revised editions of *Linji lu* and *Yunmen lu* were published together in 1267).<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding small variations of this kind, the records of the sayings of Mazu and other Chan teachers from the late Tang period, many of which were compiled during the Northern Song period, constitute a collection of texts that are fairly homogeneous, as far as their literary structure and contents are concerned.

In terms of its internal configuration, *Mazu yulu* consists of three distinct parts: (1) a biographical sketch of Mazu's life, with a focus on his monastic vocation; (2) transcripts of three of his sermons; and (3) thirty-two short exchanges or dialogues between him and his disciples. These three parts neatly follow each other in this particular order, which makes it easy to divide the text into discrete sections, as I did in my early translation of the whole text.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, in the original text there are no sections or explicit

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12. T 47504b28–506c25.

13. T 47575c5–76a19. See also Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 576.

14. Akizuki, *Rinzai roku*, 252. For the compilation of *Yunmen lu*, see Nagai Masashi, "Unmon no goroku no seiritsu ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu," 111–116.

15. Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 59–94.

divisions of any kind. Instead, there is a single continuous narrative, without structural boundaries or explicit markings that set the three sections apart from each other.

Yet, upon closer inspections, it does not take long to discover that there are notable contrasts in literary style and structure and, even more important, striking differences in the contents of the three main sections. As shown later, these disparities point to the distinct origins of each of the three literary formats in which the main sections are composed, as well as of the textual materials that are included in them. Effectively, a text such as *Mazu yulu* is a *mélange* of disparate elements culled from a variety of sources, and its production involved a process of editing and combining these different kinds of materials into a more or less coherent work. In his final product, the editor presented together these disparate materials as a purportedly homogeneous record of Mazu's life and teaching, in a way that obscured the diverse origins of the specific sources used for each of the different parts of the text.

### *Mazu's Biographical Sketch*

The first part of *Mazu yulu* is Mazu's biographical sketch. On the whole, it follows the traditional pattern of Chinese Buddhist hagiography. The brief biography is typical of normative depictions of the life and legacy of a noted Chan teacher such as Mazu, with a focus on the main pattern of his monastic vocation. Following an established literary model, the biography makes mention of Mazu's family background, youthful predisposition toward religious life, and unique character. It also briefly describes the main events in his monastic life, including his ordination and early study of Buddhism, training under Chan teachers, spiritual awakening, teaching of numerous disciples, and gradual rise to fame.

Generally speaking, the biographies of Chan monks such as Mazu were products of specific religious milieus and were informed by the internal dynamics of the Chan School's historical development. At the same time (as noted in chapter 2), they also reflected long-established Chinese traditions of biographical writing, both secular and Buddhist. Like the secular biographies, specific Chan biographies are not to be understood as independent examinations of their subject's personal character, or even of his life.<sup>16</sup> Rather, they are to be read as formulaic depictions of his performance of a specific function or a predetermined role, which is primarily defined by the larger social and religious contexts in which an individual biography is incorporated. In the

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16. See Denis Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography," 28.

case of the secular biographies, typically the primary role is that of an exemplary official, or perhaps a major literary figure. As is to be expected, Chan biographies tend to focus on their subjects' roles as sagacious monks and charismatic teachers who dispense their exceptional insights to monastic and lay disciples. In that sense, both secular and monastic biographies perform important didactic functions.

The basic information about Mazu's life presented in *Mazu yulu* is rather brief, but it covers his whole life—from his birth in Sichuan until his death in Hongzhou. For the most part, it follows the basic conventions of biographical writing, such as narrative sequence and chronological order. The text provides concise data about Mazu's ordination in Sichuan, meeting and studying with his teacher Huairang at Nanyue Mountain in Hunan, and the establishment of thriving monastic communities in Jiangxi, first at Gonggong Mountain and later at Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou. It also contains a prophecy, attributed to Prajñātāra, the putative Indian patriarch and the teacher of Bodhidharma, which is meant to highlight Mazu's pivotal position within Chan history as the main inheritor of the orthodox line of transmission:

初六祖、謂讓和尚云、西天般若多羅讖、汝足下出一馬駒、蹋殺天下人。蓋謂師也。

Formerly, the Sixth Patriarch (Huineng) told Reverend Huairang: "(In the past) Patriarch Prajñātāra of India made a prophecy that from beneath your feet a colt will appear, who will stamp to death the people of this world." That referred to Mazu.<sup>17</sup>

The biography also alludes to Mazu's teaching and training of numerous disciples. It relates that Mazu had an exceptionally successful career as a Chan teacher, during which he had 139 distinguished disciples (more than any other Chan teacher before or after him). It also briefly alludes to his interactions with powerful lay patrons, although markedly less so in comparison to some of the earlier sources. As is customary in the biographies of prominent monks, Mazu's biographical sketch ends with information about his passing away, the posthumous title he received from the Tang court, and the building of his memorial stūpa. That places his monastic life and career in relation to the established sociopolitical order of Tang China. On the whole, the basic life

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17. MY, X 119.810b2-4; the translation is loosely adapted from Cheng-Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 60. The same account also appears in Mazu's biographical entry in CDL; see Text 6, in part II.

pattern presented in Mazu's biographical sketch has dual points of reference and can be read at two levels: as a source of information about the historical reality of Mazu's life as a high-ranking Buddhist monk and a distinguished Chan teacher, and as an idealized depiction of his religious persona, textually construed as an embodiment of a particular religious paradigm.

### *The Sermons*

The second part of the *Mazu yulu* consists of transcripts of three of Mazu's sermons. The first and third sermons are prefaced by the set phrase "(Mazu) instructed the assembly, saying" (*shi zhong yun* 示眾云). Together with the term *shang tang*, literary "to ascend the (Dharma) hall" (in order to deliver a sermon), *shi zhong* is an expression that is commonly used at the beginning of the transcripts of sermons of Chan teachers. In classical Chan texts, the two terms are often used interchangeably. They refer to the standard kind of Chan sermon that is discussed in chapter 3. The second sermon is initiated by a brief question from an anonymous monk, which is also a fairly common feature in this type of text.

In his sermons, Mazu seamlessly weaves in numerous allusions and quotations from the scriptures and other popular texts, usually without identifying his canonical sources. Judging from their contents, the sermons' main function seems to have been to instruct the disciples in some of the essential teachings of Buddhism, as interpreted by Mazu, and provide them with a measure of practical guidance about the pursuit of spiritual cultivation, albeit of a rather rarefied kind. The format of the sermons is rather traditional, along the lines of what was described in chapter 3. Regarding their contents, the three sermons exhibit a peculiar conception of Chan doctrine and a rhetorical style that are characteristic of the Hongzhou School. Nonetheless, essentially they belong to a hallowed tradition of Buddhist discourse that existed in China both within and outside of the Chan School.

Yanagida has argued that the kind of Chan sermons we find in Mazu's record of sayings were markedly different from the conventional sermons that were in vogue at the time,<sup>18</sup> although without providing any compelling evidence. Unfortunately, I cannot fully agree with his basic contention, which seems to be primarily based on an a priori belief in the uniqueness of the Chan School's teaching methods. As we move away from normative views about the exceptionality of the whole Chan experience, we find a bit more commonality

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18. Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 513–514.

than difference. By and large, the three sermons included in Mazu's record, like the comparable sermons of a number of other Chan monks from the Tang era, are presented in a fairly conventional format. Notwithstanding their peculiar tenor and innovative formulation of Buddhist doctrine, the form and the content of the sermons are readily recognizable within the broader religious, philosophical, and institutional contexts of medieval Chinese Buddhism. On a basic level, in his sermons Mazu assumes the traditional role of a Dharma teacher (*fashi* 法師) steeped in contemplative practice, albeit of a somewhat distinct subtype, namely, that of the wise, compassionate, and charismatic Chan teacher.

### *The Dialogues*

The picture changes rather dramatically in the third part of *Mazu yulu*, where we come across a rather different image of Mazu. The thirty-two exchanges or dialogues, which constitute the last part of the text, are usually read as succinct stories that convey the basic patterns of Mazu's interaction with his monastic and lay disciples. In these pithy exchanges, Mazu answers his disciples' questions in unusual ways and uses seemingly unconventional pedagogical techniques, such as shouting and beating, apparently to lead them to spiritual awakening. Although we are dealing with written narratives, they seem to be presented as bare transcripts of oral narratives, which supposedly capture the essence of actual events. The impression (or perhaps the illusion) of an oral narrative is further reinforced by the employment of a vernacular style of dialogue.

In chapter 2, there are several examples of stories of this kind, including the story about Shuilao's awakening at the hands of Mazu. Here is another representative example from *Mazu yulu*, featuring Mazu and his disciple Magu Baoche 麻谷寶徹 (dates unknown).

麻谷寶徹禪師、一日隨祖行次。問、如何是大涅槃。祖云、急。徹云、急箇什麼。祖云、看水。

One day Chan master Baoche, (who was) from Magu, accompanied Mazu for a walk. Baoche asked (Mazu), "What is the great Nirvāṇa like?"

(In response,) Mazu said, "Quickly!"

Baoche asked, "Quickly what?"

Mazu told him, "Look at the water."<sup>19</sup>

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19. MY, X 119.814a11-12; the translation is adapted from Cheng-Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 73.

This and other similar stories are written in ways to suggest that they represent records of the great master's enigmatic wisdom and enlightened activity, situated within the midst of everyday life at a medieval monastery. For the most part, in these short exchanges traditional Buddhist discourse is completely forsaken. There is also hardly any mention of common Buddhist doctrines or conventional practices, including meditation and daily liturgy. Instead of being depicted as an abbot of a public monastery, as well as an exemplar of proper conduct for a large monastic community, Mazu is described as a forceful Chan teacher and an iconoclast par excellence. On the whole, Mazu comes across as a radical religious leader who seems to challenge or transgress established social norms and religious conventions. He can also be perceived as a religious innovator who introduces novel forms of religious expression that are at odds with the prevalent monastic mores.

### *Divergent Images of Mazu*

The contrast between the images of Mazu conveyed by his sermons and the dialogues is quite striking. In the sermons he assumes a somewhat traditional role of a teacher of Buddhist doctrine and practice, albeit of a peculiar variety associated with the Chan School. There he comes across as a somewhat conventional religious figure: a wise monk divulging recondite reflections and inspiring insights about the nature of reality and the essential aspects of a contemplative way of life, who is well-versed in canonical texts and related traditions. He also adopts an established and time-honored mode of religious instruction, namely, an adapted form of the traditional Buddhism sermon. In the dialogues, on the other hand, he comes across as a deliberately unconventional figure. There he assumes the familiar role of an iconoclastic Chan master who engages in spontaneous, illogical, and seemingly eccentric exchanges with his interlocutors, which at times tend to subvert established monastic mores and ideals.

This sort of literary bifurcation of Mazu's religious persona goes back to the main modes of hagiographic representation discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Namely, it takes us back to two of the three main hagiographic images of Mazu, which can also be found in a number of other Chan texts. We are dealing with depictions of Mazu as a classical Chan iconoclast, on one hand, and as a learned teacher of doctrine and contemplative practice on the other hand. What is entirely missing from *Mazu yulu* is the depiction of Mazu as a thaumaturge and a popular religious figure, the main reasons for which are indicated in chapter 3.

Generally speaking, even when the sermons of Mazu and his disciples are not ignored completely, they tend to be read in conjunction with the dialogues.

Furthermore, their contents are interpreted via the colored lenses of traditionalist Zen apologetics, or under the influence of biased sectarian interpretations, instead of being placed in their proper doctrinal and institutional contexts: the elite Buddhist circles of Tang China. That includes the prevalent notion—promoted by Yanagida Seizan and other (often Japanese) scholars—that starting with Mazu, the ostensibly spontaneous patterns of interactions between Chan teachers and their disciples, as depicted in the dialogues, become the focal point of spiritual discipline. That supposedly freed the Chan teachers to directly communicate the arcane truth of enlightenment directly, in ways that often defied reason and logic. As a result, the focus shifted away from the teachings and practices of canonical Buddhism and toward the words and actions of enlightened Chan teachers. That new approach, we are told, stood in stark contrast to the soteriological schemata of all earlier Indian and Chinese Buddhism, at the center of which was the primary notion of a path (S: *mārga*) of practice and realization. In the end, that represented a radical paradigm shift, tantamount to a radical remaking of the basic character of Chinese Buddhism.<sup>20</sup>

Stories composed in the encounter dialogue model obviously tell us something about Chan Buddhism as it was understood and articulated at the time when they were created. But when was that? Should we assume that they reveal anything about the views and practices of Mazu and the other prominent Tang monks who appear in them? Or perhaps it is more prudent to view them as reflections of later remaking or reimagination of the religious personas and the teachings of Chan masters such as Mazu, which might not have much to do with Tang-era Chan? When traditional and modern writers use these kinds of stories as historical records, are they perhaps mistakenly basing their interpretations on apocryphal textual materials that bear no direct relevance to the tradition they are supposed to describe? I have already indicated the answers to these questions, but perhaps it will be helpful to examine in a bit more detail the origins of the divergent images of Mazu by tracing the earliest textual sources where they make their initial appearance.

### *Diverse Origins of the Materials*

As we already saw in chapters 4 and 5, closer examination of classical Chan literature reveals the composite structure of the various texts composed in the main Chan genres. Their compilers and editors made efforts to construct

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20. For additional discussion, along with notes on the relevant secondary sources, see the last section of chapter 2.

coherent narratives meant to illuminate the Chan monks' realization of spiritual awakening, as well as the resourceful communication of their insights, ideas, and experiences. Nonetheless, texts such as Mazu's record of sayings, being hybrid and multidimensional narratives, bear resemblance to colorful quilts. They are like multicolored patchworks, seemingly random collections of miscellaneous and often inconsistent or incompatible parts. The same can be said of most texts dealing with Tang Chan that are composed in the record of sayings and the transmission of the lamp chronicle genres.

As these texts are assemblages of miscellaneous parts, there is substantial correlation and overlap among different texts. As was already noted, the editors and compilers of texts composed in both genres often used the same materials, albeit in somewhat distinctive ways and for slightly different purposes. There was also considerable direct borrowing between texts that belong to the two genres. For instance, much of *Mazu yulu* seem to be based on materials that already appear in *Jingde chuan deng lu*. In a way, it is possible to say that, in terms of their basic contents, the transmission of the lamp chronicles are compilations of numerous abbreviated records of sayings, organized in a specific genealogical format according to the basic notion of an ancestral transmission of the timeless flame of awakening.

Each of the distinct textual units used as the building blocks for the construction of a text such as *Mazu yulu* had its own literary history, which in some instances began centuries earlier. The same can be said of the main literary styles and formats in which they were composed. To delve into this issue a bit deeper, it might be helpful to trace the oldest textual sources that contain the specific materials that comprise each of Mazu's record's three main parts—the biographical sketch, the sermons, and the dialogues. As an exercise in textual archaeology (of sorts), tracking down the earliest appearance of the contents of each of the three parts can help us make better sense of the text as a whole, as well as of the individual textual elements and discrete literary strata that comprise it.

### *Provenance of the Biographical Data*

The basic information presented in Mazu's biographical sketch in *Mazu yulu*—like his biographies in other texts, including *Jingde chuan deng lu* and *Song gao seng zhuan*—is primarily based on the two inscriptions composed by Quan Deyu and Bao Ji, two renowned literati and officials. Both men, who were good friends, became personally acquainted with Mazu's monastic community during official tours of duty in Jiangxi. As was already noted, Quan Deyu's stele inscription was composed in 791, only three years after Mazu's

death,<sup>21</sup> and Bao Ji's memorial inscription soon thereafter. Bao's inscription is no longer extant, but its existence is mentioned in Mazu's biography in *Song gao seng zhuan*, which seem to be largely based on it.<sup>22</sup> Since Quan was on familiar terms with Mazu and his close disciples, he was well acquainted with the basic biographical details about Mazu's life.

There is also the short stone inscription, discovered in 1966 underneath Mazu's memorial pagoda on the grounds of Baofeng monastery in Jiangxi.<sup>23</sup> The editors of later Chan texts possibly also used Mazu's biographical entry in *Baolin zhuan*, compiled in 801. Unfortunately, only small fragments of *Baolin zhuan*'s tenth fascicle, which included Mazu's biography, survive. Notwithstanding the presence of formulaic topoi and hagiographic embellishments of the kinds that are common in the commemorative inscriptions of medieval monks, there is little reason to doubt that the basic outline of Mazu's life, initially presented in the two contemporary inscriptions, is fairly accurate.

### *Provenance of the Sermons*

Unfortunately, there are no extant manuscripts from the Tang period that contain Mazu's sermons. Nonetheless, on the basis of fairly strong circumstantial evidence, it is possible to deduce that the extant sermons are based on early editions of edited transcripts of various talks Mazu gave during his long teaching career. Admittedly, none of the evidence given here is fully conclusive on its own, nor are some of the pertinent sources without problems. Nonetheless, when taken together, the available evidence points to the sermons' Tang origins. Furthermore, to turn the burden of proof around, there is no compelling reason or evidence to suggest that the sermons were compiled after the Tang era.

The main evidence for the Tang origins of the sermons can be summarized as follows. The existence of a record of Mazu's teachings (*yuben*) is mentioned in Dongsi Ruhui's 東寺如會 (744–823) and Yangshan's biographical entries in *Zu tang ji* (although admittedly that takes us to the tenth century). Ruhui is recorded as saying that Mazu's *yuben* included discussion about the well-known maxim "Mind is Buddha," which is also cited in a number of other sources.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Yangshan is cited as stating that in his sermons Mazu

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21. See chapter 4 and Text 1, especially the introduction, for more details.

22. SGS 10, T 50.766c. See the introduction to Text 5, in part II, and Nishiguchi Yoshio, "Baso no denki," 117.

23. See Text 2, part II.

24. ZTJ 15.338.

quoted the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*.<sup>25</sup> Both of these appear in Mazu's extant sermons.<sup>26</sup>

Various allusions or quotations from Mazu's sermons appear in the records of his disciples. Pertinent examples include Huangbo's *Chuan xin fa yao*<sup>27</sup> and one of Wuyue's sermons quoted in *Zong jing lu*.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the first sentence in Mazu's third sermon, which is on the theme of Ordinary Mind, is cited in *Baizhang guang lu*.<sup>29</sup> The sentence in question, as cited by Baizhang, reads: "It has also been said (by Mazu) that the Chan Way needs no (special methods of spiritual) cultivation—all you need to do is put an end to (engendering all sorts of) defilements" (亦云禪道不用修、但莫污染).<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, close textual comparison of the description of Mazu's teachings presented in the writings of Zongmi, composed during the 830s, with the extant version of Mazu's sermons indicates that Zongmi read Mazu's sermons during the early ninth century and drew on them in his depiction of the Hongzhou School's teachings. In his *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu*, Zongmi considers both Mazu's Hongzhou School and the Heze School 荷澤宗 of Shenhui, to which he claimed to belong, as teaching "direct disclosure of the mind's (true) nature." He identifies this approach to religious practice and realization as being directly related to the *tathāgatagarbha* (C: *rulaizang* 如來藏) doctrine, especially as presented in the *Huayan Scripture*. Zongmi describes the teachings of the Hongzhou School in the following manner (the division into sections is mine):

[A] 三直顯心性宗者。說一切諸法、若有若空、皆唯真性。真性無相無為。體非一切、謂非凡非聖、非因非果、非善非惡等。然即體之用、而能造作種種。謂能凡能聖、現色現相等。

25. ZTJ 18.410.

26. See the sermon about mind and Buddha in ZTJ, translated in Text 3, which is also included in Mazu's entry in CDL, translated in Text 6. The *Lankāvatāra Scripture* is also evoked and discussed in the same sermon. In addition, see the first sermon in ZJL, translated in Text 4, which is a different version of the sermon included in MY, ZTJ, and CDL.

27. See T 48.381a; Iriya, *Denshin hōyō*, Enryō, 30. For the analogous passage from Mazu's sermon, see ZJL 14, T 48.492a. This and the next correspondence are pointed out in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 494.

28. ZJL 98, T 48.942c.

29. For the original sentence in Mazu's sermon, see MY, X 119, 812a6. The same sermon can also be found in CDL; see CDL 28, T.51.440a3-4, translated in Text 7, part II.

30. BGL, in GZY 1, X 118.169a6.

Third, there is the (Chan) school (that teaches) direct disclosure of the mind's (true) nature. It explains that all phenomena, whether existent or empty, are nothing but the true nature. The true nature is free of characteristics and is unconditioned. Its essence cannot be described in any way: it is neither profane nor holy, neither cause nor effect, neither good nor evil. However, through its functioning the essence can manifest in numerous ways. Namely, it can manifest as profane or holy, with form and appearance, and so on. . . .

[B] 即今能語言動作、貪嗔慈忍、造善惡、受苦樂等、即汝佛性。即此本來是佛、除此無別佛也。

This very thing that is capable of speech and physical activity, of desire, anger, compassion, and patience, capable of giving rise to good and evil, and experiencing suffering and joy—that is precisely your Buddha-nature. This is the original Buddha, and outside of it there is no other Buddha.

[C] 了此天真自然、故不可起心修道。道即是心、不可將心還修於心。惡亦是心、不可將心還斷於心。不斷不修、任運自在、方名解脫。性如虛空、不增不減。

Realizing the spontaneous nature of this fundamental reality, it is therefore impossible to arouse the mind to cultivate the Way. The Way is mind, and mind cannot be cultivated with mind. Evil is also mind, and mind cannot be obliterated by mind. When there it neither obliterating nor cultivating, and one is simply able to be oneself and act in a natural way—that can be called liberation. The (true) nature is like empty space, neither increasing nor decreasing.

[D] 何假添補。但隨時隨處息業。養神聖胎、增長顯發、自然神妙。此即是為真悟、真修、真證也。

Is there any point in trying to make it complete? Just at all times and all places stop creating any karma. Nourishing the spirit and the sacred embryo, increasing and making it manifest, spontaneously there will be spiritual wonders. This is true enlightenment, true cultivation, and true attainment.<sup>31</sup>

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31. T 48.402c15-27; the translation is loosely based on Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 38–39.

If we compare Zongmi's description of the teachings of Hongzhou School with the extant versions of Mazu's sermons, it becomes apparent that there are considerable similarities between the two. A comprehensive comparative analysis of the relevant texts is beyond the scope of this book, but let me give a few examples. The first three sentences of Zongmi's description (section A) resemble the following statement from the *Record of Mazu*, which points to the all-pervasiveness of reality and the potential immediacy of liberation:

一切法、皆是佛法。諸法即是解脫。解脫者、即是真如。諸法不出於真如。行住坐臥、悉是不思議用、不待時節。經云、在在處處、則為有佛。

"All things instantiate the Buddhist truth" (Buddha-dharma). All things are identical with liberation. As to liberation, it is identical with suchness. All things (never) depart from suchness. (Whatever one might be doing), whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, all of it is inconceivable function, without having to wait for a suitable occasion to arise. The scripture states that whatever place there might be, there is a Buddha there.<sup>32</sup>

Echoing the first sentence of section C from Zongmi's description (about the impossibility of arousing the mind to cultivate the Way), in Mazu's record there is a similar statement, which marks the beginning of a sermon that is initiated with a question regarding the proper "cultivation of the Way," namely, the correct approach to Chan practice:

道不屬脩。若言脩得、脩成還壞。

The Way does not belong to (the causal realm of) cultivation. If one speaks of any attainment through cultivation, whatever is accomplished in that way is still subject to regress.<sup>33</sup>

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32. MY, X 119. 812b4-7. Virtually the same passage also appears in the CDL version of this sermon, translated in Text 7, part II, which is where this translation comes from. For an alternative translation, see Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 66.

33. MY, X 119. 811a13; the translation is loosely based on Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 63.

By the same token, the last three sentences from Zongmi's passage quoted earlier, in section D, appear to be a direct paraphrase of the following two passages in *Mazu yulu*:

自性本來具足。但於善惡事中不滯、喚作脩道人。

The self-nature is originally complete. If one could only avoid getting bogged down amidst all good and evil things, that can be called a person who (truly) cultivates the Way.<sup>34</sup>

本有今有、不假脩道坐禪。不脩不坐、即是如來清淨禪。如今若見此理真正、不造諸業、隨分過生。一衣一衲、坐起相隨。戒行增薰、積於淨業。

It originally exists, and it exists in the present moment, not being something that is dependent on spiritual cultivation or sitting meditation. When there is no more (attachment to) practice and sitting, that is precisely the untainted meditation of the Tathāgata (Buddha). At this moment, if you grasp this principle, as it truly is, and you stop creating all kinds of (unwholesome) karma, then you can pass your life (at ease) in accord with your circumstances. (As a monk, all you need is) a single robe and a single alms bowl; whether sitting or getting up, you are (always) interdependently implicated with it. You should strictly observe the monastic precepts, and (should endeavor to) accumulate wholesome karma.<sup>35</sup>

In a similar vein, in another sermon in *Mazu yulu* there is the statement cited next, which also resembles the contents of section D in Zongmi's text. It is especially interesting that both Zongmi's text and Mazu's sermon evoke the notion of "sacred embryo," originally a Daoist term that is also used in Buddhist texts, in pretty much the same sense.

若了此意、乃可隨時著衣喫飯。長養聖胎、任運過時。更有何事。

34. MY, X 119.811a15-16; the translation is adapted from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 63.

35. MY, X 119. 813a4-7. Exactly the same passage also appears in the CDL version of the same sermon, translated in Text 7, part II, which is where this translation comes from. For an alternative translation, see Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 68.

If you can comprehend this meaning, then you can at any time simply wear your robes and eat your food. As you constantly nourish the sacred embryo, you can allow things to follow their natural course. What else is there to do?<sup>36</sup>

There is much more that can be said about Zongmi's description and assessment of the Hongzhou School and its teachings. For our present purpose, however, it will suffice to note that the quotations presented here strongly suggest that Zongmi's writings provide descriptions of the Hongzhou School's teaching that bear considerable similarities to the contents of Mazu's sermons. It appears that Zongmi had read a copy of Mazu's record, which included versions of the extant sermons. Consequently, on the basis of the evidence provided by Zongmi's writings, we can ascertain that transcripts of Mazu's sermons circulated as far as north China within a few decades after his death, at the latest.

Last, and perhaps most important, in terms of their literary style and structure, terminology, use of canonical quotations, and doctrinal contents, Mazu's sermons closely resemble the records of his disciples' teachings that were compiled during the eighth or ninth century, such as Dazhu's *Dun wu yaomen*, Baizhang's *Guang lu*, and Huangbo's *Chuan xin fa yao*. Namely, the style and the content of Mazu's sermons are essentially those of Tang-era texts. In that sense, they differ considerably from the kinds of Chan materials that were produced during the Song era. Many of the quotations and allusions to passages from canonical texts found in Mazu's sermons can also be found in the records of his disciples. Moreover, not only does Baizhang quote roughly the same scriptures as Mazu, but the manner in which he quotes them is pretty much the same. Like his teacher, Baizhang seamlessly incorporates into his sermons a variety of allusions and quotes from canonical texts, often without mentioning their titles or even without any indication about the separate origin of the quoted passages.<sup>37</sup>

On the basis of all of this evidence—discussions and quotations in the records of Mazu's disciples, correlation with Zongmi's writings, and textual similarity with early records of Mazu's disciples that can be traced to the Tang era—we can cautiously conclude that the extant sermons are probably based

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36. X 119. 811a9-11. Almost the same passage also appears in the version of the same sermon included in Mazu's biographical entry in ZTJ; see Text 3, part II, from where this translation is taken. In addition, see Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 62.

37. See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 545. For a discussion of the use of scriptural quotations, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 144-156.

on early manuscripts that were in circulation within at least a few decades after Mazu's death. Although a skeptic might argue that the evidence is not unconditionally conclusive, I think we also have fairly strong grounds to infer that the extant sermons are based on edited transcripts of various talks Mazu gave during his long teaching career, as they were recorded and transmitted by his disciples. In that sense, they give us a general idea about Mazu's thought and his vision of Chan practice, as well as the primary medium of instruction that was implemented by Mazu and his disciples.

### *Provenance of the Dialogues*

As far as the provenance of the dialogues and the exchanges that appear in the last part of *Mazu yulu* is concerned, there is no evidence to suggest that *any* of the materials composed in the encounter dialogue format existed during the Tang era. The earliest extant text where a few of the dialogues appear, *Zu tang ji*, was compiled in 952, namely, 164 years after Mazu's death. Moreover, Mazu's biographical entry in *Zu tang ji* contains only five of the thirty-two dialogues that appear in *Mazu yulu*. On the whole, the materials presented in *Zu tang ji* are quite different from those that appear in Mazu's record of sayings, especially when compared with the third section that contains the thirty-two dialogues.<sup>38</sup> While *Zu tang ji* contains a number of stories, for the most part they are not composed in the encounter dialogue format. *Zong jing lu*, another tenth-century text that includes a wealth of materials from the Tang era, includes versions of Mazu's sermons—as well as additional sermon excerpts—but it only contains a couple of short dialogues.<sup>39</sup>

A large number of Mazu's dialogues, including some of the best-known ones, appear for the first time in *Jingde chuan deng lu* (compiled in 1004). For the most part, there are only minor differences between these versions and the ones that are included in *Mazu yulu*, so it seems likely that the compiler of *Mazu yulu* used *Jingde chuan deng lu* as one of his main sources. The origins of the materials that constitute the three parts of *Mazu yulu* can be summarized conveniently in a table format, as presented in table 6.1.<sup>40</sup>

If we examine closely the data presented in the table, it is conspicuous that none of the early sources from the Tang period contains a single dialogue. The

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38. See ZTJ 14.304–09, as well as Text 3, in part II.

39. See the last two sections of Text 4, in part II.

40. The subdivision of each section is based on the following criteria: (1) the biographical sketch is divided into seven parts, each of which consists of essential information

Table 6.1. Origins of the materials that constitute the three parts of *Mazu yulu*

Sources / Section → ↓	Biography	Sermons	Dialogues
Baofeng stone inscription (c. 791)	2/7	○	○
Quan Deyu's inscription (791)	7/7	○	○
Zongmi's writings (c. 830)	2/7	3/3	○
Biography in <i>Zu tang ji</i> (952)	5/7	1/3	5/32
<i>Zong jing lu</i> (961)	2/7	3/3	2/32
Biography in <i>Song gao seng zhuan</i> (988)	7/7	○	○
<i>Jingde chuan deng lu</i> (1004)	7/7	2/3	11/32
<i>Mazu yulu</i> (c. 1085)	7/7	3/3	32/32

fact that the encounter dialogues were not in existence during the early ninth century is also collaborated by the contents of *Baolin zhuan*. While (as previously noted) the crucial tenth fascicle that included Mazu's biographical entry is no longer extant, on the basis of the materials presented in the surviving seven fascicles, it is readily apparent that this important text was composed before the emergence of the encounter dialogue format.

After the encounter dialogues make their initial appearance in *Zu tang ji*, namely, during the middle part of the tenth century, their number increases in later texts. The only exception to that trend is *Song gao seng zhuan*, which ignores the dialogues, perhaps in part because Mazu's biographical entry is mostly based on Tang-era sources. As we move to the early eleventh century, Mazu's biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu* contains only eleven dialogues, approximately 34 percent of the total number of dialogues that appear in *Mazu yulu*. If we examine the whole text of *Jingde chuan deng lu*, we can locate another eleven dialogues that appear in the biographical entries of Mazu's disciples. That brings the total number of dialogues to twenty-two, approximately 69 percent of the total number of dialogues featured in *Mazu yulu*.

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about Mazu's life—years of birth and death, birthplace, study with Huairang, teaching at Gonggong Mountain, stay in Hongzhou, association with literati/officials, and training of disciples; (2) the number of sermons given as basis of comparison is three, based on the sermons contained in *Mazu yulu*; (3) the extant dialogues are divided into thirty-two sections, following the division introduced in *Sun-Face Buddha*, a book that contains my translation of *Mazu yulu*. The approximate dates of the compilation of each text are given in parentheses, and the correspondences between the contents of a particular text and the relevant section of *Mazu yulu* are expressed as fractions. The CDL entry includes Mazu's biographical entry in fascicle 6, as well as his sermon in fascicle 28.

It is evident that the inclusion of the iconoclastic dialogues as integral parts of the various records about Mazu's life and teachings started with *Zu tang ji*, and that trend became much more prominent several decades later, starting with the compilation of *Jingde chuan deng lu*. From the early eleventh century onward, virtually all Song collections of Chan materials, such as *Tiansheng guang deng lu* (compiled in 1029) and *Gu zunsu yulu* (compiled in 1178), continued to include the dialogues as the largest part of Mazu's records.<sup>41</sup>

### *Vanishing Paradigm*

In light of the still prevalent view about the central role of the encounter dialogue model in the religious discourse and spiritual practice of the classical Chan tradition, it is important to note that the lack of any evidence about the Tang-era origins of any of the dialogues that appear in *Mazu yulu* is in no way unique to this text. Despite the fact that later Chan texts include many stories that contain iconoclastic dialogues in which Mazu and his disciples of the first several generations—as well as many other monks from the same era—are the main protagonists, not one of them appears in a text that can be traced back to the Tang period. Indeed, I have not been able to find a single piece of evidence to show that during the Tang period there was any awareness of the existence of such a thing as the encounter dialogue model, let alone that it was the Chan School's main medium of religious instruction or practice, as is often assumed.

As we examine the existing textual records from the Tang era, it is striking that none of them conveys a sense of awareness or recognition of the iconoclastic paradigm associated with the encounter dialogues. That is true of the numerous stele inscriptions and other types of epigraphic evidence, the transcribed teachings of Mazu's spiritual descendants (such as Baizhang and Huangbo), Zongmi's writings about Chan and its relationship with canonical Buddhism, the poems and miscellaneous writings of the Tang literati, and the early historical chronicles such as *Baolin zhuan*. The same goes for the Tang texts that were actually written by Chan monks, such as Dazhu's aforementioned treatise on Chan doctrine or Guishan's tract about the place of morality in monastic life, *Guishan jingce* 澗山警策 (Guishan's Admonitions).<sup>42</sup>

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41. For a convenient summary of the inclusion of Mazu's dialogues in these texts, see the table in Okimoto Katsumi, "Zen shisō keiseishi no kenkyū," 351–353.

42. For Guishan's text, see Poceski, "Guishan jingce and the Ethical Foundations of Chan Practice."

It was only from the middle part of the tenth century onward that stories that contain Mazu's iconoclastic dialogues with his disciples come to shape the understanding—or rather the interpretative distortion—of his religious thought and teaching methods. In the modern context, similar kind of tendencies (with particular twists) have often been further accentuated by an uncritical acceptance of biased views and ahistorical perspectives, especially those put forward by sectarian Japanese scholarship, not to mention popular publications on Zen. That does not completely preclude the possibility that some of the dialogues might echo orally transmitted lore, which in some instances might take us back to the Tang period. But such tenuous connections are impossible to unravel. At any rate, it is quite clear that the encounter dialogue model of discourse and practice, as presented in numerous Song texts or interpreted by modern commentators, was not in vogue during the Tang period. Accordingly, it is fairly obvious that the numerous encounter dialogue stories, important as they might be for understanding the Chan milieu that produced them, should not be used as sources for the study of the history, teachings, and practices of Mazu's Hongzhou School or for those of the rest of Tang Chan.

### *Literary Transmutations*

The analysis of the content of *Mazu yulu* presented in the preceding pages offers a fairly straightforward resolution to the problem posed by the contrasting images of Mazu, discussed in more detail in chapters 2 and 3, which are especially evident when we compare the sermons and the dialogues. The existence of the two divergent portrayals of Mazu—a teacher of a peculiar brand of Buddhist doctrine and contemplative practice, and an emblematic Chan iconoclast—can for the most part be explained by the simple fact that each of the two types of literary subgenres in which they were formulated had separate origins and was a product of a distinct Chan milieu. The sermons and the dialogues, as well as the two modes of hagiographic representation with which they are closely associated, originated at different times, imply different understandings of Chan doctrine and practice, and emerged in response to different sets of religious and social predicaments. In separate ways, each of the two distinct types of narratives reflects evolving communal memories and hagiographic imaginings, at the center of which are the changing portrayals of Mazu, his Hongzhou School, and the rest of classical Chan.

The sermons' fairly conservative image of Mazu as an erudite, eloquent, and yet somewhat conventional Buddhist teacher—which is confirmed by the available biographical materials—reflects the historical reality of his position

as an abbot of a large public monastery, located in the southern part of the Tang empire. The approach to Buddhism articulated by this historical figure, as far as we can glean from the available sources, is both innovative and grounded in tradition, at the same time. In contrast, the iconoclastic image, expressed in the numerous dialogues, reflects later hagiographic portrayals of Mazu that were retroactively imputed to his evolving religious persona. In this revised and embellished version, he comes across as a radical leader of a novel movement that challenges the hallowed traditions of medieval Buddhism and supposedly charts a path for the establishment of new Chan orthodoxy.

One of the notable differences between the sermons and the dialogues, which is directly related to their diverse origins, is the level of variation among different editions or versions of the same sermons and dialogues. On the whole, with some exceptions,<sup>43</sup> there are not many significant changes or discrepancies among the different versions of Mazu's sermons, and most versions hardly differ at all. The same is generally true of the sermons of other Chan monks from the Tang period. The situation with the dialogues is quite the opposite. Careful comparison of different editions of Chan texts reveals that often there are large changes and significant discrepancies among variant versions of the same encounter dialogue.<sup>44</sup> In a number of instances, even the main protagonists change, as identical or similar stories feature completely different monks.

It appears that because many of the dialogues were originally created and transmitted as oral narratives that circulated within sizable monastic circles, at the early stage of their historical development, their contents had considerable fluidity and flexibility. The stories were probably treated as open narratives, malleable to all sorts of revisions, modifications, or embellishments. As they were passed on from one person to another, the random introduction of new elements or arbitrary changes was probably not tempered by anything resembling modern notions about narrative integrity or factual accuracy. That helps to account for the proliferation of different versions of the same stories.

It is also possible that many of the encounter dialogue stories might have originated as literary artifacts. In his book about Linji's record, Albert Welter points to the fictional background of the popular encounter dialogues and argues that Chan records such as *Linji yulu* are primarily literary works, rather than verbatim records of the sayings and doings of prominent monks from the Tang era. He also suggests that their contents and literary format were

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43. A notable exception is the first sermon in ZJL; see Text 4, in part II.

44. Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 545.

influenced by other genres that were popular among the Song literati, including the various short stories that belong to the *chuanqi* 傳奇 genre, which are basically fictional tales about marvelous occurrences.<sup>45</sup> While the evidence is inconclusive, on balance I would suggest that probably there was a combination of both: adaptation of oral narratives and creation of new fictional stories.

### *Story about Wuye's Awakening*

To illustrate the significant changes introduced in different versions of specific stories composed in the encounter dialogue format, let us examine two different accounts about the initial meeting between Mazu and his disciple Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 (760–821).<sup>46</sup> Following are translations of two extant versions of this story, divided into sections for easy comparison. Some parts of the story are identical in both versions or differ only in fairly minor details, but in other parts there are significant and telling differences. The first version is from Wuye's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*, and the second version is from *Mazu yulu*. There are also three additional versions of the same story from the tenth century. One version appears in Wuye's biographical entry in *Zu tang ji*.<sup>47</sup> That is the earliest version, although not by much when compared to the *Song gao seng zhuan* version. There is also a shorter version in the same text, in Mazu's biographical entry.<sup>48</sup> Then there is the abbreviated version included in *Zongjing lu*.<sup>49</sup>

The precise origins of the story are impossible to establish with unqualified certainty. Nonetheless, when comparing the two versions presented here, it is helpful to remember that the *Song gao seng zhuan* version is earlier by about a century. It also appears in a nonsectarian text that, on the whole, tends to be a more reliable source of historical information. Here is first the earlier version of the story that appears in Wuye's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*:

[A1] 後聞洪州大寂、禪門之上首、特往瞻禮。業身逾六尺、屹若山立。顧必凝睇、聲作洪鐘。大寂一見異之笑、而言曰、巍巍佛堂、其中無佛。

45. Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy*, 138–153.

46. For more about Wuye, see SGS 11, T 50.772b14–773a29; CDL 8, T 51.257a1-b13; Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 60–61.

47. ZTJ (b) 15.690–91.

48. See Text 3, in part II. This version of the story is closer to the MY version.

49. ZJL 98, T 48.942c25–43a3.

Later, (Wuye) heard about Mazu, (who resided) in Hongzhou and was the leader of the Chan School, so he went to see (Mazu) and pay his respects.<sup>50</sup> Wuye's body was six feet tall, towering like a mountain peak. His gaze was intense, while his voice sounded like a bell.

Mazu smiled as soon as he saw (Wuye's) unusual appearance, and then he said, "What an imposing Buddha hall, but (unfortunately) there is no Buddha inside it."

[B1] 業於是禮跪、而言曰、至如三乘文學、粗窮其旨。嘗聞禪門即心是佛、實未能了。

Thereupon Wuye kneeled down respectfully, and said, "When it comes to the (canonical) texts that contain the teachings of the three vehicles, I roughly understand their essential purport. I have (also) heard about the Chan School's teaching regarding the identity of mind and Buddha, but really that is something that I do not yet understand."

[C1] 大寂曰、只未了底心即是。別物更無。不了時即是迷。若了即是悟。迷即眾生、悟即是佛道。不離眾生、豈別更有佛。亦猶手作拳、拳全手也。

Mazu said, "The very mind that does not understand—that is it. There is no other thing. When (a person) lacks understanding, that is ignorance. If (a person) has understanding, that is awakening. With ignorance, there are sentient beings, while with awakening, there is the Buddha's Way. (But) one needs not leave (the realm) of sentient beings, since where else could there be any Buddha? It is like when you make a fist with your hand—your fist is nothing but the hand!"

[E1] 業言下豁然開悟。涕淚悲泣。向大寂曰、本謂佛道長遠、勤苦曠劫方始得成。今日始知、法身實相、本自具足。一切萬法、從心所生。但有名字、無有實者。

On hearing that, Wuye suddenly experienced an awakening. His eyes filled with tears, and he wept with grief. Then he told Mazu, "I used to think that (perfecting) the Buddha's Way takes a very long time,

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50. In this version of the story, Mazu is referred to as Daji. I have changed that to Mazu for the sake of consistency. The same goes for the MY version of the same story, where I have Mazu instead of "the Patriarch" (which can also be read as an abbreviation of Mazu).

and that one can arrive at a (true) realization only after numerous eons of effort and suffering. Today for the first time I have come to know that the true reality of the *dharmakāya* is fully present within oneself from the very beginning. The myriad phenomena are all created by the mind. There are names only, and they are devoid of any (fundamental) reality.”

[F1] 大寂曰、如是如是。一切法性、不生不滅。一切諸法、本自空寂。經云、諸法從本來、常自寂滅相。又云、畢盡空寂舍。又云、諸法空為座。此即諸佛如來、住此無所住處。若如是知、即住空寂舍、坐空法座。舉足下足、不離道場。言下便了、更無漸次。所謂不動足、而登涅槃山者也。

Mazu said, “That is so, indeed! When it comes to the (true) nature of phenomena, they are neither created nor do they become extinct. Fundamentally all phenomena are empty and quiescent. It is stated in the (*Lotus*) scripture that ‘all phenomena, from the very beginning, always share the character of final extinction (*Nirvāṇa*).’<sup>51</sup> The (scriptures) also talk about ‘the abode of ultimate emptiness and quiescence.’<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, it is stated (in the *Lotus Scripture*) that ‘emptiness is the base of all phenomena.’<sup>53</sup> That is to say, all the Buddhas, Tathāgatas, dwell in this place of non-dwelling. If you have this kind of understanding, then you can dwell in the abode of emptiness and quiescence, and you can sit at the base of emptiness. Whether you are lifting your foot or putting it down, you never leave the sanctuary of awakening. If upon receiving verbal instructions you gain a (genuine) understanding, then there is no (sense of) gradualness. As has been said,<sup>54</sup> without moving your foot, you can ‘ascend the mountain of *Nirvāṇa*.’”<sup>55</sup>

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51. FHJ 1, T 9.8b25-26.

52. Variations on this expression appear in several scriptures; for instance, see WMJ 2, T 14.549c5-6.

53. FHJ 4, T 9.32a22.

54. It is unclear if the whole sentence is meant to be a quotation, as it does not appear in another canonical text, although the expression “ascend the mountain of *Nirvāṇa*” appears in a number of scriptures and other canonical texts. For example, see T 8.867c24-25 and T 20.106c24.

55. SGS 11, T 50.772b26-c14. See also Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 90, n. 52; the present translation is loosely based on that earlier translation, although with all the significant changes, it can be viewed as a new translation.

Next, here is the later version of the same story from *Mazu yulu*, which is considerably shorter and in important respects quite different from the earlier version:

[A2] 汾州無業禪師參祖。祖覩其狀貌瓌偉、語音如鐘。乃曰、巍巍佛堂、其中無佛。

Chan teacher Wuye of Fenzhou went to see Mazu. Mazu noticed that (Wuye's) physical appearance was extraordinary, and that his voice sounded like a bell. (Mazu) then said, "What an imposing Buddha hall, but (unfortunately) there is no Buddha inside it."

[B2] 業禮跪、而問曰、三乘文學、粗窮其旨。常聞禪門即心是佛、實未能了。

Wuye knelt down respectfully (in front of Mazu), and then he said, "(As to) the (canonical) texts that contain the teachings of the three vehicles, I roughly understand their essential purport. I have (also) often heard about the Chan School's teaching regarding the identity of mind and Buddha, but really that is something that I do not yet understand."

[C2] 祖曰、只未了底心即是。更無別物。

Mazu said, "The very mind that does not understand—that is it. There is no other thing."

[D2] 業又問、如何是祖師西來、密傳心印。祖曰、大德正闢在。且去別時來。

Wuye also asked, "What is the mind-seal that Patriarch (Bodhidharma) secretly transmitted when he came from the West?"

Mazu said, "Reverend, you looks somewhat disturbed right now. You can go away, and come back some other time."

[E2] 業纔出、祖召曰、大德。業迴首、祖云、是什麼。業便領悟、禮拜。

Just as Wuye was about to step out (of the hall), Mazu called after him, "Reverend!"

Wuye turned his head, and Mazu asked him, “What is it?”  
 (Thereupon) Wuye experienced an awakening; then he bowed (to Mazu as an expression of gratitude).

[F2] 祖云、這鈍漢。禮拜作麼。

Mazu said, “What a fool! Why are you bowing?”<sup>56</sup>

The basic plot of the story about Wuye’s meeting with Mazu is typical of this type of literary piece. The young Wuye, who has already studied canonical Buddhism for some time, learns about Mazu’s fame as a leading Chan teacher. He then goes to visit Mazu’s monastery, with the hope that he will receive edifying religious instruction from the famous monk. The main characters in the story will also be familiar to readers of Chan literature: Wuye is a sincere seeker in search for enlightenment, and Mazu is a great master who facilitates his talented student’s presumed entry into a rarefied realm of insight and transcendence.

At the outset, until the beginning of section C, both versions of the story are similar. However, from that point onward they present two contrasting versions of the Chan search for wisdom and the experience of spiritual awakening it entails. They also convey different understandings of the essential character and role of the Chan master, the nature of his teachings, and the instructional method he deploys. Let us examine a bit more closely some of the main discrepancies between the two versions, and try to relate the changing storyline to the important shifts in hagiographic representation discussed earlier, as evidenced in this and other similar anecdotes.

### *Shifting Storyline*

The earlier version of the account about Wuye’s awakening, from his biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*, presents a fairly tame or moderate description of Mazu’s teachings, which on the whole accords with the earliest sources discussed. This version of the story lacks most of the dramatic elements we expect to find in classical Chan stories composed in the encounter dialogue format. It simply presents Mazu as an astute and skilled teacher who instructs

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56. MY, X 119.814b2-8. This translation is also loosely based on the earlier translation in Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 74, although once again there are a number of substantial changes.

his new student by offering him fairly commonplace doctrinal explanations about the nature of mind and reality, even if they are organized and expressed in a peculiar manner associated with the Hongzhou School. Like Mazu's sermons, the instructions given to Wuye are filled with technical Buddhist terms and scriptural quotations, evoking a traditional mode of Buddhist discourse that, with some adaptations, was in vogue in Chan circles during the Tang era.

The early version of the story depicts Wuye as becoming awakened upon hearing Mazu's short discourse about the ubiquity of reality, the immanence of Buddhahood, and the essential identity of Buddha and sentient beings. When it comes to its central element, Wuye's awakening (section E<sub>1</sub>), the story does not clarify the epistemological status of Wuye's realization. It is possible to read the story as simply stating that Wuye suddenly understood the essential philosophical or religious point Mazu was trying to convey to him. It is also noteworthy that even after Wuye experiences an awakening or insight of some sort, in the final part of the story (section F<sub>1</sub>) Mazu continues with his sermonizing, offering further instructions about the essential emptiness and quiescence of all phenomena, and the sublime realm of emptiness and detachment that is the true abode of the enlightened ones.

Wuye is portrayed as being equally prone to doctrinal reflection and verbosity. Section E<sub>1</sub> is especially interesting, as it sheds some light on the intellectual content of Wuye's awakening, or rather his insight into Mazu's teaching. Namely, his insight primarily consists of a comprehension of the immanence of the true reality of the *dharma-kāya*—the true or essential body of the Buddha, which constitutes the essence of Buddhahood—within each person, accompanied with an intuition into the fundamental emptiness of all phenomena. These are all fairly standard doctrinal tenets, at least within the elite intellectual and contemplative circles of Chinese Buddhism. The same can be said of the philosophical themes incorporated into Mazu's instructions to Wuye, both before and after Wuye's awakening. Basically, at the doctrinal level there is hardly anything that is strikingly new or unique to the Chan School. In form and content, this version of the dialogue between Mazu and Wuye is quite similar to the conventional dialogues that can be found in other Hongzhou School texts from the Tang period, such as the records of Huangbo and Baizhang. To some degree, it is also akin to some of the dialogues featured in early Chan texts such as the *Platform Scripture* and the records of Shenhui.

In contrast, the later version of the story—from *Mazu yulu*—portrays Wuye as being enlightened by Mazu in a direct and immediate way, without any resort to traditional forms of religious instruction. In this version, there is no trace whatsoever of intellectual deliberation or any discussion of doctrinal

tenets. Technical Buddhist vocabulary is also largely absent, and of course there is no trace of scriptural quotations. The contents of the story are very much in accord with Song-era depictions of the dramatic encounters between Chan masters and their students. They also conform to specific expectations about how a Chan teacher such as Mazu should act in this sort of situation. Accordingly, Mazu eschews any hint of sophisticated intellectualism and profuse verbosity, especially the kind of rational philosophical discourse that is associated with the doctrinal schools. Within this paradigm, the Chan teacher is supposed to discard conventional Buddhist teachings in favor of a more direct method of communication, which supposedly goes directly to the heart of the matter, or so it seems.

The unusual form of religious training presented in this story—if we can postulate such a thing—accords with popular notions about the distinctive teaching methods of classical Chan, which as previously noted included beating, shouting, asking enigmatic questions, remaining silent in response to a question, and the like. The calling of the student's name, purportedly as a means to engender or catalyze religious insight, is yet another unconventional teaching method that, according to traditional explanations, was emblematic of the novel style of inimitable spiritual virtuosity associated with Mazu and his disciples.

Even without considering its late origin, the contents of the second version of the story give rise to doubts about its realism and its dependability as a depiction of an actual event. It is strange, for example, that Wuye, who at the outset (in section B2) describes himself as an outsider to the Chan School, then (in section D2) goes on to request further religious instruction by asking about Bodhidharma's mythic transmission of the mind-seal of enlightenment into China. This formulaic question is an alternative form of the familiar question about the "meaning of (Bodhidharma's) coming from the West,"<sup>57</sup> which appears as a set expression in numerous Chan texts from the Song era. That is a typical example of the kind of insider talk that was popularized in later Chan texts, including the various *gong'an* collections (discussed in chapter 5). Within a Tang context, however, that is not the kind of question that somebody like Wuye might ask, especially when he comes to meet a Chan teacher for the first time.

In addition, it is strange that Wuye, who by his own admission had studied the canonical literature, would be unfamiliar with or perplexed by the doctrine about the identity of mind and Buddha. Although the authors of these kinds

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57. The Bodhidharma question appears in chapter 2, as well as in Text 3 and Text 6 in part II.

of stories tried to appropriate this doctrine as something unique to the Chan School, the theory about the intrinsic identity of the mind of the Buddha and the minds of ordinary people is traceable back to canonical sources and was a prominent part of the doctrinal outlook of Tang Buddhism. It is highly improbable that a bright and well-educated monk such as Wuye, who evidently was versed in a broad range of Buddhist doctrines, would have been unfamiliar with it, or that he would have been puzzled by its doctrinal or soteriological implications.

### *Remaking of Patriarchs*

It is apparent that the later version of the story about Wuye's awakening, as presented in *Mazu yulu*, is not a record of an encounter between two eighth-century monks. Like most similar stories incorporated in (relatively) late Chan texts, it should be read as a literary source that reflects a peculiar transformation of the constellation of ideas and images linked with Mazu and other Tang masters, as formulated during the Song era. These, in turn, were closely related to the far-reaching reconceptualization and reimagining of the vibrant Chan tradition that these prominent monks led or represented during their lifetimes. A central feature of that development was the literary transformation of Mazu and his disciples into the radical iconoclasts of popular Chan literature. To a large degree, this drawn-out process, especially the drastic hagiographic makeover it entailed, reflected the changing beliefs, ideological presuppositions, and modes of self-representation of the Chan School as a whole, as well as the quasi-sectarian propensities and parochial concerns of particular Chan factions.

In the textual sphere, sometimes these kinds of literary changes and conceptual realignments were expressed via the modification or reinterpretation of existing records, as can be seen from the story about Wuye's awakening. More important, however, they were also conveyed via the invention of new types of (mostly) fictional narratives that lent support to specific claims about religious authority and institutional legitimacy. At the center of that was the explosive growth and popularization of short stories composed according to the encounter dialogue model, which centered on the imagined spiritual exploits, paradoxical statements, and assorted eccentricities of the great Chan teachers from the Tang era. That led to a thorough refashioning of the religious personas of Mazu and other noted Chan teachers, in a manner that conformed to a new model of exemplary Chan religiosity that reflected the religious aspirations, ideological suppositions, and organizational concerns of later Chan factions.

Over the course of time and under the influence of a host of factors, the communal remembrance of Mazu's legacy and the construal of his teachings—along with those of Baizhang, Huangbo, and other Chan masters—underwent notable transformations. The learned and wise teachers of Chan doctrine and contemplative practice, with their subtle and recondite, yet direct and compelling vision of religious life, were transformed into the indomitable iconoclasts of the later Chan tradition. In effect, the attention shifted away from the Chan masters' sermons—and the distinctive visions of Chan practice and realization that were articulated in them—toward the encounter dialogue stories that became popular in the world of Song Chan. This kind of radical shift, from sermonizing to storytelling,<sup>58</sup> also involved a significant refocusing of attention: from the cogent doctrinal discourses and recondite instructions about contemplative life we find in the sermons, to the fictionalized depictions of weird exchanges and dramatic performances that characterize the encounter dialogues.

Such a drastic swing in orientation and emphasis had far-reaching ramifications for the subsequent development of Chan/Zen Buddhism in China and the rest of East Asia. As the colorful story-based portrayals of the Tang masters took hold, the refreshingly straightforward and enduringly relevant teachings articulated in their sermons—which addressed a host of key issues in religious life, with practical and transcendental import—were largely pushed to the sidelines. By and large, later generations of Chan followers came to ignore or gloss over the teachings conveyed in the sermons and other relevant sources from the Tang era, although there were exceptions to that trend. When these records were taken a bit more seriously, often they were reinterpreted according to prevailing views or dogmas. That paved the way for the establishment of a very different type of Chan tradition, largely formulated during the Song era, which with some modifications was transmitted to other parts of East Asia.

In the end, careful reading and analysis of the hagiographic transformations of Mazu and other Chan monks from the Tang era takes us back to the malleability and imperfection of collective memories, especial as they evolve within the context of expansive religious communities. They also point to the ways various external and internal factors restructure or transform such memories, often by turning them into romanticized commemorations. In many instances, they can also lead to engendering fanciful flights of imagination, grounded in a limited repertoire of literary portrayals. Moreover, the notable

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58. See Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy*, 75.

shifts in hagiographic representation examined in this volume illustrate the power of mythologizing tendencies and the prevalence of interpretive distortions, via which the lives and ideas of historical persons become the stuff of legend or are repackaged as the contents of “sacred history.” That should not be that surprising, if we consider that the premodern authors of most Chan texts were not necessarily concerned with the creation of reliable historical narratives, in the modern sense.

The manufacture of pious embellishments and ingenuous fabrications, in conjunction with assorted factors on the ground, tends to have lasting effects on the collective memories and the (pseudo-) historical representations of religious groups, as preserved in a variety of sources. The Chan School is not unique in that respect, although one could say that its adherents were peculiarly resourceful when it came to recollecting and retelling their communal history. By closely examining these types of complex historical and literary processes, we put ourselves in a better position to both understand and go beyond the normative narrative of traditionalist apologetics. That includes the kind of homogenizing discourse that highlights the mythos of the Chan School’s uniqueness and singularity, specifically as expressed in the imaginary words and acts of its great patriarchs.

### *Historical Flows and Changing Paradigms*

At a basic level, the various texts examined in this volume can be viewed as literary microcosms that reflect a range of themes, issues, and developments relevant to the study of Chan Buddhism. The texts—which tend to occupy permeable spaces at the intersections of literature, history, and religion—can be approached in a number of ways. They take us to different times and places, most notably to Tang and Song China. They also point in different directions, including the broader developmental trajectories and conceptual realignment that characterized the Chan School’s multifarious existence and its location within the broader religious landscape. Particularly, the contrasting images of Mazu, as presented in the various sources, denote a host of significant changes that marked the historical transformation of Chan. Most important, they highlight the far-reaching differences between Tang and Song Chan. Generally speaking, these changes are tantamount to a significant paradigm shift (although, as we make broad generalizations, we need to keep in mind that the Chan School was hardly monolithic, especially during the Tang era).

The retrospective creation of the iconoclast image of Tang Chan conveyed by the encounter dialogues, which started during the Five Dynasties and accelerated during the Song era, can be seen as part of an ongoing process

of religious evolution. It involved the creation of new creeds, ideals, and symbolic representations that were retroactively imputed to earlier figures such as Mazu. Overall, that is hardly a unique process, as the history of religion—in China and elsewhere—is filled with numerous examples of that sort of thing. The main issues and forces that shaped such developments—including the making of the texts that shed light on them—are undoubtedly relevant to the study of Chan history and literature, especially when it comes to understanding Song Chan.

As was indicated, we still do not completely understand the whole range of milieus, concerns, and forces that drove the creation of new Chan texts or the formulation of the ideas presented in them. The same goes for the various modes of hagiographic representation discussed in this and the previous chapters. As we explore those issues, it might be helpful to remember that during the early Song period there was a reconfiguration of the social, political, and religious landscapes in the aftermath of the establishment of a new and powerful dynasty. Within the context of the Chan School, that set in motion (or accelerated) far-reaching changes in a number of key areas, most notably the codification of specific forms of literary expression, the consolidation of monastic institutions, and the routinization of contemplative practice. Paradoxically, as the Chan School was becoming more institutionally and ideologically conservative—and more deeply embedded into the socioreligious status quo of Song China—it was also becoming more prone to promoting an iconoclastic ethos, at least in the spheres of literary production and ideological posturing, if not actual practice.

At a basic level, much of this activity was directed toward making sharp distinctions that highlighted the supposed uniqueness and superiority of Chan, as conveyed by its famous depiction as “a special transmission outside of the scriptures that does not postulate words and letters” (教外別傳、不立文字). Namely, the Chan School was engaged in establishing an alternative canon that featured new types of texts, differentiated from traditional canonical works by their distinctive form and content. That went together with an effort to establish a new sense of orthodoxy, centered on an alternative source of religious authority: the enlightened Chan master, who was depicted as a member of the timeless Chan lineage that went all the way back to the Buddha. Accordingly, these developments can be viewed within the broader historical context of ongoing efforts to establish a hegemony (of sorts) within Song Buddhism that placed the Chan School at the very center of religious life, as the main representative of Buddhist orthodoxy.

These developments undoubtedly enhanced the power and prestige of Chan institutions in Song China, during a period that also saw the robust

and effective resurgence of Confucianism, largely expressed in a new form of Confucian orthodoxy that was fairly exclusivist. Nonetheless, such solidification of the Chan School's position and influence came at a price. Moreover, the conspicuous implications and downsides of that condition continued to affect the subsequent history of Buddhism, in China and elsewhere. To begin with, while the creation of new modes of hagiographic representations, as formulated in Song sources, can be viewed as a kind of creative process, effectively that led to the misconstrual and obscuration of the highly developed, vibrant, and significant Chan traditions that flourished during the Tang era. After all, Song writers did not invent the notion of the Tang as the golden age of Chan (and more generally the high point of Buddhism in China). Instead, for a number of reasons (not all of them conscious or deliberate), they misread and misinterpreted the basic character of Tang Chan and created a new version of it that accorded with their own beliefs and agendas.

Putting aside the sticky issue of veracity, the new vision of Mazu and the rest of late Tang Chan that was constructed at that time, I would argue, was much less sophisticated and compelling than the actual tradition it replaced. Admittedly, the qualitative comparison of the two versions or visions of Tang Chan is a tricky and contestable undertaking. Nonetheless, at the very least one could assert that the new version of Tang Chan was not, in any meaningful sense, an improvement or enhancement on the original. In fact, it can easily be viewed as a regression in a number of important areas.

The core issue with the Song vision of the Chan tradition's cumulative heritage, especially as it pertains to Mazu and his Hongzhou School, is exemplified by the stated focus on the encounter dialogue stories, as well as by the forced and often fanciful interpretations that are imputed to them. Generally speaking, there is nothing wrong with telling stories, which is an essential part of human life across a wide spectrum of cultures. When done well, religious stories can perform a number of important functions, and their basic message can resonate well beyond the religious groups who transmit them. For instance, stories can illustrate important values or clarify major religious ideals. Indeed, some of the classical Chan stories make very good points, and those are the ones that tend to be cited in popular Chan literature.

Unfortunately, the majority of the exchanges or anecdotes composed in the encounter dialogue format are not very good stories, in any meaningful sense. In fact, a huge number of Chan stories or exchanges, included in texts such as *Jingde chuan deng lu* and *Bi yan lu*, can be viewed as little more than nonessential ramblings, a peculiar type of religious gibberish. Basically, we are confronted with countless examples of mass-produced textual materials

that tend to be highly formulaic, numbingly repetitive, and ostensibly pointless. One of the things that keeps amazing me is how otherwise intelligent or sincere people can take this sort of stuff seriously, although the history of religion is filled with blind spots of that sort.

Even the vaunted Chan iconoclasm, when seen in this light, turns out to be something else. At first glance, we might be tempted to see it in a positive light—by pointing to the potential usefulness of questioning entrenched views and received traditions, for instance. While that might hold true in some instances, in the end it becomes just another cliché. As it turns into a conventional trope that is repeated over and over again, the putative iconoclasm conveyed by the encounter dialogues becomes just another predictable marker of a narrow vision of religious orthodoxy that is fraught with all sorts of problems.

All too often, despite the presence of conspicuous elements that are meant to suggest otherwise, Chan stories of this kind are far removed from the everyday realities of monastic life. They also tend to lack a meaningful message that makes them directly relatable to the actual spiritual practices of real people, notwithstanding the ingenious exegesis that is associated with them. Among other things, many of them also offer an unrealistic promise of quick and easy enlightenment, promoting a peculiar version of instant Chan/Zen that is available for mass consumption. In some cases, the stories or exchanges seem to have been created largely to fill certain gaps in coverage, or to run up the volume of putative records about the Chan School's glorious heritage.

If this explanation—which presumably will be uncomfortable to some within academic and religious circles—holds true to some degree, then the wholesale production of this sort of material is not necessarily a sign of religious genius or compelling evidence of a creative impulse, especially one that represents deep engagement with some sort of authentic spirituality. Instead, much of this profuse textual production can be viewed as a conspicuous lack of intellectual creativity and religious vitality. In the end, some of these mass-produced materials might be best viewed as the literary artifacts of a tradition that has run out of any good and compelling ideas, whose ascendancy, along with other related factors, marked the long-term decline of Chinese Buddhism.

To recap, the variety of materials examined in this volume, being products of different times and conditions, exemplify a range of views and perspectives about the fundamental character of Chan Buddhism, the basic blueprint of its historical development, and the essential teachings and legacies of its major figures. They also convey several different conceptions of spiritual life, as well

as distinctive depictions of Chan doctrine and practice (or lack thereof). In the end, the multiplicity of materials about Tang Chan, including the seven texts translated in part II of this volume, point to the richness and variety of Chan literature. They also highlight some of the main developmental patterns and broad historical trajectories, and point to the Chan School's important place in the long and complicated story of Chinese Buddhism.

PART II

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*Translation and Commentary  
of Mazu's Records*



## *Text 1*

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# *Mazu's Stele Inscription*

### *Introduction*

QUAN DEYU 權德輿 (759–818), the author of the text for Mazu's stele inscription, was a noted official and literatus.<sup>1</sup> He composed the inscription in 791, three years after Mazu's passing away, at the age of thirty-two, during a relatively early phase of his official career. That took place during a stay in Hongzhou, where he established personal connections with some of Mazu's disciples, who asked him to write a literary piece to commemorate their recently departed master. At the time he wrote the text for the inscription, Quan Deyu had just completed the customary three years of mourning for his deceased mother and was about to depart to the capital to assume a post in the central bureaucracy.

Quan Deyu went on to have a very successful official career, reaching the apex of the Tang bureaucracy, as he eventually rose to the rank of a grand counselor. He was also widely respected by his contemporaries as an eminent writer and intellectual. In key respects, in addition to his high political position, Quan Deyu was a prominent representative of the cultural and intellectual mainstream of Tang China. His association with Mazu's monastic community is indicative of the close connection between the literati and Buddhism, which was among the hallmarks of religious life at the time.

Known as a practicing Buddhist, Quan Deyu also wrote inscriptions for other Buddhist monks, including Zhangjing Huaihui 章敬懷暉 (756–815),

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1. For Quan Deyu's official biographies, see JTS 148.4001-05 and XTS 165.5076–80. For an account of Quan Deyu's life and career, see Anthony DeBlasi, "Quan Deyu (759–818) and the Spread of Elite Culture in Tang China." Useful information about his thought, as well as the social and intellectual context that shaped his professional life and ideas, can also be found in Anthony DeBlasi, *Reform in the Balance: The Defense of Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (see esp. chapter 4).

a noted disciple of Mazu who rose to prominence in the social and religious circles of Chang'an, the primary Tang capital, during the first decade of the ninth century.<sup>2</sup> Quan's text is fairly representative of the genre, which was popular both within and outside of Buddhism. In this and other similar texts, we have prime examples of Buddhist adaptation of well-known forms of commemorative writing, which had high currency in Tang China. On the whole, in the text Mazu is treated as a prominent Chan master. There are explicit allusions to peculiar leitmotifs and ideas associated with the Chan tradition, such as the distinguishing notion of a Chan lineage. At the same time, in both form and content, the text essentially exemplifies a pan-Buddhist style of writing, expressed in the kind of convoluted and high-flown language that was popular among the educated elites of Tang China.

The text of Mazu's inscription is included in Quan Deyu's collected works, *Quan zaizhi wenji* 權載之文集 (Collected Writings of Quan Zaizhi). It is also incorporated in two well-known collections of Tang literature: *Quan tang wen* 全唐文 (Complete Tang Prose, compiled in 1814, in 1,000 fascicles) and *Tang wen cui* 唐文粹 (Essential Tang Literature, compiled in 1011, in 100 fascicles).<sup>3</sup> This translation is primarily based on the last version, although I have consulted the other two versions as well. There are slight differences among the different extant editions, most of which are noted in the comments. Nonetheless, the basic narrative about Mazu's life and legacy is pretty much the same.

### *Title*

唐故洪州開元寺石門道一禪師碑銘并序

Stele inscription, with preface, for the late Chan teacher Daoyi, from Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou and Shimen, (who lived during) the Tang (dynasty)

2. For Huaihui, see SGS 10, T 50.767c–68a; CDL 7, T 51.252b-c; ZIJ 14.325–26; and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 66–67. For his stele inscription, *Tang zhangjingsi baiyan dashi beiming bingxu* 唐章敬寺百巘大師碑銘並序, see QTW 501.2260b-c and WYY 866.4568a-b.

3. For the standard editions of the original text, see QTW 501.5106a–7a, *Tang wen cui* 64.1058–59, and *Quan zaizhi wenji* 28.167a–68a. There is also a Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering of the *Tang wen cui* edition in Iriya Yoshitaka, *Baso no goroku*, 212–214, although unfortunately Iriya does not provide a proper Japanese translation.

## Comments

- The title of the stele inscription transliterates as *Tang gu hongzhou kaiyuansi shimen daoyi chanshi beiming bingxu*.
- There is a slight difference—three different characters, to be precise—in the titles of the two editions of the stele inscription included in *Quan tang wen* and *Tang wen cui*. The alternative title is *Hongzhou kaiyuansi shimen daoyi chanshi ta beiming bingxu* 洪州開元寺石門道一禪師塔碑銘并序, or “Stele inscription, with preface, for the pagoda of Chan teacher Daoyi, from Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou and Shimen.”
- Daoyi was the monastic name of Mazu (see later). Early texts refer to him as Mazu (Patriarch Ma), Chan teacher Daoyi, or great master Ma.
- Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou (Nanchang) and Shimen Mountain in Jianchang 建昌, both of them in northern Jiangxi, are the two main sites where Mazu spent the final years of his life. As noted in the inscription, his final resting place was at Shimen, where a memorial pagoda was built for him on the grounds of Letan monastery 泐潭寺 (see later, as well as the comments in Text 2 and Text 3).
- Kaiyuan monastery was part of an official network of state-sponsored monasteries. The monastic network was initially established by emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756) in 739, during the latter part of the Kaiyuan era (713–741).<sup>4</sup>

*Prologue*

鍾陵之西曰海昏。海昏南鄣、有石門山。禪宗大師馬氏塔廟之所在也。門弟子、以德輿嘗游大師之藩、俾文言而揭之。曰、三如來身、以大慈為之本、六波羅密、以般若為之鍵。非上德宿殖者、惡乎至哉。

(The area) west of Zhongling is called Haihun. In a remote area south of Haihun there is Shimen Mountain. That is the location of the (memorial) pagoda and shrine (dedicated to) the great master Ma of the Chan school. His disciples asked me, Deyu, as I (happened to be) traveling through the great master's region, to compose the text for his stele in order to make known (his life and accomplishments).<sup>5</sup> It is said that great compassion is the basis of the three bodies of the Tathāgata,

4. See Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, 53–54.

5. In the fourth sentence of the Chinese text, the QTW edition has *jié* 揭 instead of *jiē* 揭. Here I am following Iriya's edition.

and the perfection of wisdom is key to the six perfections. If it were not for superior virtues cultivated in his former lives, how could he reach (such exalted status)?

### Comments

- Zhongling is an alternative name for Hongzhou. This name was instituted at the beginning of the Baoying 寶應 era (762), during the final part of the reign of Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762).
- The three bodies of the Buddha are: the physical body (C: *huashen* 化身; S: *nirmāṇa-kāya*), the enjoyment (or reward) body (C: *baoshen* 報身; S: *sambhoga-kāya*), and the truth (or Dharma) body (C: *fashen* 法身; S: *dharma-kāya*).
- Tathāgata (lit. the “thus come/gone one”) is an often-used appellation of the Buddha. The two titles are frequently used interchangeably.
- The six perfections (S: *pāramitā*) represent a standard Mahāyāna formulation of the bodhisattva path of practice. They are generosity, patience, morality, vigor, meditation, and wisdom. According to the scriptures that belong to the Perfection of Wisdom corpus, wisdom (S: *prajñā*) is the supreme and most fundamental of all perfections.
- The last sentence highlights a common Buddhist theme: the realization of consummate awakening presupposes extensive practice and the accumulation of various virtues, which need to be cultivated over numerous lifetimes. The final realization of spiritual freedom is simply a consummation of a very long and intricate process.

### *Early Life in Sichuan*

大師法諱道一。代居德陽。生有異表。幼無兒戲。巖如山立、湛如川渟。舌廣長以覆準、足文理而成字。全德法器、自天授之。嘗以為九流六學、不足經慮。局然理世之具、豈資出世之方。惟度門正覺、為上智宅心之域耳。

The religious name of the great master was Daoyi. For generations (his family) had resided in Deyang. At birth he had an exceptional appearance. As a young child he did not amuse himself with playthings. He stood as lofty as a mountain, and was translucent as the clear water of a river. His tongue was (exceptionally) broad and long, so that it could cover his nose, while the markings on his feet were arranged in a manner that formed characters. His complete virtue

and (superior) spiritual abilities were something that was bestowed (on him) from heaven. He considered the (ancient) nine schools of thought and the six (Confucian) classics, but he became concerned about their inadequacy. (He realized that they are just) tools for dealing with circumstances that pertain to the managing of this world: of what use are they as methods that facilitate transcendence of the (mundane) world? The right awakening of the (Buddhist) approach to liberation alone is the realm where the minds of those with supreme wisdom dwell.

### Comments

- A religious (or Dharma) name is given by a preceptor when a person first enters monastic life. Daoyi can be translated as “united with the Way.”
- Deyang is a city in central Sichuan, located northeast of Chengdu, the provincial capital. It has a long history that goes back to the ancient kingdom of Shu 蜀 (221–263 C.E.). During the early Tang era, it became a capital of a county with the same name. Now it is a large industrial city.
- Long tongue and markings on the two feet are among the primary thirty-two marks (also referred to as physical attributes) that are characteristic of the Buddha’s unique physical appearance. They are often referred to as the thirty-two marks of a great man. There is also a related list of eighty minor marks. Other marks that are prominently featured in Buddhist iconography include the Buddha’s beautiful smile, his cranial protrusion, and his long earlobes (the last one being one of the eighty minor marks). The presence of these two marks points to Mazu’s special character and superior spiritual aptitude, which according to basic Buddhist teachings are grounded in blessings and merits accumulated in previous lives.
- The nine schools of thought are the Confucians 儒家, the Daoists 道家, the School of Yin and Yang 陰陽家, the Legalists 法家, the Logicians 名家, the Mohists 墨家, the School of Political Strategy 縱橫家, the Miscellaneous School 雜家, and the School of Agriculture 農家. They represent the dominant intellectual trends of the Spring and Autumn (722–481 B.C.E.) and Warring States (453–221 B.C.E.) periods. Also referred to as the era of a hundred schools of thought, this period is often portrayed as the golden age of Chinese philosophy.
- The “six studies” (*liu xue* 六學) presumably refers to the six Confucian classics, which early on were also referred to as the “six disciplines” (*liu yi* 六藝). They are *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經), *Book of Change* (*Yijing* 易經), *Book of*

*Documents (Shujing 書經), Spring and Autumn Annals (Chunqiu 春秋), Three (Texts about) Rituals (Sanli 三禮), and Book of Music (Yuejing 樂經).*

- The second part of the paragraph is noteworthy for its juxtaposition of Buddhist and Confucian themes and concepts. That points to the ecumenical manner in which Tang literati such as Quan Deyu approached the teachings of the two religions. Here Mazu's early engagement with Confucianism is treated as a conventional trope, meant to communicate the relative superiority of Buddhism, as well as to highlight the earnestness of Mazu's commitment to it. Within this conceptual scheme, Buddhism is portrayed as a spiritual path that ultimately leads to realization of the essence of reality, in contrast to the Confucian concern with mundane affairs. In essence, the two traditions are seen as being complementary, notwithstanding the sense of hierarchy conveyed by the text.

### *Travel East and Study with Huairang*

初落髮於資中、進具於巴西。後聞衡岳有讓禪師者、傳教於曹溪六祖。真心超詣、是謂頓門。跋履造請。一言懸解。始類顏子、如愚以知十。俄比淨名、默然於不二。

(Mazu) initially shaved his head (and become a novice) at Zizhong, and then he went on to receive the full (monastic precepts) at Baxi. Later he heard that at Hengyue there is Chan master Huairang, who transmits the teaching of the sixth patriarch (Huineng) from Caoxi. (Enabling individuals to) directly reach the true mind, it is called the sudden approach. He traveled on foot in order to call on (Huairang). As soon as he heard (Huairang's) words (of religious instruction), his (earlier) views fell apart. Then he was like Yanzi, who although looking as if he was stupid, understood perfectly (what he learned from Confucius). All of a sudden, he could also be compared to Pure Name, who remained silent in response to (the question about the meaning of) nonduality.

### Comments

- Zizhong, more often referred to as Zizhou, and Baxi are both in Sichuan. At Zizhou, Mazu's first teacher was Chuji 處寂 (684–734), also known as Revered Tang, a prominent figure in local Chan circles. See the additional comments about Chuji in Text 5.

- Hengyue (Mountain Heng), also known as Nanyue 南嶽 (Southern Mountain), is one of the five holy mountains of China.<sup>6</sup> The mountain is located in Hunan and has rich Buddhist and Daoist heritages. Over the centuries, Nanyue served as a home base for many monastic communities, a dwelling place of numerous hermits, and a popular place of pilgrimage.
- Huairang 懷讓 (677–744) was the primary teacher of Mazu. He is among the best-known disciples of Huineng 慧能 (638–713), the legendary “sixth patriarch” of Chan in China, although his posthumous fame is primarily based on his connection with Mazu. During his lifetime, he was a relatively obscure monk, and he did not have many disciples. Nanyue was his primary place of residence.
- The sudden approach (or teaching) is one of the hallmarks of the so-called Southern School of Chan, which is primarily associated with the disciples of Huineng.
- Yanzi (521–490 B.C.E.?), also known as Yan Hui 顏回 and Yan Yuan 顏淵, was one of the main disciples of Confucius. He is depicted as the most gifted disciple of Confucius, whose understanding of the master’s teachings was superior to that of the other disciples. He died young, to the great distress of Confucius. Here the text is alluding to a well-known passage in the *Analects of Confucius* (2/9), in which Confucius states that Yan Hui might come across as stupid because the two of them can talk for a whole day without Yan Hui disagreeing with him a single time. However, Yan Hui is far from being stupid; in fact, he embodies the teachings of Confucius.<sup>7</sup>
- Pure Name refers to Vimalakīrti, the hero of the popular scripture that bears his name, which was widely read in Tang China. The text here alludes to one of the best-known passages in the scripture, which comes after a series of erudite explanations about the bodhisattva’s entrance into the sublime principle of nonduality. After being asked by Mañjuśrī, the great bodhisattva who embodies wisdom, to offer his own explanation about the entrance into the sublime principle of nonduality, Vimalakīrti responds by maintaining silence. Vimalakīrti’s silent response is deemed to be superior because it directly points to the ineffable and nonconceptual nature of reality. The passage with

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6. For more on Nanyue, see James Robson, *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue) in Medieval China*.

7. See Confucius and Edward Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selection from Traditional Commentaries*, 11; and Confucius and D. C. Lau, *The Analects (Lun Yü)*, 64.

Vimalakīrti's silence appears at the end of chapter 9, titled "Entrance into the Teaching of Nonduality."<sup>8</sup>

### *Early Teaching*

以法惟無住、化亦隨方。嘗禪誦於撫之西裡山。又南至於虔之龔公山。攫搏者馴、悍戾者仁。瞻其儀相、自用丕變。刺史今河南尹裴公、久於稟奉。多所信嚮、由此定惠、發其明誠。

Since the (Buddhist) teaching is just about nondwelling, (Mazu's) edification was also in accord with actual situations.<sup>9</sup> Early on (Mazu practiced Chan) meditation and recited (the scriptures) at Xili mountain in Fuzhou.<sup>10</sup> Then he moved south and arrived at Gonggong mountain in Qianzhou. (There, due to Mazu's presence and his teaching, the local) robbers were tamed, while those that were violent and recalcitrant (were influenced to) become benevolent. They looked up to his (exemplary) conduct and appearance, and thereby they became greatly transformed on their own accord. The local prefect, Pei (Xu), who is now the administrator of Henan, had been a government official for a long time. Being an ardent believer, by using (the Buddhist practices) of concentration and wisdom, he perfected (the Confucian virtues) of understanding and sincerity.

### Comments

- Fuzhou was in the western part of Linchuan county. At present it is a fairly large city, situated in the eastern part of Jiangxi province, not far from the border with Fujian.
- At the end of the third sentence in the Chinese text, the *Tang wen cui* version, which I am following, has *qián* 虔 rather than *chǔ* 處. The first refers to Qianzhou 虔州, a prefecture in Tang China, in what is now Jiangxi province.

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8. WMJ 2, T 14.551c; Robert Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture*, 77.

9. In the Chinese text, at the beginning of the first sentence, the QTW version has the extra character *yòu* 又 (moreover; also). Here I am following Iriya's edition.

10. The two characters that I have translated as "(Mazu practiced Chan) meditation and recited (the scriptures)" can literally be rendered as "(Mazu) recited Chan," although that does not make much sense.

- Gonggong mountain was in Qianzhou. That prefecture is also known as Nankang 南康, which is how it is referred to in Mazu's biography in *Song gao seng zhuan*. At present, it is a district of Ganzhou, a city in southern Jiangxi. It was the place where Mazu initially attracted a fairly large monastic congregation and started to become renowned as an important Chan teacher.
- Pei Xu 裴諲 (719–793) was a scion of the renowned Pei clan, which produced many prominent officials during the Tang era.<sup>11</sup> He was appointed to serve as a local prefect in Qianzhou, of which Gonggong Mountain was a part, in 766. He occupied the Henan post mentioned in the text at the time when Quan Deyu composed the inscription.
- Concentration and wisdom are essential aspects of the Buddhist path of practice and realization. They are featured prominently in various schematizations of the path; for instance, they are the second and third of the “three trainings” (the first of which is morality).
- “Understanding” (also rendered as enlightenment or intelligence) and “sincerity” (or truthfulness) are important Confucian concepts, as well as virtues that need to be cultivated in the course of one's life. They are mentioned in the “Doctrine of the Mean” (Zhongyong 中庸), an important classic that in the Song dynasty became one of the Four Books, as formulated by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), the great Neo-Confucian systematizer.<sup>12</sup> They are often discussed in the works of noted Neo-Confucian thinkers.
- In the last sentence, we have another example of the aforementioned juxtaposition of Buddhist and Confucian concepts, which we often find in literati writings from this period. According to Quan Deyu, Pei Xu was both a sincere Buddhist and a good Confucian.

### *Move to Hongzhou*

大歷中、尚書路冀公之為連帥也。舟車旁午、請居理所。貞元二年、成紀李公、以侍極司憲、臨長是邦。勤護法之誠、承最後之說。大抵去三以就一。舍權以趨實。示不遷不染之性、無差別次第之門。

11. For more on Pei Xu, see his official biographies in JTS 126.3567–68, XTS 130.4490–91, and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 30, 89–90.

12. See William Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600* (vol. 1), 338 (sec. 21).

During the Dali reign (766–779), Minister Lu (Sigong), the Duke of Ji (in Hebei), took up the post of civil governor (of Jiangxi). Crisscrossing (the area) by boat and carriage, he invited (Mazu) to come to reside at the administrative center (in Hongzhou).<sup>13</sup> During the second year of the Zhenyuan reign (785–805), Li (Jian) of Chengji, (who had the official titles of) policy advisor and vice censor, arrived to take over the leadership of the local administrative area. Always sincere in his protection of Buddhism, he became a recipient of (Mazu's) final teaching. (The master taught Li that,) generally speaking, one should relinquish the three (vehicles) in order to advance toward the one (vehicle). (Furthermore,) one should renounce the provisional (teaching) in order to approach the true (teaching).<sup>14</sup> He revealed the unchanging, immaculate nature, as well as the (essential) teaching that is devoid of discrimination and gradualism.

### Comments

- Lu Sigong 路嗣恭 (711–781) became the civil governor of Jiangxi in early 772. His administrative office was in Hongzhou.
- Lu Sigong's official designation (*lianshuai* 連帥), which I have translated as “civil governor,” can also be rendered as “surveillance commissioner” (usually referred to as *guanchashi* 觀察使). In Tang times, the two designations were often used interchangeably.
- In the third sentence of the Chinese text, the *Tang wen cui* edition of the text has the “first year” of the Zhenyuan reign, but the other two editions have the “second year” instead.<sup>15</sup>
- Li Jian 李兼 (dates unknown) became the civil governor of Jiangxi in 785. He became Mazu's patron—and presumably his lay disciple—during his early tenure as the governor of Jiangxi. Even after the death of Mazu, he continued to support Mazu's monastic congregation.
- Chengji, at present located in the eastern part of Gansu province, was the ancestral home of the Li family.
- The “three vehicles” are those of hearers, solitary Buddhas, and bodhisattvas. According to the *Lotus Scripture*, they are all provisional and are superseded

13. For an explanation of *lisuo*, here translated as “administrative center,” see Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism*, 17, 139 n. 74.

14. In the second sentence from the end, the *Tang wen cui* version of the original Chinese has *qù* 趣 instead of *qū* 趨.

15. See also Iriya's edition of the text.

by the “one vehicle” of perfect Buddhahood, which is the ultimate goal and universal destination of all beings.

- The well-known dichotomy between the provisional and the true, which often appears in medieval Buddhist texts, can be applied in reference to specific teachings, as well as in regard to discrete realms of reality.

### *Sermon Excerpt*

常曰、佛不遠人、即心而証。法無所著、觸境皆如。豈在多歧、以泥學者。故夸父喫語、求之愈疏。而金剛醍醐、正在方寸。於是解其結、發其覆。如利刃之破羈索、甘露之洒稠林。隨其義味、快得善利者、可勝道哉。

(Mazu) often said (to his disciples), “The Buddha is not far away from (each) person, and he is to be realized within the mind.<sup>16</sup> The truth (Dharma) is without any attachment, and all external objects are suchness.<sup>17</sup> How could there be numerous forks in the road (to awakening) for students to get bogged down?” Therefore, Kua Fu and Chi Gou tried to find it, but only got more and more distant from it. Accordingly, the diamond and ghee are precisely (to be found) within the human heart (mind). Consequently, he untied (the disciples’) knots and removed their (mental) obscurations. It was like a sharp edge of blade that cuts through a snare made with ropes, or like sweet dew that is sprinkled in a dense grove. According with the meaning (of Mazu’s teaching), they quickly obtained good benefits, being able to excel at the Way!

### Comments

- This is the earliest extant record of Mazu’s teachings. It is unclear where the quote ends; it could perhaps be extended to also cover the next two sentences. In terms of its contents, it fits well with the views and ideas that are presented in the several transcribed sermons that are presented later on, in the other translated texts.

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16. In the first sentence of the Chinese text, the first character in the *Tang wen cui* edition is *cháng* 嘗 (try; experience), instead of *cháng* 常 (always; constantly). Here I am following the QTW edition.

17. In the second sentence of the Chinese text, we find another textual discrepancy between the QTW and *Tang wen cui* versions: the second has *shè* 攝 (contain; absorb) instead of *zhuó* 著 (attachment).

- Kua Fu (Boastful Father) and Chi Gou (Enduring Abuse) are two mythical heroes of ancient Chinese lore. Kua Fu appears in *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas), an early classic that maps the mythological geography of ancient China and the surrounding areas.<sup>18</sup>
- Chi Gou, the more obscure of the two, is a strong man featured in the “Heaven and Earth” (Tian di 天地) chapter of *Zhuangzi* 莊子. According to a short story told in *Zhuangzi*, the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝), the mythical ancestor of the Chinese people, sent Chi Gou, along with three other individuals, to look for a mysterious pearl that he lost while returning from a sojourn to the mythical Kunlun mountain. However, Chi Gou and the two others were unable to find it. It was only Xiang Wang 象罔, who in that context represents the lack of purpose or fixed structure, who was able to retrieve and bring back the mysterious pearl.
- Diamond and ghee, two auspicious symbols, are often mentioned in Buddhist canonical texts. The diamond is a symbol of hardness and indestructibility. The taste of ghee—the most refined product made out of milk—is used as a metaphor for the most advanced and sublime teaching of the Buddha. There are especially numerous mentions of ghee in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, as well as in various Tiantai writings.
- Sweet dew (or ambrosia) is a drink that, according to Indian mythology, confers immortality to the gods. By extension, in Buddhist texts it is used as a metaphor for the deathless realm of Nirvāṇa.
- The dense grove can be interpreted as pointing to the dense thickets of passions and wrong views, which characterize the everyday existence and normal mental activity of common people.

### *Passing Away*

化緣既周、趺坐報盡。時貞元四年二月庚辰。春秋八十、夏臘六十。

When it was time for him to die, (Mazu) set cross-legged and passed away. That was the fourth year of the Zhenyuan reign (788), on the first day (*gengchen*) of the second month (March 17). He was eighty years old, and he had been a monk for sixty years.

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18. For Kuafu, see Anne Birrell, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, 123; Anne Birrell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, 133–134, 215–216; and Lihui Yang and Deming An, *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, 155–158.

## Comments

- The literal meaning of the first clause, which I have translated as “When it was time for him to die,” is something like “When the salvific causes for his coming into this world were completed.”
- In the second sentence of the Chinese text, the *Tang wen cui* version has “the second year” instead.
- According to Chinese tradition, at birth the age of a person is reckoned to be one year. Accordingly, in contemporary terms, at the time of his passing away Mazu was seventy-nine years old. Regarding the time of his death, the *Quan tang wen* edition of the inscription has the “fourth month of the second year,” which is probably a misprint.
- Monastic seniority is calculated from the time when a person undergoes formal ordination and receives the full monastic precepts. In this instance, the text implies that Mazu was ordained at the age of twenty, which according to the Vinaya regulations is the earliest age when a person can become fully ordained.

### *Premonition about Impending Death*

前此以石門清曠之境、為宴默終焉之地。忽謂入室弟子曰、吾至二月當還、爾其識之。及是委化、如合符節。

Before that, (Mazu) specified a clear and open area at Shimen as his final resting place. All of a sudden, he told his close disciples, “When the second month arrives, I will return (to be buried) here; you should remember that.” When the time for his passing away had arrived, it was like putting together (the two halves of) a tally.

## Comments

- Premonition about one's impending death is a common trope that appears often in the biographies of Buddhist monks. Knowing the time and place of one's own death is regarded as a sign of high spiritual attainment.
- “Close disciples,” literally “disciples who entered the (teacher's) room (to receive personal instruction),” is a phrase that appears in both Confucian and Buddhist texts. Its origins can be traced back to a passage in *The Analects of Confucius*, or *Lunyu* 論語 (section 11/15): “You have ascended to the hall, but have not yet entered the (inner) chamber.”<sup>19</sup>

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19. See Confucius and D. C. Lau, *The Analects*, 108.

- The last two characters in the Chinese text refer to a tally or a seal that is divided into two matching parts. In traditional China, these were used to verify identity or certify official authorization. The basic idea is that it all fit perfectly.

### *Burial Procession*

當夾鍾發生之候、葉拘尸薪火之期。緇素幼艾、失聲望路。渡澗流而法雨滂灑。及山門而天香紛靄。天人交際、昧者不知。

During the spring, at the time when (Mazu's death) took place, (it was like) on the occasion when the torch (was passed on) at Kuśinagara. Monks and laypeople, young and old, lost their voices (from crying too much) and approached the road (on which the funeral procession was passing). When (the procession) was crossing a dried-up stream, there was a torrential splash of Dharma rain. When they reached the main gate of the monastery, there were scattered mists of heavenly fragrances. (On that occasion, when there was such) communion between the celestial and the human (realms), the ignorant were unaware of it.<sup>20</sup>

### Comments

- The term *jiazhong* 夾鍾 is used in music notation, but in certain correlative schemes it is associated with the first three months of the year, which correspond to the season of spring.
- Kuśinagara is the place in northern India where the historical Buddha passed away and was cremated. Subsequently, it became an important place of Buddhist pilgrimage.
- Dharma rain is a popular metaphor for the Buddha's teaching. It appears many times in various scriptures, including the *Huayan Scripture* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經) and various texts that belong to the perfection of wisdom corpus. Just as rain falls evenly on all plants and helps them grow, the truth of the Buddha's teaching equally reaches all people and provides them with spiritual nourishment.
- Heavenly fragrance—or celestial incense—conveys a sense of purity and goodness. There are copious references to it in a wide range of canonical

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20. In the last sentence of the Chinese text, the *Tang wen cui* edition has *gǎn* 感 (feel; touch; be grateful) instead of *ji* 際 (boundary; among; interval). Iriya's edition has a different version of the whole four-character clause. I am not sure of its provenance.

texts. In this passage the propitious appearances of Dharma rain and heavenly fragrance are presented as supernatural occurrences that underscore the sacredness and auspiciousness of the occasion. By extension, these auspicious signs draw attention to Mazu's saintliness and his high spiritual attainment.

- The four-character phrase at the very end of the passage, here translated as “the ignorant were unaware about it,” initially appears in the “Great and Venerable Teacher” chapter (Dao zong shi 大宗師) of the *Zhuangzi*.<sup>21</sup> There the expression is used in reference to a person who does not know why and how his boat and fishnet were stolen in the middle of the night by a strong man, even though he has hidden them beforehand. The same expression can also be found in a number of Buddhist texts, including *Hong ming ji* 弘明集 and *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄.

### *Disciples*

沙門惠海、智藏、鎬英、志賢、智通、道悟、懷暉、惟寬、智廣、崇泰、惠雲等、體服其勞、心通其教。以為吾師真心湛然、與虛空俱。惟是體魄、化為舍利。則西方之故事傳焉、不可已也。

The monks (Dazhu ) Huihai, (Xitang ) Zhizang, Gaoying, (Ganquan) Zhixian, Zhitong, (Tianhuang) Daowu, (Zhangjing) Huaihui, (Xingshan) Weikuan, Zhiguang, Chongtai, Huiyun, and others, all toiled in (Mazu's) service and their minds penetrated his teaching. They considered our master's true mind to be calm—just like empty space. Only his physical body was transformed into relics. Therefore, the story from the West (India) that has been transmitted here (China) would not be allowed to come to an end.

### Comments

- This is the earliest extant list of Mazu's disciples. It includes some of his best-known disciples, such as Dazhu, Xitang, Huaihui, and Weikuan. The most notable omission from the list is Baizhang. Other prominent disciples not mentioned in it include Damei and Nanquan. More information for some of these monks will be provided later, in the comments on the translated sections in which they are major protagonists.

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21. Translated in Zhuangzi and Burton Watson, *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*, 76–77.

- Five of the monks listed here are virtual unknowns. Among them, Gaoying, Zhitong, and Chongtai have their names listed at the beginning of fascicle 6 in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, just before Mazu's biographical entry.<sup>22</sup> Gaoying and Chongtai, along with Xitang, are also mentioned at the end of Mazu's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan* (see Text 5). There is not even that much information regarding the other two, Zhiguang and Huiyun.<sup>23</sup>
- In the second sentence of the Chinese text, the *Tang wen cui* edition has "true nature" (*zhenxing* 真性) instead of "true mind" (*zhenxin* 真心). This is a minor discrepancy, however, since the basic meaning remains pretty much the same.
- The veneration of relics, including those of prominent and saintly monks such as Mazu, is a widespread practice in Chinese Buddhism. It is also prevalent in other Buddhist traditions, as well as in other religions, including Christianity.

### *Funerary Rites*

乃率吁其徒、從荼毗之法。珠圓玉潔、煜耀盈升。建茲嚴事、眾所瞻仰。至七年而功用成。竭誠信故、緩也。

Thereupon, led by the disciples, they carried out the customary procedure of cremating (the body).<sup>24</sup> (Evoking) the pearl's roundness and the jade's purity, the bright and dazzling (flames) filled (the air), as they rose upwards. The setting up of this solemn affair was something that was looked at with reverence by the whole congregation. The work (of building the memorial pagoda) was completed in the seventh year (of the Zhenyuan reign, namely, 791). Because of (the disciples') sincere faith, the process (of building the pagoda) was (a bit) slow.

### Comments

- Cremation is a customary Buddhist manner of conducting a funeral and disposing of a dead body. It was introduced into China with the arrival

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22. CDL 6, T 51.245c.

23. There are, however, scattered references to monks with the name Zhiguang; for instance, see SGS 11, T 50.777c (which might be a reference to the same monk); SGS 27, T 50.882a-b; and *Shen seng zhuan* 9, T 50.1008c.

24. In the first sentence of the Chinese text, the *Tang wen cui* version has yù 籲 instead of yù 吁, but the meaning remains the same.

of Buddhism. Before that, the bodies of the dead were buried in the ground, often in elaborate tombs that also contained a variety of burial objects.

- Presumably Quan Deyu was commissioned to write the stele inscription around the time when the construction of Mazu's memorial pagoda was completed.

### *Postscript*

德輿往、因稽首、粗獲擊蒙。雖飛鳥在空、莫知近遠、而法雲覆物、已被清涼。今茲銘表之事、敢拒眾多之請。銘曰、

When I, Deyu, went there, as I bowed down (to pay my respects), my ignorance was dispelled briefly. Even though a bird flies in the sky, there is no awareness of proximity and distance; when the Dharma cloud covers all creatures, they are already purified and refreshed by it. As for the present matter of displaying this inscription, I ventured (to write it), being unable to refuse the numerous requests from the congregation. The inscription says:

### Comments

- Here Quan Deyu presents himself as a believer, although the first sentence comes across as somewhat formulaic and is not necessarily indicative of a profound personal piety, or a sense of deep commitment to Mazu's teachings.
- "Dharma cloud" is similar in meaning to the aforementioned Dharma rain; it is referring to the fertilizing or nourishing capacity of the Buddhist teachings. It is also the name of the tenth and final of the ten stages (*S: daśabhūmi*) that constitute the bodhisattva path, which culminates with the realization of perfect Buddhahood.

### *Commemorative Inscription*

達摩心法、南為曹溪。頓門巍巍、振拔沈泥。禪師弘之、俾民不迷。九江西部、為一都會。亦既戾止、玄津橫霈。慈哀攝護、為大法礪。五濁六觸、翳然相蒙。真心道場、決之則通。隨器受益、各見其功。真性無方、妙道不竭。顧茲夢幻、亦有生滅。微言密用、煥炳昭晰。過去諸佛、有修多羅。心能悟之、在一剎那。何以真哀、茲罕堵波。

Bodhidharma's mind teaching is (to be found) in the south at Caoxi.  
The sudden approach is lofty, as it extricates us from sinking into the  
mud (of ignorance).

The Chan master propagated it, so that people will not be deluded.<sup>25</sup>

In the western part of Jiujiang a fine assembly was formed.

Having already put an end to perversion, the mystic ferry traverses the  
torrential waters.<sup>26</sup>

Compassion and protection (of others) are perfected for the sake of the  
great teaching.

The five impurities and the six bases of contact are hidden and they  
conceal each other.

When the sanctuary of the true mind is ascertained there is thorough  
understanding.

Benefiting in accord with potential, one could perceive the merits of  
each one.

The true nature is without locus, and the sublime way is not exhausted.

Looking back at this dreamlike illusion, there is still birth and death.

The abstruse words and mysterious functions are brilliant and clear.<sup>27</sup>

All the Buddhas of the past had their own scriptures.

The mind can awaken to this within an instant.

How can we put aside our grief at this stūpa.

## Comments

- Bodhidharma is the famous Indian monk who, according to tradition, brought Chan from India to China. While he was a historical person, in Chan texts the allusions or mentions of him are typically legendary in nature. With the maturation of the Chan movement, the rich lore that developed around Bodhidharma's iconic image and literary persona

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25. In the third sentence, or the fifth verse line in the Chinese text, the QTW edition has *hóng* 宏 (great; vast) instead of *hóng* 弘 (great; to expand; to enlarge). I am following the *Tang wen cui* edition.

26. In the fifth sentence, or the tenth verse line in the Chinese text, the QTW edition has *yuán* 元 (original; first) instead of *xuán* 玄 (dark; profound; arcane). I am following the *Tang wen cui* edition.

27. In the twelfth sentence, or the twenty-fourth verse line in the Chinese text, the QTW edition has *rú* 如 (if; like) instead of *bīng* 炳 (bright; luminous). I am following the *Tang wen cui* edition.

primarily came to function as embodiments of a distinct Chan paradigm. Among its primary functions was the demarcation of the parameters of orthodoxy, as well as the conferral of a sense of legitimacy and authenticity. The normative image of Bodhidharma, which is prominently featured in classical Chan literature, was essentially a hagiographical creation that came to perform a number of important roles—ideological, literary, and institutional—throughout later Chan history. Over the centuries, Bodhidharma remained one of the most popular and emblematic Chan figures, and his exoticized image is often featured in East Asian Buddhist art.

- Modern scholarship has established that the classical lineage of Indian Chan patriarchs, of which Bodhidharma is supposedly the twenty-eighth representative, was a later Chinese creation. It was essentially a product of a mythologizing process aimed at producing a pseudo-historical link between the historical Buddha and the nascent Chan movement in Tang China. Bodhidharma's mention here, as well as in some of the other records translated in this volume, points to the fact that by Mazu's lifetime there was a clear sense of Chan as a distinctive tradition within Buddhism and of Bodhidharma as a major patriarchal figure.
- Caoxi refers to the monastery of Huineng, the famous "sixth patriarch" of Chan. The name is derived from the area in Guangdong where the monastery was located.
- Huineng was the teacher of Mazu's teacher Huairang, so the implication here is that Mazu is the inheritor of the orthodox line of transmission that goes back to Huineng.
- According to Chan lore, the sudden approach was championed by Huineng and his disciples. From the eighth century onward, it became a potent symbol of Chan orthodoxy, in part due to Shenhu's aggressive championing of it as the linchpin of orthodox Chan doctrine. However, in many contexts it functioned primarily as an identifying slogan, often deployed to establish religious legitimacy or assert lineage supremacy, rather than as a specific teaching that guided everyday practice.
- The phrase *mystic ferry* refers to the Buddhist teaching, or the Buddha-dharma, which carries people over the turbulent waters of everyday existence and unto the other shore of salvation.
- The "five impurities" (also rendered as five defilements, or five turbidities) that befall the world and wreak havoc unto humanity are linked with the chaos that marks the final decay of an eon, or *kalpa*. They are the impurities of (decay of) the eon, (wrong) views, afflictions, (miserable) sentient beings, and (short) lifespan.

- In the seventh sentence, or the thirteenth verse line in the Chinese text, the *Tang wen cui* edition has *wuzhuo* 五濁 instead of *wuzi* 五滓, which appears in the *Quan tang wen* edition. The two technical terms, here rendered as the “five impurities,” as used interchangeably in Buddhist texts, although *wuzhuo* is the more common rendering.
- The “six (perceptual) bases of contacts” is yet another technical Buddhist term. It refers to the points of contact that bring together the six sense faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind), the six objects of perception (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and mental concepts), and the corresponding six types of consciousness. By means of these processes, various concepts and perceptions, based on a variety of sensory stimuli and mental objects, are engendered and processed via the basic six consciousnesses.
- In the last line, Quan Deyu refers to Mazu’s memorial pagoda as *sudubo* 窣堵波, a Chinese transliteration of *stūpa*, instead of using *ta* 塔, the common Chinese term, which is also rendered as pagoda.

## Text 2

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# Stone Case Inscription

### Introduction

THIS SHORT TEXT was inscribed on a stone case that served as a repository for Mazu's relics.<sup>1</sup> In Chinese, the text is usually referred to as 馬祖舍利石函銘文 or 馬祖舍利石函題記, namely, "Inscription on the Stone Case for Mazu's Relics." It is believed to have been composed in 791, to coincide with the formal opening of Mazu's memorial pagoda—named Great Adornment (Da zhuangyan 大莊嚴)—in which his relics were deposited. The pagoda was located on the grounds of Baofeng monastery 寶峰寺 at Shimen Mountain, in Jing'an county, Jiangxi, the original site of Mazu's burial. The dating and contents of this inscription tally with those of Quan Deyu's memorial inscription (Text 1), which seem to indicate that it is from roughly the same period. While in scholarly references the inscription is identified as being composed during the Tang era, the actual stone case seem to be from the Yuan era, when Mazu's memorial pagoda was rebuilt.<sup>2</sup> It seems probable that the text of the old inscription was copied or reinscribed into the new case at that time, but I do not think we have irrefutable evidence to confirm such a hypothesis.

The stone case with the inscription was unearthed and recovered in 1966—at the beginning of the extended political turmoil and social anarchy that characterized the Cultural Revolution—beneath the remains of Mazu's memorial pagoda. The stone case is forty-three centimeters high and

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1. For the discovery and the contents of the stone inscription, see Chen Baiquan, "Mazu chanshi shihan tiji yu zhang zongyan tianshi kuanji," and Chen Baiquan, *Jiangxi chutu muzhi xuanbian*, 2–3. The Chinese text of the inscription reproduced here is taken from Chen's book and his earlier article. The same text is also reproduced in Xing Dongfeng, *Mazu yu lu*, 186, and He Mingdong, *Baofeng shan zhi*, 272.

2. He, *Baofeng shan zhi*, 406.

thirty-two centimeters wide.<sup>3</sup> It was originally stored in the Jiangxi Provincial Museum (江西省博物館), Nanchang.<sup>4</sup> However, according to museum officials, the stone case is not there anymore, and there seems to be uncertainty about its current whereabouts.<sup>5</sup> The text of the inscription is also included in *Baofeng shan zhi* 寶峰山志 (Gazetteer of Baofeng Mountain), which contains two related inscriptions, probably from the Yuan era.<sup>6</sup> There are still unresolved issues about the stone case and the inscription, which I have not been able to examine in person, and the whole matter merits additional research.

As part of the monastery renovation, in 1993 Mazu's memorial pagoda was reconstructed at its old location, as one of the central edifices in the monastic complex at Shimen, following the formal opening of the newly reconstructed Buddha Hall during the previous year.<sup>7</sup> The new structure is built from white marble and is 3.8 meters tall.<sup>8</sup> It has inscriptions on all four sides: its name, "Pagoda for the relics of Chan Master Mazu Daoyi Daji" 馬祖道一大寂禪師舍利之塔, is inscribed in large letters at the front; at the back, there are inscriptions of Mazu's two famous adages, "mind is Buddha" and "no mind and no Buddha"; on one side, there is Quan Deyu's inscription; and on the other side, there is a new inscription by Rev. Yicheng 一誠 (1927–), a prominent contemporary monk who was instrumental in initiating the project and securing financial backing from the local government.<sup>9</sup> At the time when the new pagoda was erected, Yicheng was the abbot of the famous Zhenru Chan Monastery 真如禪寺 on Yunju Mountain 雲居山, which is also located in the northern part of Jiangxi. Later he also served as president of the Buddhist Association of China (2002–2010). Additional information about Baofeng monastery, Shimen Mountain, Mazu's burial, and the erection of his memorial pagoda can be found in Text 1 and Text 3.

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3. Chen, *Jiangxi chutu muzhi xuanbain*, 3.

4. He, *Baofeng shan zhi*, 406.

5. Xing, *Mazu yu lu*, 294–295. It is possible that the stone case was returned to the monastery, where it was placed into the newly built memorial pagoda. See Shi Dayuan 釋大願, *Chong zou jiang hu* 重走江湖, 99.

6. He, *Baofeng shan zhi*, 272–273. The two other inscriptions are also reproduced in Xing, *Mazu yu lu*, 185–186. One of them, probably composed during the Yuan era, is on the opposite side of the stone case. The other inscription, which seems to be later, is from a lid for the relic case.

7. Shi Dayuan, *Chong zou jiang hu*, 100.

8. He, *Baofeng shan zhi*, 406.

9. He, *Baofeng shan zhi*, 273; Shi Dayuan, *Chong zou jiang hu*, 98–100.

### *Text of the Stone Case Inscription*

維唐貞元七年、歲次辛未、七月庚申朔、十七日景子(丙子)、故大師道一和上黃金舍利建塔於此地。大師貞元四年二月一日入滅。時洪州刺史李兼、建昌縣令李啟、石門法林寺門人、等記。

It was in the seventh year of the Zhenyuan reign (785–805) of the Tang (dynasty), the year of *xinwei* (791), on the seventeenth day of the seventh (lunar) month (August 25), that a pagoda was erected at this location (to house) the golden relics of the great master, Reverend Daoyi. The great master entered Nirvāṇa in the fourth year of the Zhenyuan reign (788), on the first day of the second month (March 17). On that occasion he was commemorated by Li Jian, the governor of Hongzhou (prefecture), Li Qi, the county magistrate of Jianchang, (his) disciples from Falin monastery in Shimen, and others.

### Comments

- *Xinwei* and *gengshen* are both stem/branch combinations (*gan zhi* 干支). The same applies to *jingzi* 景子, but that should be read as *bingzi* 丙子. The word *jing* is not a celestial stem, but during the Tang era, it was used instead of *bing*, which was a taboo word due to its association with the father of Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618–626), the founder of the dynasty. In traditional China, these kinds of combinations were widely used as parts of a counting system that, among other things, was applied to denote years and dates in the Chinese calendar. Here they are employed alongside numerical designations. In the translation, for the sake of clarity I have omitted the last two stem/branch combinations, which I treat as redundancies.
- Li Jian (dates unknown) was the civil governor of Hongzhou at the time when Mazu passed away. He assumed the post in 785, and soon thereafter he developed a close relationship with Mazu.<sup>10</sup> He is also mentioned in Mazu's stele inscription (see Text 1).
- Jianchang is the county where Falin monastery was located. It corresponds to present-day Jing'an county 靖安縣 in Jiangxi, which administratively is under the prefecture-level city of Yichun. It is located in the vicinity of Nanchang, the provincial capital; the driving distance from Nanchang is about eighty-three kilometers, going in the northwestern direction.

10. JTS 12.348, and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 91.

- Letan, Falin, and Baofeng are all different names of the same monastery. The monastery's name was changed into Baofeng in 850; it is still a functioning monastery with that name.<sup>11</sup>
- Shimen (Stone Gate) is the name of the mountain where the monastery was (and still is) located. It already appeared in Text 1.

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11. For the monastery, see *Jiangxi tongzhi* 50.1082b, 121.2526a; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, 117; and Suzuki Tetsuo, *Sekkō kōzei chihō zenshū shiseki hōroku*, 66–67. For Shimen, see also *Yudi jisheng* 26.1158.

## Text 3

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# *Biographical Entry in Zu tang ji*

### *Introduction*

ZU TANG JI 祖堂集 (Hall of Patriarchs Collection) was compiled in 952, toward the end of the Five Dynasties era, in the kingdom of Southern Tang (937–975), one of the so-called ten kingdoms that rose and fell during this transitional period in Chinese history.<sup>1</sup> That was an important period in the development of Chan, and the text exemplifies some of the trends that marked its growing entrenchment as a central part of the Buddhist mainstream. There is little information about the circumstances that led to its compilation, which is attributed to two obscure Chan monks. In the brief preface to the text, written close to the original date of compilation at Zhaoqing Monastery 招慶寺 in Quanzhou 泉州 (in present-day Fujian province), they are simply referred to as Jing 靜 and Yun 筠. Various attempts to ascertain the identity of the two monks have not yielded definitive results.<sup>2</sup>

It seems probable that the two compilers did not have access to a very comprehensive range of Chan sources, but were instead limited to materials available in the areas of southeastern China that were under the control of the kingdom of Southern Tang. That presumably included earlier collections of Chan hagiographies, such as *Baolin zhuan* and *Xu baolin zhuan*, as well as a number of shorter texts, most of which were eventually lost. In view of that, the text can perhaps be understood as a comprehensive outline of Chan “history,” written from a regional perspective. It is meant to cover the period from

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1. For a convenient outline of the text’s history and contents, see Albert Welter, “Lineage and Context in the *Patriarch’s Hall Collection* and the *Transmission of the Lamp*,” 144–154. See also the discussion in Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 59–113.

2. See Welter, “Lineage and Context in the *Patriarch’s Hall Collection* and the *Transmission of the Lamp*,” 144–145.

the Chan School's initial inception up to the time of its compilation; it also includes the early mythical origins of Chan. It is possible that the original text was shorter than the existing version, with new materials being added to it at later stages of textual development.<sup>3</sup> In addition to its value as a rich repository of materials for the study of Chan history, doctrine, and literature, because of the presence of numerous colloquialisms, the text is also an important source for the study of the vernacular language of tenth-century China.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of its literary format, *Zu tang ji* belongs to the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre. It can be viewed as an earlier precursor to the best-known example of that genre, *Jingde chuan deng lu*, and other similar texts that followed it. It is essentially a collection of hagiographies (or biographical entries), arranged in a genealogical fashion, starting with the seven Buddhas of antiquity (the six mythical Buddha, plus Śākyamuni), the twenty-eight Chan patriarchs in India, and the five Chinese patriarchs after Bodhidharma (for a total of thirty-three patriarchs). These are followed by the hagiographies of subsequent generations of Chan teachers. The total number of biographical entries included in the text is 246 (or 245, according to a different calculation).<sup>5</sup>

Among the peculiar features of *Zu tang ji* is its arrangements of the various Chan lineages, as they were conceived at the time of its compilation and among the local Chan communities. Its compilers decided to prioritize those Chan lineages that traced their ancestry back to Shitou, presumably because they were personally affiliated with one of them—probably the lineage of Xuefeng—at the expense of the spiritual descendants of Mazu. Such partiality is evident in the manner in which they arranged the various biographical entries that comprise the text. Shitou's biographical entry is located at the beginning of fascicle 4, followed by the biographical entries of his spiritual descendants (fascicles 4–13). In contrast, Mazu's biographical entry appears at the beginning of fascicle 14, and the coverage of his disciples that follows (fascicles 14–20), while fairly comprehensive, it is not as extensive as one might hope or wish for. That contrasts sharply with later texts composed in the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre, most notably *Jingde chuan deng lu*. There Mazu's disciples receive extensive coverage, and as a group they occupy a dominant position.

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3. Welter, "Lineage and Context in the *Patriarch's Hall Collection* and the *Transmission of the Lamp*," 145; Christoph Anderl, *Studies in the Language of Zu-tang-ji*, 30–32.

4. For a study of the language of ZTJ, especially its grammatical features, see Anderl, *Studies in the Language of Zu-tang-ji* (2 vols.).

5. Anderl, *Studies in the Language of Zu-tang-ji*, 7.

The text of *Zu tang ji* was lost and forgotten in China. Therefore, it exerted little influence on the subsequent growth of the Chan tradition and the development of its literature. In effect, *Zu tang ji* was eclipsed and superseded by *Jingde chuan deng lu* and other texts that belong to the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre. Fortunately, a copy of the original manuscript was preserved among the 81,258 woodblocks of the Buddhist canon stored at Haein Monastery (Haeinsa 海印寺) in Korea, which were originally carved during the 1236–1251 period.<sup>6</sup> The Haein Monastery version of the text was rediscovered during the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, its history and contents have been studied by scholars who specialize in Chan history and literature, most notably by Yanagida Seizan.<sup>8</sup>

Among the most noteworthy qualities of *Zu tang ji* is its inclusion of a wealth of materials that do not appear in other Chan sources. That is especially evident in Mazu's biographical entry, which contains several significant stories that cannot be found in any other Chan text, along with alternative versions of familiar stories and sermon excerpts. That makes the text a unique and valuable source, especially given that some of its materials depict facets of Mazu's religious persona that are not presented in any other source. The most important examples are discussed in chapter 3, in reference to Mazu's hagiographical representations as a thaumaturge. As is to be expected, Mazu also appears in the biographical entry of his teacher Huairang, as well as in the biographical entries of many of his disciples that are included in *Zu tang ji*. Examples include the entries for Damei,<sup>9</sup> Wuyue,<sup>10</sup> Xitang,<sup>11</sup> Danxia Tianran

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6. For the Korean canon, see Lewis R. Lancaster, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*.

7. For the original woodblock print edition of the text, see the Korean Buddhist canon, often referred to as *Tripitaka Koreana* (*Goryeo Daejanggyeong* 高麗大藏經) or *Palman Daejanggyeong* 八萬大藏經, available in modern print and digital versions. In the print version, ZTJ is text no. 1503, vol. 45. There is also a modern Chinese version of ZTJ with punctuation, albeit not of the best quality, published in 1996, and a better edited version (in two volumes), with some annotation, published in 2007; for Mazu's entries, see ZTJ (a) 14.304–9, and ZTJ (b) 14.610–20.

8. For examples of Yanagida's pioneering research on ZTJ, see Yanagida, "Sodōshū no shiryō kachi" and "Sodōshū no honbun kenkyū (ichi)." For his partial Japanese translations of the text, which include Mazu's biographical entry, see Yanagida, *Zen goroku*, 391–572 (509–520 for Mazu's entry); and *Daijō butten: Chūgoku, Nihon hen* (vol. 13, 272–288 for Mazu's entry). There is also a partial translation into modern Chinese: Feng Zuomin and Song Xiuling, eds., *Chan yulu*; see 705–726 for a translation of Mazu's entry.

9. ZTJ (b) 15.674; Japanese translation in Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 146–149.

10. ZTJ (b) 15.690–91; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 142–145.

11. ZTJ (b) 15.657; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 174–175.

丹霞天然 (739–824),<sup>12</sup> and Wuxie Lingmo 五洩靈默 (747–818).<sup>13</sup> In addition, Mazu appears in the entries of other noted Chan teachers, such as Jingshan (along with his disciple Xitang),<sup>14</sup> Shitou,<sup>15</sup> and Huizhong.<sup>16</sup>

### *Prologue*

江西馬祖、嗣讓禪師、在江西。師諱道一、漢州十方縣人也。姓馬。於羅漢寺出家。自讓開心眼、來化南昌。

Mazu of Jiangxi, a (Dharma) successor of Chan master Huairang, was (active) in Jiangxi. His (monastic) name was Daoyi and he was a native of Hanzhou, (located in) Shifang county. His (lay) surname was Ma. He entered monastic life at Luohan Monastery. His mind opened up under Huairang, and (subsequently) he came to Nanchang to teach (about the Buddhist path to awakening).

### Comments

- Hanzhou was a town located in what is now Sichuan province. It corresponds to present-day Guanghan, which is incorporated into the larger city of Deyang (see the comments in Text 1). The Chinese characters for the name of the county, Shifang, are written wrongly: it should be 什邡 instead of 十方.
- In the last sentence, for the word *mind* the Chinese text literary reads “the eye of the mind,” a reference to the mind and its faculty of wisdom.
- Nanchang, now the capital and largest city of Jiangxi, is where Mazu spent the last couple of decades of his life. The name Nanchang goes back at least to the Han dynasty. While the town was known by different names during the Sui and early Tang periods, in 762 the name was changed back to Nanchang. During Mazu’s time, the prefectural government of Hongzhou was located in Nanchang.

12. ZTJ (b) 4.209-10; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 151–154.

13. ZTJ (b) 15.669-70; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 156–161.

14. ZTJ (b) 3.143; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 177–178.

15. ZTJ (b) 4.200; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 181–182.

16. ZTJ (b) 3.172; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 179.

### *Sermon about Mind and Buddha*

每謂眾曰、汝今各信自心是佛，此心即是佛心。是故達摩大師、從南天竺國來、傳上乘一心之法、令汝開悟。又數引楞伽經文、以印眾生心地、恐汝顛倒不自信。此一心之法、各各有之。故楞伽經云、佛語心為宗、無門為法門。

When preaching to the congregation, Mazu always taught them: “Each of you should right away believe that your own mind is Buddha, that this very mind is identical with the Buddha mind. For that reason, the great master Bodhidharma came from South India (to China), transmitting the One Mind teaching of the supreme vehicle, in order to cause you to experience awakening. He also often quoted the *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture* in order to imprint the minds of living beings, fearing that they are perturbed and lack faith in themselves. The truth of this One Mind is something that each one of you possesses. Therefore, it is stated in the *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture* that according to the Buddha’s teaching the mind is the essential principle, and that the lack of a particular point of entry is (the essence of) the teaching.

### Comments

- This is the earliest extant example of a transcribed version of one of Mazu’s sermons, with the exception of the short sermon excerpt included in Mazu’s stele inscription (see Text 1). With some variations, the same sermon also appears among Mazu’s teachings recorded in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, *Mazu yulu*, and *Zongjing lu*, as well as in later Chan texts such as Dahui Zonggao’s 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) *Zhengfa yan zang* 正法眼藏 (Treasury of the True Dharma Eye).<sup>17</sup>
- Bodhidharma was also mentioned in Mazu’s stele inscription. See the relevant comments at the end of Text 1.
- One Mind is a concept that appears in a number of canonical texts, such as the *Huayan Scripture*—there are no fewer than forty-two references to it in Śikṣānanda’s translation of the scripture—the *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture* (*Lengqie jing* 楞伽經), and the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論). The term evokes a sense of wholeness and unity that supposedly characterizes all things in the universe, the ultimate reality of which is primarily understood in mental or nonmaterial terms.

17. *Zhengfa yan zang* 2, X 118.34a.

The notion of One Mind points to the absolute nature of the mind, which is equated with ultimate reality. It is also envisaged as the essential source of all things or phenomena in the universe. In some canonical texts, especially the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith* and the *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture*, it is equated with the *tathāgatagarbha* (*rulaizang* 如來藏).<sup>18</sup>

- The *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture* is an important canonical text that was often evoked in early Chan circles. There are three extant Chinese translations of the scripture (in four, seven, and ten fascicles), as well as two Tibetan versions and a Sanskrit manuscript. It was believed to be the primary text transmitted by Bodhidharma, which contributed to its use as an emblem of orthodoxy or a symbol of legitimacy within the nascent Chan movement. Besides Bodhidharma, the scripture is also connected with other early Chan figures, especially monks associated with the Northern School. The scripture's pre-eminent status led to frequent evocation of its authority, as is reflected in the title and contents of *Lengqie shi zi ji* 楞伽師資記 (Record of the Teachers and Disciples of the *Laṅkāvatāra*), probably compiled around 708, which purports to chronicle the early transmission of Chan in China. Its author, Jingjue 淨覺 (683–750?), presented Guṇabhadra (394–460), the foreign monk who produced the earliest Chinese translation of the scripture, as a Chan patriarch who preceded Bodhidharma in the orthodox line of transmission, even though Guṇabhadra had no connection whatsoever with the Chan school, which from a historical perspective did not yet exist during his lifetime.<sup>19</sup>
- The alleged quotation from the *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture* does not appear in any of the extant translations of this important canonical text. It is possible that Mazu is misquoting the scripture, but most likely he is summarizing the meaning of certain passages that appear in it, which is why the translation does not have quotation marks.<sup>20</sup>
- A literal translation of the last clause is “no gate is the Dharma gate,” or perhaps “gateless is the gate of truth/teaching.” The original Chinese here involves a play of words. The basic meaning, as suggested by my not very literal translation, is that there is no particular approach or point of entry through which one can access or enter into the essential truth; the same applies to entry into the formless and recondite teaching that points to that truth.

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18. For instance, see *Dasheng qixin lun*, T 32.576a; *Ru lengqie jing* 1, T 16.591a.

19. See *Lengqie shizi ji* 1, T 85.1283c–84c; Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no zenshi I: Ryōga shijiki, Denhōbōki*, 92–95.

20. For suggestions about what those scriptural passages might be, see Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 18–19.

又云、夫求法者，應無所求。心外無別佛、佛外無別心。不取善、不捨惡、淨穢兩邊、俱不依怙。達罪性空、念念不可得、無自性故。三界唯心，森羅萬像、一法之所印。凡所見色、皆是見心。心不自心，因色故有心。

Mazu also said, “Those that seek the truth should not seek anything. There is no other Buddha (to be found) outside of the mind, and there is no other mind (that exists) outside of the Buddha. (You should) not grasp goodness and (should) not reject evil; (you should also) not rely on either of the two extremes of purity and defilement. Realize that the nature of (each) transgression is empty: it cannot be ascertained in each succeeding thought, because it does not have self-nature. ‘The three worlds are nothing but mind,’ while ‘all things in the universe are marked by a single truth.’ Whenever you perceive external forms, they are all perception of the mind. The mind, however, does not exist in and of itself: it is because of external forms that there is mind.

### Comments

- The first sentence is a paraphrase of a sentence that appears in the *Vimalakīrti Scripture* (*Weimojie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經). In the scripture the sentence reads: “If you seek the truth, in regard to all things you should not seek anything.”<sup>21</sup> Similar statements also appear in other canonical sources.<sup>22</sup>
- The view that the true Chan adept should not seeking anything, even the highest truth, is often expressed in the records of Mazu and other monks associated with the Hongzhou school. That is not, however, a uniquely Chan notion, as similar ideas can also be found in canonical literature, albeit presented in a somewhat different form. The basic idea is that all forms of seeking, including those that are subtle or spiritually inflected, presuppose some form of attachment. Consequently, they function as impediments toward the ultimate realization of reality, which is formless and cannot be grasped.
- The three worlds (or realms), which according to traditional Buddhist cosmology comprise the whole sphere of phenomenal reality, are the world of desire, the world of form, and the formless world. This tripartite division

21. WMJ 2, T 14,546a.

22. For instance, see T 14,570c and T 17,637a.

implies a hierarchical structuring of the universe, with the world of desire (in which we live) at the bottom, and the formless world at the top.

- The statement “The three worlds are nothing but mind” appears in a number of canonical texts, including the *Huayan* and *Laṅkāvatāra* scriptures,<sup>23</sup> as well in various Yogācāra treatises such as *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 (Treatise on the Establishment of Consciousness Only) and *She dasheng lun* 攝大乘論 (Compendium of Mahāyāna).<sup>24</sup> It is a representative example of the presence of Yogācāra ideas in the teachings of Mazu. It also appears in the records of other Chan monks from the Tang and later eras, including Linji and Yunmen.<sup>25</sup>
- The statement “all things in the universe are marked by a single truth” is treated as a quotation because almost exactly the same sentence appears in *Fo shuo fa ju jing* 佛說法句經.<sup>26</sup> Modern scholarship has suggested that this is an apocryphal scripture composed in China.<sup>27</sup> *Fa ju jing* 法句經 is also a Chinese translation of the title for the *Dharmapada* (P: *Dhammapada*), the popular collections of sayings in verse form attributed to the Buddha, which should not be confused with the apocryphal Chinese text.<sup>28</sup>

汝可隨時言說、即事即理，都無所礙。菩提道果、亦復如是。於心所生、即名為色。知色空故、生即不生。若體此意、但可隨時著衣吃飯。長養聖胎、任運過時。更有何事。

You can say at any time—(all) phenomena are identical with principle, and they are all without any obstruction. The fruit of the path to awakening (S: *bodhi*) is also like that. Whatever is produced by the mind is called external form. Knowing that external forms are (all) empty (of self-nature), whatever is born is unborn. If you can comprehend this meaning, then you can at any time simply wear your robes and eat your food. As you constantly nourish the sacred

23. HYJ 54, T 10.288c; *Ru lengqie jing* 7, T 16.555b.

24. *Weishi lun* 1, T 31.64b; *She dasheng lun* 1, T 31.101a.

25. *Linji yulu* 1, T 47.500a; *Yunmen guanglu* 1, T 47.546a.

26. *Fo shuo fa ju jing*, T 85.1435a.

27. For instance, see Kimura Kiyotaka 木村清孝, “Gikyō bussetsu hokkukyō saikō” 偽經『仏說法句經』再考.

28. See T 4.559a–66b.

embryo, you can allow things to follow their natural course. What else is there to do?

### Comments

- The identity of principle and phenomena is a major doctrinal theme in Huayan philosophy. It is elaborated in great detail in the voluminous writings of prominent Huayan scholars and patriarchs, such as Fazang 法藏 (643–712) and Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839).
- The concept of “nonobstruction” (*wuai* 無礙), which is often applied to the causal relationship between principle and phenomena, as well as the causal relationship among all phenomena, appears prominently in both the *Huayan Scripture* and the writings of the Huayan School.
- The emptiness of all things is a major doctrinal tenet of the Mahāyāna tradition, especially associated with the Madhyamaka School. What is notable about this and the previous passage is the manner in which Mazu combines a number of doctrinal themes and concepts, derived from diverse textual sources and philosophical systems, including those of the Yogācāra, Madhyamaka, and Huayan traditions. This kind of ecumenical or eclectic approach to Buddhist doctrine is also evident in the recorded sermons of Baizhang, as well as in the records of the teachings of other Chan teachers from the Tang era.
- The embrace of spontaneity and simplicity, evident in the last two sentences, is a common theme in the records of Mazu and his disciples. We will come across it again, particularly in reference to Mazu’s oft-quoted notion of ordinary mind.
- The term *sacred embryo* appears in Daoist texts. There it is primarily discussed within the context of internal processes of spiritual transformations that are brought about by application of the techniques of interior alchemy (*neidan* 內丹). The notion that one should simply allow things (or fate) to follow their natural course also has a distinct Daoist flavor. On the other hand, the term *sacred embryo* is also used in Buddhist sources, primarily in reference to the seed of Buddhahood that inheres in each person. Within the Buddhist context, nourishing the sacred embryo assumes the meaning of cultivating the practices and traversing the stages that comprise the bodhisattva path. In both cases, we are dealing with complex processes of spiritual cultivation and mental transformation. Nonetheless, the soteriological goals and the associated procedures of spiritual transformation are defined differently, in accord with the specific Buddhist and Daoist schematizations of spiritual practice and realization.

汝受吾教、聽吾偈曰。心地隨時說、菩提亦只寧。事理俱無礙、當生則不生。

Having received my teaching, hear my verse:  
 The (essential) mind is always spoken of;  
 Awakening (*bodhi*) is also just peace.<sup>29</sup>  
 Principle and phenomena are both without any obstruction;  
 This life itself is unborn.”

### Comments

- The term *xindi* 心地—that appears in the first line of the verse (as well as at the beginning of the sermon)—which I have simply translated as mind, can literally be rendered as “mental ground” or “mind ground.” It often functions as a synonym for the true mind, which is the source of all phenomena. Within the context of Chan doctrine, it is the essential mind that was supposedly transmitted by Bodhidharma and other Chan patriarchs. In different contexts, the same term can also assume the meaning of a state of mind, as well as refer to the mind and its objects.
- As noted earlier, the nonobstruction of principle and phenomena is one of the major themes of Huayan philosophy. Its classical formulation can be found in the writings of Chengguan, traditionally identified as the fourth Huayan patriarch. Within his influential formulation of the four realms of reality (S: *dharma-dhātu*; C: *fajie* 法界), the nonobstruction of phenomena and principle represents the key third realm of reality. That is also closely related to the central Huayan doctrine of “nature origination” (*xing qi* 性起), which postulates that all phenomena originate from the absolute mind.

### *The Abbot of Da'an Monastery Eludes the Messengers of Death*

有洪州城大安寺主、講經講論。座主只觀(管)誹謗馬祖。有一日、夜三更時、鬼使來搥門。寺主云、是什麼人。對云、鬼使來取寺主。寺主云、啟鬼使、某甲今年得六十七歲。四十年講經講論、為眾成持。只觀(管)貪諍論、未得修行。且乞一日一夜、還得也無。

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29. In the Chinese text of this sentence, Xing's version has 只 instead of 隻, which also is the way I have it here.

There was an abbot at Da'an Monastery in the city of Hongzhou, who lectured on the Buddhist scriptures and treatises. The abbot persistently slandered Mazu.<sup>30</sup> One day, during the middle of the night, the demon's messengers came, pounding at his door.

The abbot asked, "Who is it?"

"We are the demon's messengers. We have come to fetch you, abbot," came the reply.

The abbot said, "I wish to inform you, demon's messengers, that this year I reached the age of sixty-seven. For forty years I have lectured on the Buddhist scriptures and treatises, concerned with the growth of the congregation. I have merely been indulging in disputations. (Consequently,) I have not yet engaged in actual practice. I beg you to give me one more day and one more night."

### Comments

- This story appears only in *Zu tang ji*. It is unique in terms of its form and content. Especially notable is the contrast between its rather lengthy recounting of the dramatic tale about the abbot of Da'an monastery and the many pithy stories written in the encounter dialogue format. As such, the story reveals a distinctive dimension of the communal remembrance and reimagining of Mazu's religious persona. Another noteworthy feature is Mazu's limited presence in the story.
- The clause that in the third sentence I have translated as "the middle of the night" literally reads "the third watch of the night." In ancient China, the night was divided into five periods, each lasting for about two hours, so the third watch is the middle period of the night.
- The demon in question is presumably King Yāma (C: Yanluo wang 閻羅王), who according to both Buddhist and popular Chinese mythology presides over the netherworld. In the story, his messengers (or assistants) arrive to fetch the abbot, who has reached the end of his allotted lifespan, so that he can be taken to the abode of King Yāma. Once the abbot gets there, King Yāma will pass a judgment on his life and will determine his future destiny, based on his past actions and his moral frame of mind. To put it differently, his future rebirth—which can be in one of the various heavens or hells depicted in Buddhist mythology, or in any of the other realms of

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30. In the second sentence of the Chinese text, I am reading 只管 instead of 只觀, which is what we have in the original text, following Iriya's and Xing's editions of the text. The same applies to the subsequent appearances of these two characters.

existence—will be determined according to the karma he has accumulated up to that point in his life.

- The abbot is scared to face King Yāma's judgment because, having experienced an epiphany of sorts as a result of the sudden confrontation with his own mortality, he is aware of his heavy karmic burden and his spiritually undeveloped state of mind. These are due to the fact that he has wasted his whole life in egotistical pursuits—withstanding his duplicitous posturing as a Buddhist preacher—without really cultivating the Buddhist path. A pertinent example of an unwholesome mental state and an objectionable course of action, from a Buddhist perspective, is the unjustifiable slandering of a saint such as Mazu.
- The only escape from the perilous predicament the abbot is faced with is a sudden reversal in his spiritual fortune. Hence the request for a bit more time, during which the abbot hopes to gain an authentic insight into the truth of Buddhism, or find some other way to salvation, so that he can offset the karmic impediments he has accumulated so far.

鬼使云、四十年來貪講經論、不得修行、如今更修行作什麼。臨渴掘井、有什麼交涉。寺主適來道、只觀(管)貪講經論、為眾成持。無有是處。何以故。教有明文、自得度令他得度、自解脫令他解脫、自調伏令他調伏、自寂靜令他寂靜、自安隱令他安隱、自離垢令他離垢、自清淨令他清淨、自涅槃令他涅槃、自快樂令他快樂。

The demon's messengers said, "For forty years you have indulged in lecturing on the Buddhist scriptures and treatises, without doing any practice—what is the point of getting involved in practice right now? Is there any sense in (starting to) dig a well when you get thirsty? You, abbot, just stated that you merely indulged in lecturing on the Buddhist scriptures and treatises, concerned with the growth of the congregation. What you propose is not possible. Why? It is clearly stated in the (scriptural) teachings: 'Having attained salvation for oneself, one should cause others to attain salvation. Having liberated oneself, one should cause others to be liberated. Having disciplined oneself, one should cause others to be disciplined. Having become calm oneself, one should cause others to be calm. Having become tranquil oneself, one should cause others to become tranquil. Having left behind impurities oneself, one should cause others to leave behind impurities. Having purified oneself, one should cause others to become pure. Having (realized) Nirvāṇa for oneself, one should cause others (to realize) Nirvāṇa. Having become joyful oneself, one should cause others to be joyful.'

## Comments

- “To (start) digging a well when getting thirsty” is a popular proverb, based on a passage in *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 (Master Yan’s Spring and Autumn Annals), a well-known classical text composed during the Spring and Autumn or Warring States period.
- The long scriptural quotation at the end of this section comes from Śikṣānanda’s translation of the “Ten Practices” chapter in the *Huayan Scripture*.<sup>31</sup> That chapter describes in great detail the ten primary practices that need to be perfected by all bodhisattvas that traverse the path to Buddhahood.
- The scriptural passage underscores the importance of serious practice and compassionate concern for others. One should try to help others, especially with their spiritual practice, but only after one has perfected that same practice by oneself. The demon’s messengers suggest that, since the abbot has failed miserably on both accounts over the course of his life, it is impossible in such a short time frame to do anything that will fundamentally rectify the situation or dramatically alter the unfortunate predicament he finds himself in.

是汝自身尚乃未得恬靜、何能令他道業成持。汝不見金剛藏菩薩告解脫月菩薩言、我當自修正行、亦勸於他令修正行。何以故。若自不能修修正行、令他修者、無有是處。汝將生死不淨之心、口頭取辦。錯傳佛教、誑謊凡情。因此彼王嗔汝、教我取去彼中。便入刀樹地獄、斷汝舌根、終不得免。

Since you yourself have not yet really attained peace, how can you positively affect the spiritual growth of others? Are you not aware of the words that bodhisattva Diamond Storehouse spoke to bodhisattva Moon of Liberation: ‘I myself should cultivate correct practices, and I should also exhort others, causing them to cultivate correct practices. Why is that so? If I myself am unable to cultivate correct practices, it is impossible for me to cause others to practice.’ With your impure mind (mired in the circle) of birth and death, you superficially engage in glib talk. Wrongly transmitting the Buddhist teachings, you mislead and daunt the feelings of ordinary people. Because of that, the King (of the netherworld) is angry with you, so he instructed us to take you there. You are about to enter the hell of knife trees, where your tongue

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31. HYJ 19, T 10.103c.

will be cut off, with no opportunity whatsoever to escape (that terrible predicament).

### Comments

- Bodhisattva Diamond Storehouse and bodhisattva Moon of Liberation are among the celestial protagonists featured in the “Ten Stages” chapter of the *Huayan Scripture*. The passage quoted here appears in Śikṣānanda’s translation, as part of an extended discussion of the second stage of the bodhisattva path.<sup>32</sup>
- The hell of knife trees mentioned in the passage is an abbreviation for the hell of knife hills and sword trees (*dao shan jian shu* 刀山劍樹), which is also referred to as the hell of sword trees. As the name of the hell indicates, the main forms of suffering endured by its denizens consist of being cut into pieces by the blades of sharp knives, or by leaves that are as sharp as sword blades, which fall down from trees as they are stirred by the wind.
- Rebirth in one of the hells—which are prominently featured in traditional Buddhist cosmology—is the karmic recompense for a life that has been lived wrongly, in a manner that contravenes the basic principles of Buddhist ethics.<sup>33</sup> The pending cutting of the abbot’s tongue is supposed to be a symbolic punishment for his dishonesty and his telling of lies. The abbot’s hypocritical preaching about the texts and tenets of Buddhism—even though he has made no effort to live his life in accord with them, or to actually engage in spiritual cultivation—is the biggest lie of all. Here the text echoes familiar criticisms of monastic duplicity and corruption, which were voiced both within and outside of the monastic community.

汝不見佛語、言詞所說法、小智妄分別。是故生障礙、不了於自心。不能了自心，云何知正道。彼由顛倒慧、增長一切惡。汝四十年來作口業、不入地獄作什麼。古教自有明文、言語說諸法、不能現實相。汝將妄心、以口亂說。所以必受罪報。但噴自嫌、莫怨別人。如今速行、若也遲晚、彼王嗔吾。

Are you not familiar with the Buddha’s saying, ‘The teaching that is communicated by means of words is wrongly discriminated by

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32. HYJ 35, T 10.185b-c. For other mentions of these two bodhisattvas in the same text, see HYJ 36, T 10.189c; HYJ 37, T 10.193c; and HYJ 38, T 10.199a.

33. For more on the various Buddhist hells, see Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins*, 41–54.

those with slight wisdom. Consequently, they engender obstacles (to proper understanding), not comprehending their own minds. If one does not comprehend one's own mind, how can one know the correct path? Among such individuals, because of their confused wisdom, there is increase in all sorts of vice.' For the last forty years you have been producing (bad) speech karma, so what else can you expect but to enter hell? From ancient times it has been clearly stated in the (canonical) teachings, 'Even though he could explain all teachings by means of words, he could not manifest ultimate reality.' With a deluded mind, with your mouth you have been engaging in reckless talk. Consequently, you must receive retribution (fitting) for your transgressions. You should only detest yourself: do not blame others (for your ill-fated predicament). Let us hurry up now—if we are late, the King (of the netherworld) will be angry with us."

### Comments

- The first quotation comes from Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Huayan Scripture*.<sup>34</sup> The passage quoted here originally appears as two verses, included in chapter 14, titled "Eulogies at the Top of Sumeru Mountain."
- The second quotation also comes from the "Eulogies at the Top of Sumeru Mountain" chapter in Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Huayan Scripture*.<sup>35</sup> In the original text, the sentence that is quoted here forms the first two lines of a four-line verse.
- According to Buddhist doctrine, human beings produce karma in three basic ways: by their physical, verbal, and mental actions, or to put it differently, by their deeds, words, and thoughts. Speech karma is therefore one of the three basic forms of karma.

其第二鬼使云、彼王早知如是次第。何妨與他修行。其第一鬼使云、若與摩則放一日修行。某等去彼中、謔白彼王。王若許、明日便來。王若不許、一餉時來。其鬼使去后、寺主商量、這個事鬼使則許了也、某甲一日作摩生修行。無可計。不待天明、便去開元寺搥門。門士云、是什麼人。對云、大安寺主、來起居大師。門士便開門。寺主便去和尚處。具陳前事后、五體投地。禮拜起云、生死到來、作

34. HYJ 16, T 10.82a. See also the alternate translation in Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, 375.

35. HYJ 16, T 10.83a.

摩生即是。乞和尚慈悲、救某甲殘命。師教他身邊立地。天明了、其鬼使來大安寺裡、討主不見。又來開元寺、覓不得、轉去也。師與寺主即見鬼使、鬼使即不見師與寺主也。

The second demon's messenger then said, "The King (of the netherworld) already knows about this state of affairs. What harm is there in letting him practice?"

The first demon's messenger then said, "If that is the case, then let us allow him to practice for one day. We will go back over there and will consult about this with the King (of the netherworld). If the King allows it, we will come back tomorrow. If the King does not allow it, we will come back in a little while."

After the demon's messengers went away, the abbot mulled it over, thinking, "The demon's messengers responded favorably to my request, but how should I practice during the one day (that was given to me)?" He did not quite know what to do.

Not waiting for dawn to arrive, the abbot then went to Kaiyuan Monastery and (started) pounding the gate with his fists. The gate warden asked, "Who is it?"

"It is the abbot of Da'an Monastery; I have come to see the great master," replied the abbot.

The gate warden opened the gate. The abbot then went to Mazu's quarters. After he gave a complete account of what had transpired before, the abbot threw himself to the floor and made a full prostration (in front of Mazu). After he showed his respects, the abbot got up and said, "Birth and death have come along—what can be done about it? I beg for your reverence's mercy. Please save me from my cruel destiny!" Mazu instructed the abbot to remain standing by his side.

After the arrival of dawn, the demon's messengers came back to Da'an monastery to look for the abbot, but they could not find him. After that they also came to Kaiyuan monastery, but not being able to find him there either, they went back (to the netherworld). Although Mazu and the abbot were able to see the demon's messengers, the demon's messengers were unable to see Mazu and the abbot.

## Comments

- It is apparent that the abbot was saved by Mazu's thaumaturgic prowess, although the story's ending is not without some ambiguity. For instance, it does not make it clear if Mazu imparted any teachings to the abbot, although

that does not seem to be the case. It appears that the abbot was essentially saved from his impending demise and unpleasant destiny merely by virtue of his proximity to Mazu. For more on this story, see the discussion in chapter 3 of this volume.

僧拈問龍華、只如寺主、當時向什摩處去、鬼使見不得。花云、牛頭和尚。僧云、與摩則國師當時也太奇。龍花曰、南泉和尚。

(Later) a monk asked Longhua about this anecdote, “Regarding the abbot, where did he go at that time, so that the demon’s messengers could not find him?”

Longhua said, “Reverend Niutou.”

The monk said, “If that is the case, then the National Teacher was also very odd at that time.”

Longhua said, “Reverend Nanquan.”

## Comments

- This section was obviously added to the original story at a later date. These kinds of enigmatic (and seemingly nonsensical) comments, typically appearing at the end of a story or a dialogue, are a fairly common feature of Chan literature.
- Longhua Lingzhao 龍華靈照 (870–947) was a native of Korea and a disciple of Xuefeng. The appellation Longhua comes from the name of the monastery where he taught during the latter part of his life.
- Niutou 牛頭 is a mountain located in the vicinity of Nanjing. A number of Chan monks resided at the mountain, but here the text is probably referring to the best-known Chan master associated with the mountain: Niutou Farong 牛頭法融 (549–657), the putative founder of the Niutou School of early Chan.
- National Teacher was an official monastic title that was bestowed by the imperial government. It was a common way of honoring prominent monks.
- Here “National Teacher” probably refers to Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (d. 775). He is often referred to by his official title, National Teacher, which he received from the Tang emperor. Huizhong was Mazu’s contemporary and was also among the most prominent Chan teachers during the third quarter of the eighth century. Born in Zhejiang, he is often depicted as a student of Huineng, although that linkage is somewhat problematic and some texts list him as a disciple of another monk. He resided for a long time at a monastery in Nanyang (Henan), and then in 762 he moved to the Tang capital at the invitation of emperor Suzong. His transcribed sermon is

included in fascicle 28 of *Jingde chuan deng lu* (see the introduction to Text 7). He is not to be confused with Niutou Huizhong 牛頭慧忠 (683–769), a prominent member of the Niutou school.

- Nanquan, also a name of a place, refers to Mazu's famous disciples Nanquan Puyuan. He appears in other stories translated later on.

### *Pratyeka-Buddha Monk Visits Mazu's Monastery*

有一日齋后、忽然有一個僧來。具威儀、便上法堂參師。師問、昨夜在什麼處。對曰、在山下。師曰、吃飯也未。對曰、未吃飯。師曰、去庫頭覓吃飯。其僧應諾、便去庫頭。

One day, after the (midday) vegetarian meal, all of a sudden an (unknown) monk came (to Mazu's monastery). Possessed with an impressive presence, he proceeded to the Dharma hall, where he went to see Mazu.

Mazu asked him, "Where did you stay last night?"

"Below the mountain," replied the monk.

Mazu asked him, "Have you already had your meal?"

"No, I have not eaten yet," replied the monk.

Mazu said, "Go to the kitchen and get some food." The monk complied (with Mazu's instructions) and went to the kitchen.<sup>36</sup>

### Comments

- This story only appears in Mazu's biographical entry in *Zu tang ji*.
- *Kutou* 庫頭 is one of the monastic titles or offices given to a monk who is in charge of monastery's supplies and its operating expenses; it can be translated as "superintendent of provisions."<sup>37</sup> Here the term seems to be used to refer to the monastery's kitchen, hence the translation here, unless we read the Chinese text as "he went to see the superintendent of provisions."

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36. In the last sentence, the original Chinese text, as well as Iriya's edition, have *nuò* 喏 (all right) instead of *nuò* 諾. I have changed the text following Xing's edition. That makes more sense because the later option forms a compound with the previous character in the sentence (*yingnuò*: agree to do something), although the other reading might also be viable.

37. For the monastic office of superintendent of provisions, see Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*, 162–163, and Ichimura, *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*, 185–186.

當時百丈造典座、卻自個分飯與他供養。其僧吃飯了便去。百丈上法堂。師問、適來有一個僧未得吃飯。汝供養得摩。對曰、供養了。師曰、汝向后無量大福德人。對曰、和尚作摩生與摩說。師曰、此是辟支佛僧。所以與摩說。進問、和尚是凡人，作摩生受他辟支佛禮。師云、神通變化則得。若是說一句佛法、他不如老僧。

At that time Baizhang, who was serving as the monastery's kitchen superintendent, took aside a portion of his own food and offered it (to the visiting monk). The monk ate the meal, and then he left.

(Afterwards) Baizhang went to the Dharma hall. Mazu asked him, "A while ago there was a monk who had not yet eaten his meal. Did you make an offering to him?"

"I made him an offering," replied Baizhang.

Mazu said, "From now on you will be a person with boundless good fortune."

"Why are you saying that, reverend sir?" asked Baizhang.

Mazu said, "That was a pratyeka-buddha monk. That is why I am saying that."

Baizhang responded with a further question, "Your reverence is an ordinary person. How can you receive obeisance from a pratyeka-buddha?"

Mazu said, "It is true that he has attained magical powers and the ability of spiritual transformation. But when it comes to uttering even a single sentence of the Buddhist teachings, he is not my equal."

## Comments

- *Dianzuo* 典座, translated as "kitchen superintendent," is the name of another monastic office.<sup>38</sup> The monk who occupies this office—which can also be translated as "chief cook"—is responsible for the preparation of meals served to the monastic congregation.
- Pratyeka-buddhas belong to a distinct category of Buddhist saints or holy beings. Sometimes they are referred to as solitary Buddhas, because they are said to have attained awakening by themselves, without the spiritual guidance of a teacher. In the original Chinese, the character for Buddha is written wrongly (twice), which I have corrected.

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38. For the office of kitchen superintendent, see Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*, 154–155, and Ichimura, *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*, 186–187.

- Traditionally, pratyeka-buddhas are depicted as being aloof and unwilling to instruct others. Within the classical Mahāyāna tradition, the vehicle of pratyeka-buddhas is one of the three vehicles of Buddhism, as described in the *Lotus Scripture* and other canonical texts. For more on the three vehicles, see the comments on the story about Wuye's awakening, which comes later in this text.
- As noted in chapter 3, the Buddhist scriptures and other canonical sources depict a number of magical or supernatural powers, which are traditionally described as byproducts of spiritual cultivation, especially the perfection of meditative practice, which culminates with the attainment of absorptions. Examples of such powers include clairvoyance, clairaudience, awareness of other people's minds, and knowledge of past lives.
- The ability of spiritual transformation can imply both the power to transform things and the power to manifest oneself in different physical forms.
- The early part of the story makes no explicit mention of the pratyeka-buddha monk formally paying respects to Mazu, as is implied by Baizhang's last question. However, bowing to the abbot at the beginning of an audience with him is a basic feature of monastic etiquette, so the visiting monk's obeisance to Mazu is implied in the brief depiction of his initial entry into the Dharma hall.
- The story reiterates a somewhat familiar trope, which appears in other Chan texts: a deep and genuine insight into the teachings of Buddhism is superior to a mastery of supernatural powers or of meditative techniques used to develop them. By extension, the story can be interpreted to imply that the Chan master, as a distinctive type of Buddhism saint, is superior to the pratyeka-buddha archetype of canonical writings and popular lore.

### *Dialogue about the Bodhisattvas' Realm*

師有一日上禪床。才與摩坐便洩唾。侍者便問、和尚適來因什麼洩唾。師云、老僧在這裡坐、山河大地、森羅萬像、總在這裡。所以嫌他、與摩唾。侍者云、此是好事。和尚為什麼卻嫌。師云、於汝則好、於我則嫌。侍者云、此是什麼人境界。師云、此是菩薩人境界。

One day Mazu took a seat on his meditation couch. Once he was seated, he spat out. His attendant asked him, "You reverence, why did you spit out a moment ago?"

Mazu said, "As I sit here, the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth, along with all things in the universe—they are all here. Since I detest them, I spat out like that."

The attendant said, “They are good things. Why does your reverence detest them?”

Mazu said, “They might be good things to you, (but) to me they are detestable.”

The attendant said, “This is the realm of what kind of person?”

Mazu said, “This is the realm of a bodhisattva person.”

### Comments

- The all-pervasiveness of reality, which permeates all things in the universe, was previously mentioned in the sermon on mind and Buddha. There Mazu proclaimed that “all things in the universe are marked by a single truth.”
- There are numerous canonical references or depictions of the recondite “realm of bodhisattvas.” For instance, a number of pertinent examples can be found in the *Huayan Scripture*.<sup>39</sup> Here Mazu seems to be referring to a person who aspires to actualize the bodhisattva path.

后鼓山舉此因緣云、古人則與摩。是你諸人、菩薩境界尚未得、又故則嫌他菩薩。雖則是嫌、但以先証得菩薩之位、后嫌也嫌。老僧未解得菩薩之位、作摩生嫌他這個事。

Later Gushan cited the above story (in front of his congregation), and then he said, “The ancients were like that. As for all of you, you have not yet reached the bodhisattvas’ realm, and still you detest those bodhisattvas. Even though it is detestable, one should first realize the bodhisattva stage, and then one can detest. I have not yet grasped the bodhisattva stage, so how can I detest these things?”

### Comments

- Gushan refers to Chan master Shenyan 神晏 (863–939), also known as National Teacher Xingsheng 興聖國師, who resided at Gu Mountain. Traditionally he is listed as a disciple of Xuefeng.<sup>40</sup>
- The meaning of this whole exchange is a bit obscure, and the translation is tentative.

39. For instance, see the enumeration of ten kinds of bodhisattva realms in HYJ 56, T 10.295b.

40. For Gushan Shenyan, see ZTJ 10, 231–32, and CDL 18, T 51.351a-c. For his fairly extensive record of sayings, see GZY 37, X 118.629b–645b.

### *Dialogue with Civil Official Huang*

有西川黃三郎、教兩個兒子投馬祖出家。有一年卻歸屋裡。大人才見兩僧，生佛一般。禮拜云、古人道、生我者父母、成我者朋友。是你兩個僧、便是某甲朋友、成持老人。曰、大人雖則年老、若有此心、有什摩難。大人歡喜。從此便居士相、共男僧便到馬祖處。

There was Civil Official Huang from Sichuan, who sent his two sons to become monks under Mazu's tutelage. After being away for a year, (the two monks) returned to the home (of their family). When the father saw the two monks, they looked like living Buddhas to him. He worshiped them, and then he said, "An ancient person said, 'My father and mother gave me birth, but I was made complete by my friends.' You, two monks, are my (spiritual) friends, and you are able to support the (spiritual) growth of this old man."

The two monks said, "Father, even though you are an old man, if you can have this kind of frame of mind, what problems can there be?" The father was delighted. Thereafter he assumed the appearance of a Buddhist layman, and together with the two monks he went to Mazu's abode.

### Comments

- This is yet another story that appears only in *Zu tang ji*.
- The exact identity of Civil Official Huang is unknown. Presumably he was a member of the Tang officialdom who, like Mazu himself, was originally from Sichuan.
- Within the religious context of Tang China, it was not that uncommon for the sons (as well as daughters) of aristocratic or literati families to enter the Buddhist monastic order. In that respect, the personal religious choices made by Huang and his sons are noteworthy, but perhaps not that unusual.
- The quote that Huang attributes to an unidentified "ancient person" can be traced back to a well-known statement made by Guan Zhong 管仲 (725–645 B.C.E.), also known as Guanzi, a thinker and politician who lived during the Spring and Autumn era, as recorded in *Shi ji* 史記 (Historical Records). There is a bit of discrepancy between the two versions, so this is not an exact quote. In the *Shi ji* version, the second part of the quote reads: "the one who knows me is Bao Shu 鮑叔" (a reference to a friend of Guan Zhong).

其僧具陳來旨。大師便上法堂。黃三郎到法堂前。師曰、咄、西川黃三郎豈不是。對曰、不敢。師曰、從西川到這裡、黃三郎如今在西川、在洪州。云、家無二主、國無二王。師曰、年幾。云、八十五。雖則與摩、算什麼年歲。云、若不遇和尚、虛過一生。見師后、如刀劃空。師曰、若實如此、隨處任真。

The monks gave a full account of the purpose of their coming (to Mazu's monastery). Mazu then entered the Dharma hall. Civil Official Huang came to the front of the Dharma hall. Making an angry noise, Mazu said, "Isn't that Civil Official Huang?"

"Yes, that is me," replied Huang.

Mazu said, "You have come here from Sichuan. Right now, Civil Official Huang: are you in Sichuan, or are you in Hongzhou?"

Huang said, "A family cannot have two masters, and a country cannot have two kings."

Mazu asked him, "How old are you?"

"I am eighty-five," replied Huang.

Mazu said, "Although that may be so, what kind of time frame are you calculating?"

Huang said, "If I did not meet you, reverend sir, I would have wasted my whole life. After I have seen you, master, it is like marking empty space with a knife."

Mazu said, "If you are really like that, then reality is everywhere you happen to be."

## Comments

- The well-known adage "A family cannot have two masters, and a country cannot have two kings" is traceable back to a passage in *Li ji* 禮記 (Record of Rites), one of the Confucian classics. It appears in a section that discusses the four key principles that govern the selection of mourning garments. The complete sentence in *Li ji* reads as follows: "The sky cannot have two suns; a country cannot have two kings; a territory cannot have two rulers; a family cannot have two respected seniors—all of these are regulated by the same principle."
- Mazu's response to Huang's statement about his age evokes the timelessness of reality. While in ordinary terms Huang might be said to be eighty-five years old, the true mind is beyond birth and death. Accordingly, one cannot ascribe to it any conventional or temporal characteristic, such as age. This kind of idea appears sporadically in the records of Mazu and other Chan monks from the Tang era.

### *Lecturer Liang's Realization*

黃三郎、有一日到大安寺廟下、便啼哭。亮座主問、有什麼事啼哭。三郎曰、啼哭座主。座主云、哭某等作摩。三郎曰、還聞道黃三郎投馬祖出家，纔蒙指示便契合。汝等座主說葛藤作什麼。座主從此發心、便到開元寺。門士報大師曰、大安寺亮座主來、欲得參大師、兼問佛法。大師便升座、座主來參大師。

One day Civil Official Huang went to Da'an Monastery; upon arriving there he started to weep. Liang, the lecturer, asked him, "What is the reason you are weeping?"

Civil Official Huang said, "I am weeping for you, head monk."

The lecturer asked him, "Why are you weeping for me?"

Civil Official Huang said, "You might have heard that I, Civil Official Huang, entered monastic life under Mazu's tutelage. Recently I received his instructions, and was then able to accord with them. Why do you, lecturer, (merely) engage in tangled and involved discussions (about doctrinal matters, but miss the essential purport)?"

The lecturer was inspired by that, so he went to Kaiyuan Monastery. The gatekeeper informed Mazu, "Lecturer Liang from Da'an Monastery has come. He would like to have an audience with you, sir, so that he can inquire about the Buddhist teachings." Thereupon Mazu took his seat, and the lecturer came to have an audience with Mazu.

### Comments

- A slightly abbreviated version of this story also appears in *Mazu yulu*.<sup>41</sup> The story is also quoted or alluded to in a number of later Chan texts, including the recorded sayings of Fayuan and Dahui,<sup>42</sup> as well as Yanshou's *Zongjing lu*.<sup>43</sup>
- Da'an Monastery in Hongzhou already appeared in the story about its abbot's narrow escape from the messengers of death. The exact identity of head monk Liang is uncertain. It is perhaps possible to conflate him with the nameless abbot who appears in the previous story. At any rate, presumably

41. See X 119.815a; Cheng-Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 76–77.

42. *Jinling qingliangyuan wenyi chanshi yulu*, T 47:592c, and *Dahui pujue chanshi fayu* 24, T 47:915c.

43. T 48:919b.

here we are primarily dealing with a composite figure who is representative of particular monastic type, rather than with an actual historical person.

- *Zuozhu* 座主, the monastic title that is bestowed to Liang, often has the meaning of a head monk or an abbot of a monastery. However, in Chan texts it is often used to refer to a learned monk who has extensive intellectual knowledge of canonical texts and teachings, but lacks genuine personal insight into the essential truths that the teachings point to. Outside of Buddhist circles, in Tang China the term was used by graduates of the official examinations for the civil bureaucracy to politely refer to their chief examiner.
- This story seems to chronologically follow the previous story. Here we find that Civil Official Huang has decided to become a monk and has joined the congregation at Kaiyuan Monastery as Mazu's disciple, just as his two sons have done earlier.

大師問、見說座主講得六十本經論。是不。對云、不敢。師云、作摩生講。對云、以心講。師云、未解講得經論在。座主云、作摩生。云、心如工技兒、意如和技者。爭解講得經論在。座主云、心既講不得、將虛空還講得摩。師云、虛空卻講得。座主不在意，便出。才下階大悟。回來禮謝。師云、鈍根阿師、禮拜作什摩。亮座主起來、震霏汗流。晝夜六日、在大師身邊侍立。后諳白云、某甲離和尚左右、自看省路修行。唯願和尚久住世間、廣度群生。伏惟珍重。

Mazu asked him, "I have heard that you, lecturer, have lectured on sixty scriptures and treatises. Is that true?"

"It is true," replied Liang.

Mazu said, "How do you lecture?"

"I lecture with my mind," replied Liang.

Mazu said, "You have not yet figured out how to lecture on the scriptures and the treatises."

"What do you mean?" said Liang.

Mazu said, "'The mind is like a leading actor (in a play), while consciousness is like a supporting actor.' How can it know how to lecture on the scriptures and the treatises?"

"If the mind cannot lecture, is it then possible that empty space can lecture?" rejoined Liang.

Mazu said, "Empty space can indeed lecture."

Liang was not satisfied (with the answer), so he left. As soon as he stepped down the stairs, he had a great realization. He returned, and then he bowed (to Mazu) with gratitude.

Mazu said, “You dull-witted monk—what is the point of you bowing like that?” Lecturer Liang got up, with sweat streaming down his body like rain. For six days and six nights he stood next to Mazu, attending on him.

Afterwards he conferred (with Mazu), saying, “I am thinking of leaving you, master, so that I can visit provincial pathways and engage in (solitary) practice. I hope that you, master, will stay in this world for a long time, saving numerous living beings. I respectfully prostrate myself and wish you all the best.”

### Comments

- The well-known canonical quote “The mind is like a leading actor, while consciousness is like a supporting actor” comes from the *Lañkāvatāra Scripture*.<sup>44</sup> There it appears as two lines of a verse, which is part of a longer verse section. A variation of the first part of the quote also appears in the *Huayan Scripture*.<sup>45</sup> This canonical passage is quoted in a number of Chan records, as well as in other kinds of texts, especially scriptural commentaries and exegetical works.

座主歸寺、告眾云、某甲一生功夫、將謂無人過得。今日之下、被馬大師呵嘖、直得情盡。便散卻學徒。一入西山、更無消息。座主偈曰、三十年來作餓鬼、如今始得復人身。青山自有孤雲伴、童子從他事別人。

The lecturer returned to his monastery and told the congregation, “I have been laboring my whole life, thinking that nobody can surpass me. Today, after I was scolded by the great master Ma, (all such vain) feelings simply came to an end.” Then he disbanded his students. He entered the Western Mountain and nothing was heard about him after that. The lecturer composed a verse, which says:

For the last thirty years I have been (like) a hungry ghost;  
It was only today that I regained my human existence.  
At the blue mountain, I have a solitary cloud as my companion;  
My disciples, you are free to follow someone else as your teacher.

44. *Dasheng ru lengqie jing* 5, T 16.620a.

45. HYJ 10, T 9.465c, and HYJ 43, T 9. 672c (sixty fascicles version); HYJ 19, T 10. 102a (eighty fascicles version).

## Comments

- In traditional Buddhist cosmology, the realm of hungry ghosts (S: *preta*) is one of the three undesirable realms of existence in samsara. Hungry ghosts suffer insatiable hunger, but they can never satisfy their prodigious appetites. Rebirth in this realm is usually deemed to be a karmic result of excessive greed or avariciousness, which the individuals reborn there have manifested in their previous lives.
- The lecturer's decision to give up his established monastic position and move to the mountain, presumably so that he can engage in solitary practice, is indicative of the kind of far-reaching transformation that, according to tradition, can be triggered via a contact with a great Chan master such as Mazu. By extension, the story reiterates the aforementioned spiritual superiority of the awakened Chan master versus the conventional monastic lecturer, and of Chan versus a certain type of canonically-oriented Buddhism.

漳南拈問僧、虛空講經、什摩人為聽眾、對云、適來暫隨喜去來。  
漳南云、是什摩義。云、若是別人、便教收取。漳南曰、汝也是把  
火之意。

Zhangnan brought up (the above story) and asked one of his monks, “When empty space lectures on a scripture, what kind of persons constitute its audience?”

The monk replied, “Just now, I happened to hear a bit of it.”

Zhangnan said, “What was the meaning (of what you heard)?”

The monk said, “If it was other person, then I would have it retracted.”

Zhangnan said, “You seem to intend to get hold of some fire.”

## Comments

- Zhangnan 漳南 (d. 928), also known as Baofu 保福, is traditionally listed as a disciple of Xuefeng. Zhangnan is the name of the place in Fujian where he resided. He is accorded fairly extensive biographical entries in both *Zu tang ji* and *Jingde chuan deng lu*.<sup>46</sup>

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46. ZTJ 11.241–48; CDL 19, T 51.354b–55c.

*Silent Sermon*

師上堂。良久、百丈收卻面前席。師便下堂。

Mazu ascended the (Dharma) hall (to preach). After (Mazu remained silent for) a good while, Baizhang collected the sitting mat in front of him. Mazu then left the hall.

## Comments

- Perhaps the best-known canonical model for Mazu's silent "preaching" is Vimalakīrti's famous silence, discussed in the comments in Text 1. Vimalakīrti's potent silence, in response to Manjusri's question about the teaching of nonduality, signifies the transcendence and indescribability of ultimate reality. The same theme is evoked in other canonical texts, as well as in various Chan records.
- Monks used their bowing and sitting mats during formal rituals, including sermons held in the monastery's main hall. Baizhang's folding of the bowing mat, usually done at the end of the formal ritual proceedings, can be interpreted as signifying the end of Mazu's wordless sermon. Such interpretation is bolstered by Mazu's act of leaving the hall, presumably to return to his private quarters. However, according to normal ritual protocol, it is the master who first marks the end of the formal proceedings, so here Baizhang is depicted as transgressing monastic convention.

*Essence of the Buddha's Teaching*

問、如何是佛法旨趣。師云、正是你放身命處。

Someone asked, "What is the essential purport of the Buddha's teaching?"

Mazu said, "It is precisely the point at which you let go of your life."

## Comments

- In the *Jingde chuan deng lu* and *Tiansheng guang deng lu* versions of the same exchange, it is Baizhang instead of an anonymous interlocutor who asks the question.<sup>47</sup>

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47. TGL 8, X 135.653b; the CDL version is translated in Text 6.

- Mazu's answer is a bit ambiguous, or perhaps can be read in two different ways. Besides the meaning of "to let go of" or "to release," which is preferable in this context, the Chinese character *fang* can also be translated as "to put" or "to place." If we follow the second meaning, then Mazu's reply can be translated as "It is precisely the point where you place your life."
- The phrase "let go of your life" also appears in the records of other Chan monks, including Guishan and Yangshan.<sup>48</sup>

### *Transcendence of the Four Propositions and Hundred Negations*

問、請和尚、離四句絕百非、直指西來意、不煩多說。師云、我今日無心情、不能為汝說。汝去西堂、問取智藏。其僧去西堂、具陳前問。西堂云、汝何不問和尚。僧云、和尚教某甲來問上座。西堂便以手點頭、云、我今日可殺頭痛、不能為汝說。汝去問取海師兄。其僧又去百丈、乃陳前問。百丈云、某甲到這裡卻不會。其僧卻舉似師。師云、藏頭白、海頭黑。

(A monk) asked (Mazu), "Please, master, leaving behind the four propositions and doing away with the hundred negations, directly point out (to me) the meaning of (Bodhidharma's) coming from the West, without bothering to say too much."

Mazu said, "Right now I do not feel like it, so I will not be able to explain it to you. Go to the western hall and ask Zhizang."

The monk went to the western hall and asked the same question. Xitang said, "Why don't you ask the master?"

The monk said, "The master instructed me to ask you, head monk."

Thereupon Xitang touched his head with his hand, and said, "I have a terrible headache today, so I cannot explain it to you. Go and ask my senior, Huaihai."

The monk then also went to Baizhang and asked the same question. Baizhang said, "As to that, I have no idea whatsoever."

The monk went back to Mazu. Mazu said, "Zhizang's head is white; Huaihai's head is black."

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48. For the pertinent citation in Guishan's record, see CDL 11, T 51.283a; for Yangshan, see *Yangshan yulu* 1, T 47.586a.

## Comments

- There are several other versions of this story, including the one included in Mazu's biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, translated in Text 6.
- The four propositions (or logical possibilities) of Madhyamaka philosophy are empty (of self-nature), (provisionally) existent, both empty and existent, and neither empty nor existent. In some medieval Chinese texts, emptiness is also expressed in terms of nonexistence (*wu* 無). The four propositions are also evoked in the records of other Chan monks from the Tang era, including Baizhang.<sup>49</sup> Transcendence of the four propositions implies rejection of all conceptual constructs and dualistic ways of thinking.
- The hundred negations, often paired with the four propositions, represent a comprehensive repudiation of all definitive statements or arguments about the true nature of reality. By definition, ultimate reality is ineffable and cannot be defined in terms of dualistic concepts such as birth and death, coming and going, impermanence and eternity. Here the word *hundred* is used in the sense of numerous or innumerable. Often the technical term "four propositions and hundred negations" appears as a set phrase, especially in texts associated with the Sanlun School. It is also quoted in Chan texts, as a critique of all forms of logical supposition or intellectual argument.
- Zhizang and Huaihai are the ordination names of Xitang and Baizhang, respectively. Xitang literary means "western hall," and there is a play on words in the original Chinese text. In medieval Chinese monasteries, the monastic congregation was divided into two "halls": eastern and western, each of them headed by a senior monk.
- During the Song era, this story became a well-known *gong'an*. For instance, it appears as case seventy-three in *Bi yan lu*.<sup>50</sup>

### *Sending a Letter to Jingshan*

師遣人送書、到(先)徑山欽和尚處。書中只畫圓相。徑山才見、以筆於圓相中與一劃。有人舉似忠國師。忠國師云、欽師又被馬師惑。

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49. For an example of such usage in Baizhang's records, see BGL, X 118.85c; translated in Cleary, *Pai-chang*, 48.

50. BYL 8, T 48.200c; Cleary and Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*, 401.

Mazu dispatched a person to deliver a letter to Reverend Faqin of Jingshan.<sup>51</sup> In the letter he only drew a circle. When Jingshan saw it, he took a brush and added a stroke in the middle of the circle. Someone relayed that to National Teacher Huizhong. National Teacher Huizhong said, “Faqin was again confused by Mazu.”

### Comments

- Jingshan Faqin 徑山法欽 (714–792), also known as Daoqin, was Mazu’s contemporary. A native of Jiangsu and a disciple of Xuansu 玄素 (668–752), he was among the most prominent Chan teachers during the latter part of the eighth century. Traditionally he is listed as one of the major masters in the Niutou school of Tang Chan.
- The circle is a symbol of wholeness, perfection, or completeness. These are also meanings ascribed to the Chinese character *yuan* 圓, whose basic meaning is round or circular. The circle symbol is often featured in latter Chan and Zen art. In addition, various circular graphs were used as pedagogical tools or hermeneutical devices by various Chan masters. Such usage was presumably initiated by Huizhong, who is said to have developed a set of ninety-seven circular forms that is no longer extant. The best-known example of the usage of circular forms in Chan circles from the Tang era are the “five rankings” developed by Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良介 (807–869).
- In this version of the story, the text simply says that Jingshan added a stroke (*hua* 劃, which can also mean a line) in the middle of the circle; in the *Mazu yulu* version of the same story, however, there is the character for dot (*dian* 點) instead.
- Nanyang Huizhong, often referred to as National Teacher Huizhong, appeared earlier in the text (see the comments at the end of the story about the abbot of Da’an monastery).

### *Drawing Lines on the Ground*

有人於師前作四劃。上一劃長、下三劃短。云、不得道一長、不得道三短。離此四句外、請師答某甲。師乃作一劃、云、不得道長、不得道短、答汝了也。忠國師聞舉、別答云、何不問某甲。

51. In the first sentence of the Chinese text, the character *xian* 先 (prior; former) seems to be redundant. Accordingly, I have not translated it and have placed it in parentheses. On the other hand, in Faqin’s brief entry in ZTJ (fascicle 3) he is referred to as Xian Jingshan, so perhaps here the character *xian* can be read as a part of his name.

There was a person who once drew four lines in front of Mazu. The top line was long, while the bottom three lines were short. He then said, "You cannot say that one (line) is long, and you cannot say that three (lines) are short. Leaving behind the four propositions—please master, answer me."

Mazu then drew a single line, and said, "Without talking about long, and without talking about short—I answered you."

When National Teacher Huizhong heard about it, he proposed an alternative answer: "Why didn't you ask me?"

### Comments

- Similar versions of this story can also be found in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, *Mazu yulu*, and *Tiansheng guang deng lu*.<sup>52</sup> The same story is also cited in a number of later Chan texts.
- The "four propositions"—that things exist, are empty, are both existent and empty, and are neither existent nor empty—were already discussed in the comments on an earlier section of this text.

### *Lion in a Cave*

有座主問師、禪宗傳持何法。師卻問、座主傳持何法。對曰、講得四十本經論。云、莫是師子兒不。座主云、不敢。師作噓噓聲。座主云、此亦是法。師云、是什摩法。對云、師子出窟法。師乃嘿然。座主云、此亦是法。師云、是什摩法。對云、師子在窟法。師云、不出入，是什摩法。座主無對。遂辭出門、師召云、座主。座主應喏。師云、是什摩。座主無對。師呵云、這鈍根阿師。后百丈代云、見摩。

There was a lecturer who once asked Mazu, "What kind of teaching is propagated and upheld by the Chan school?"

Mazu responded by asking him, "What kind of teaching are you propagating and upholding?"

(The lecturer) replied, "I have lectured on forty scriptures and treatises."

Mazu said, "Aren't you a lion's cub?"

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52. CDL 6, T 51.246b15-18; MY, X 119.815b17-816a1; and TGL 8, X 135.653b6-8.

The lecturer said, “Thank you.” Mazu made a hissing sound.  
 The lecturer said, “That is also a teaching.”  
 Mazu asked, “What kind of teaching is it?”  
 The lecturer said, “It is the teaching of a lion leaving a cave.” Mazu then remained silent.  
 The lecturer said, “That is also a teaching.”  
 Mazu asked, “What kind of teaching is it?”  
 The lecturer said, “It is the teaching of a lion being in a cave.”  
 Mazu said, “When there is neither leaving nor entering, what kind of teaching is that?”  
 The lecturer had no answer. As he was then about to leave by exiting the door, Mazu called him, “Lecturer!”  
 The lecturer responded. Mazu then asked him, “What is it?”  
 (Once again,) the lecturer had no answer. Mazu scolded him, saying, “Ah, what a dull-witted monk.”  
 Later Baizhang proposed an alternate response: “Do you see it?”

### Comments

- Similar versions of this story also appear in *Jingde chuan deng lu* and *Mazu yulu*, although the second lacks the last line with Baizhang’s comment.
- In canonical literature, the Buddha is often likened to a lion, the ruler of the animal kingdom, who is respected by all for his majesty and fearlessness. Here Mazu is presumably poking fun at the self-assured lecturer, by implying that he is the Buddha’s son.
- Peculiar “pedagogical devices” such as calling someone’s name or asking “What is it?” appear a number of times in the records of Mazu, as discussed in chapters 2 and 6. From the Song period onward, the phrase “What is it?” became integrated into the specific meditative technique of *kanhua* 看話 (“observing the phrase”) Chan. It is still used in various Chan/Zen monasteries, especially in Korea.<sup>53</sup>

### *Eastern Lake’s Water*

師問僧、從什麼處來。對云、從淮南來。師云、東湖水滿也未。對云、未。師云、如許多時雨、水尚未滿。道吾云、滿也。雲岩云、湛湛底。洞山云、什麼劫中曾欠少來。

53. See Robert Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience*, 155–158.

Mazu asked a monk, "Where are you coming from?"

The monk replied, "I am coming from Huainan."

Mazu said, "Is the water of the Eastern Lake full?"

The monk replied, "Not yet."

Mazu said, "It has rained for such long time, and yet the water is not full."

(Later, commenting on this dialogue,) Daowu said, "It is full."

Yunyan said, "It is deep."

Dongshan said, "Since which eon has it been lacking (any water)?"

## Comments

- Huainan is the area south of the Huai River, in the central part of eastern China. In Tang China it was one of the empire's main provinces. Its main city was Yangzhou (in present-day Jiangsu). During the early part of the Five Dynasties era, the area became an independent kingdom, named Wu, which in 937 was replaced by the Southern Tang dynasty. In the *Mazu yulu* version of the same story, however, the monk says that he is coming from Hunan. (Huainan should not be confused with the present-day city with the same name, located in Anhui province.)
- Daowu Yuanzhi 道吾圓智 (769–835) was a prominent disciple of Yaoshan Weiyuan 藥山惟儼 (745–828). He was born in Jiangxi, became a monk under Baizhang Niepan 百丈涅槃 (d. 828?), and later in life taught at Daowu mountain, in the vicinity of Changsha (Hunan).<sup>54</sup>
- Yunyan 雲岩 was the name of a mountain located in what is now the eastern part of Hunan province. In Tang times it was under the jurisdiction of Tanzhou 潭州 (Changsha). Here it refers to Yunyan Tansheng 雲巖曇晟 (780?–841),<sup>55</sup> who resided there during the final years of his life. Along with Daowu, who was his senior, Yunyan was among the most prominent disciples of Yaoshan. The two were apparently friends, and they are often featured together in Chan literature. During his early monastic years, Yunyan was also a disciple of Baizhang.<sup>56</sup>
- Dongshan Liangjie, the most prominent disciple of Yunyan, was among the leading Chan teachers of his generation. The later Chan tradition came to

54. For more on Daowu, see ZTJ (a) 5.123–25; CDL 14, T 51.314a11-c23; and SGS 11, T 50.775c29–776a12.

55. The year of Yunyan's birth is also sometimes given as 782 or 784.

56. For more on Yunyan, see ZTJ (a) 5.116–20; SGS 11, T 50.775b7-22; and CDL 14, T 51.314c24–315b18.

celebrate him as the “founder” of the Caodong School 曹洞宗 (J: Sōtō), which during the Song era became the second most influential school of Chan. Dongshan (Grotto Mountain), the site of his monastery, is located in Jiangxi province.

“*Sun-Face Buddha; Moon-Face Buddha*”

師明晨遷化、今日晚際院主問、和尚四體違和、近日如何。師曰、日面佛、月面佛。

As Mazu was about to pass away on the following morning, late in the day the head monks asked him, “You, reverent sir, seem unwell; how are you (feeling) today?”

Mazu said, “Sun-face Buddha (and) Moon-face Buddha.”

### Comments

- This is one of the best-known anecdotes about Mazu. It can also be found, in a bit different version, in *Mazu yulu*, as well as in Mazu’s biographical entries in *Gu zunsu yulu* and *Tiansheng guang deng lu*.<sup>57</sup> Mazu’s statement is also quoted in a number of other Chan texts from the Song and later eras, although curiously it is omitted from his biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu*. In addition, it forms the core *gong’an* of case three in *Bi yan lu*.<sup>58</sup> Alternative renderings of Mazu’s statement are “Sun-facing Buddha (and) Moon-facing Buddha” or “Sun-faced Buddha (and) Moon-faced Buddha.”
- Mazu’s statement consists of simply invoking the names of two Buddhas, Sun-face and Moon-face, which appear in *Fo shuo fo ming jing* 佛說佛名經 (Scripture of Buddha Names, Spoken by the Buddha). According to the scripture, the lifespan of Moon-face Buddha is extremely short, lasting only one day and one night. In contrast, Sun-face Buddha lives to be 1,800 years old.<sup>59</sup> The statement can thus be interpreted to be pointing to the relativity of time.

57. GZY 1, X 118.161b; TGL 8, X 135.654b.

58. BYL 1, T 48.142c; translated in Cleary and Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*, 18.

59. *Fo shuo fo ming jing* 7, T 14.154a. The same statement is reiterated in *Fo shuo fo ming jing* 17, T 14.253b, while the names of the two Buddhas are evoked a number of times in other parts of the same text.

### *Wuye's Awakening*

汾州和尚為座主時、講四十二本經論。來問師、三乘十二分教、某甲粗知。未審宗門中意旨如何。師乃顧示云、左右人多、且去。汾州出門、腳才跨門閭、師召座主。汾州回頭應喏。師云、是什麼。汾州當時便省。遂禮拜、起來、云、某甲講四十二本經論、將謂無人過得。今日若不遇和尚、泊合空過一生。

When Reverend (Wuye of) Fenzhou was a lecturer, he explained forty-two different scriptures and treatises. He came (to Mazu's monastery) and asked Mazu, "I have a general knowledge of the three vehicles and the twelve divisions of canonical teachings. However, I am uncertain about the meaning and purport of the Chan teaching."

Mazu then turned around toward him, and said, "There are many people (around here); now you should go away (and come back later)."

As Wuye was going out, just as his feet were passing through the door's threshold, Mazu call him, "Lecturer!"

Wuye turned his head and responded politely. Mazu said, "What is it?"

At that moment Wuye had a realization. Thereupon he bowed respectfully. After getting up, he said, "(In the past) I explained forty-two different scriptures and treatises, thinking that there is nobody that can surpass me. If today I did not meet with you, reverend sir, I am afraid my whole life would have been wasted to no avail."

### Comments

- There are a number of different versions of this story, including those in *Mazu yulu*, in Wuye's biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, in *Zongjing lu*, and in Wuye's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, in *Zu tang ji* there is a second, longer version, which appears in Wuye's entry.<sup>61</sup> This story is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.
- The text identifies the monk as "Reverend Fenzhou." That refers to Wuye, who was one of Mazu's prominent disciples. For the sake of simplicity, I have translated the name as Wuye.
- Fenzhou was a prefecture in Tang China. The location of its prefectural seat roughly corresponds to the present-day city of Fenyang in Shanxi province, which is under the administrative jurisdictions of Lüliang.

60. MY, X 119.407d; CDL 8, T 51.257a; ZJL 98, T 48.942c-43a; SGS 11, T 50.772b-c.

61. ZTJ (a) 15.344-45; ZTJ (b) 15.690-91.

- In the Mahāyāna tradition, the “three vehicles,” an often-used designation that also appears in Text 1, correspond to the three main kinds of teachings, or paths of practice, represented by the primary types of Buddhist saints that embody them. In this context, Wuye is basically saying that he has studied all sorts of Buddhist teachings, with the exception of Chan.
- The twelve divisions of canonical teachings correspond to the main sections of the Buddhist canon. This is just one of the ways in which the Buddhist canon has been divided over the centuries. The twelve divisions (with the original Sanskrit designations in parentheses) are scriptures (*sūtra*), metric pieces (*geya*); verses (*gāthā*), links in the chain of dependent origination (*nidāna*), narratives about past deeds and previous lives (*itivṛttaka*), stories about the Buddha’s past lives (*jātaka*), tales about miracles (*abbhutadharmā*), parables (*avadāna*), discussions of doctrine (*upadeśa*), spontaneous utterances (*udāna*), elaboration of subtle doctrines (*vaipulya*), and prophecies (*vyākaraṇa*).
- In the third sentence of the Chinese text, Wuye is referring to the “patriarchal teaching,” namely, the essential teaching of Chan. The term is often used as a synonym for the “Chan teaching” (hence my translation), or the “Chan school.”

### *Exchange with Baizhang*

師問百丈、汝以何法示人。百丈豎起拂子對。師云、只這個。為當別更有。百丈拋下拂子。僧拈問石門、一語之中便佔馬大師兩意、請和尚道。石門拈起拂子、云、尋常抑不得已。

Mazu asked Baizhang, “What kind of method are you going to use when instructing other people?” Baizhang responded by raising (Mazu’s) whisk upwardly in front of him.

Mazu said, “Is that all? Do you have anything else (to show me)?” Baizhang dropped down the whisk.

After bringing up (this story) to Shimen, a monk asked, “Within a single word he was able to grasp the great master Ma’s double meaning. Reverend, please say something (about that).”

Shimen raised the whisk up and said, “Ordinarily (this person) cannot show restraint.”

### Comments

- The whisk was originally used to chase away mosquitoes and other insects. In the context of medieval and late imperial Chinese monasteries, it was a ceremonial object used on formal occasions, including sermons, by Chan masters and other senior monks.

- Shimen could be referring to Gushan Shenyan 鼓山神晏 (860–944?), a disciple of Xuefeng.<sup>62</sup>

### *Mazu's Passing Away*

大師下親承弟子、總八十八人、出現於世、及隱道者莫知其數。大師志性慈愍。容相瑰奇。足下二輪、頸有三約。說法住世四十余年、玄徒千有余眾。師貞元四年戊辰歲二月一日遷化。塔在泐潭寶峰山。敕謚大寂禪師、大莊嚴之塔。裴相書額、左承相權德輿撰碑文。

There were altogether eighty-eight close disciples of Mazu that became well-known in the world, while an untold number of (other students) remained anonymous. Mazu's natural disposition was kind and sympathetic. His physical appearance was magnificent. On the bottoms of his feet there were two (markings in the form of) wheels, while on his neck there were three wrinkles. He preached the Dharma for a period of over forty years, while his linear disciples numbered more than a thousand. Mazu passed away on the first day of the second lunar month, in the fourth year of the Zhenyuan reign (March 17, 788). His stūpa is located at Baofeng Mountain, in Letan. Under imperial decree he received the posthumous title Chan Teacher of Great Quiescence, while his stūpa was named Great Magnificence. Prime Minister Pei (Xiu) wrote his plaque, while Senior Grand Councilor Quan Deyu composed his stele inscription.

### Comments

- The description of Mazu's distinguished physical appearance contains allusion to the unique physical features of the Buddha. A similar trope, with a slight variation, is also introduced at the beginning of Mazu's stele inscription (see Text 1).
- The depiction of three wrinkles on the neck of the Buddha is a common feature in Buddhist art, even though this particular attribute is not included in the standard version of the thirty-two major and eighty minor unique physical features of the Buddha. Furthermore, one of the Buddha's minor physical marks is the lack of wrinkles on his skin. According to some traditions, the three wrinkles on the neck symbolize the Buddha's perfection of

62. See Yanagida Seizan, trans., *Sodōshū (Daijō butten ed.)*, 418, n. 366. For Shenyan's biographical entries, see ZTJ (a) 10.231–32 and CDL 18, T 51.351a2–c14.

the three trainings (morality, meditation, and wisdom). Their depiction in Buddhist art was possibly influenced by classical esthetic ideals about physical beauty and elegance.

- Baofeng Mountain is located in present-day Jing'an county, in the northwestern part of Jiangxi province. In Tang times, it was included in Hongzhou prefecture. The name of the monastery where the stūpa (pagoda) was erected was Letan monastery; later it was changed into Baofeng monastery.<sup>63</sup>
- According to Mazu's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*, the posthumous title was bestowed by Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 805–820), during the Yuanhe era (806–820).<sup>64</sup> In Tang China, it was customary for the imperial court to bestow posthumous titles to eminent Buddhist monks. Mentions of these kinds of official honors often appear in the biographies of eminent monks.
- Prime Minister Pei refers to Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860), a prominent Tang official who was known for his Buddhist piety. Pei Xiu was closely involved with a number of prominent Chan monks, including Guishan, Huangbo, and Zongmi. As noted in chapter 6, he also edited the two records of Huangbo. According to a note attached to the Song edition of Mazu's biography in *Jingde chuan deng lu* (see the end of Text 6), Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859) asked Pei Xiu to restore Mazu's monastery and memorial pagoda, which were damaged during the anti-Buddhist persecution of the Huichang era (841–846).

### *Eulogy by Jingxiu*

淨修禪師頌曰、馬祖道一、行全金石。悟本超然、尋枝勞役。久定身心、一時拋擲。大化南昌、寒鬆千尺。

A eulogy (composed) by Chan teacher Jingxiu says:

Mazu Daoyi perfected his practice, so that it became like gold and stone. Awakened to the essence and (gone) beyond the mundane realm, he still labored and searched among the branches.<sup>65</sup>

For a long time his body and mind were calm, and then at once he cast them away.

63. See also the comments in Text 2. For a wealth of information about Baofeng monastery and the mountain on which it is situated, see He Mingdong, *Baofeng shan zhi*.

64. SGS 10, T 50.766c. See also Text 5.

65. In the second sentence of the verse, I read wù 悟 (awakening) instead of wú 梧 (Chinese parasol tree), which seems to be a typo.

He extensively propagated (the Dharma) in Nanchang, like a thousand-foot pine in the cold of winter.<sup>66</sup>

### Comments

- The author of the eulogy, Jingxiu 淨修 (884–972?), also known as Xingdeng 省燈, was the head of Zhaoqing Monastery in Quanzhou (Fujian), where *Zu tang ji* was compiled in 952. He also wrote the preface for *Zu tang ji* (mentioned in the introduction).
- Jingxiu's eulogies are also attached at the ends of the biographical entries of other Chan masters included in *Zu tang ji*. In the whole text, there are a total of forty-four eulogies dedicated to various Chan masters he composed, starting with Mahākāśyapa in fascicle 1 and ending with Nanquan in fascicle 16.
- Gold and stone, whose form is said to be unchanging, are sometimes used to symbolize firmness and stability.
- The second line of the eulogy can be interpreted to mean that although a sage like Mazu had awakened to the truth and had transcended the realm of dualistic thoughts, he still remains engaged within the mundane sphere of everyday events, presumably in order to teach and help others.
- Regarding the last line's literary allusion to a tall pine in winter, it can be interpreted to mean that just as a pine tree remains green even in the bitter cold of winter, a person of exemplary moral character and genuine spiritual attainment remains steadfast amid all kinds of circumstances.

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66. In the last sentence of the verse, I am reading *sōng* 鬆 as *sōng* 松; often the two characters are interchangeable.

## Text 4

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# Excerpts from Zong jing lu

### Introduction

THIS SECTION CONTAINS translations of the relevant sermon and dialogue excerpts from *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄 (Record of Reflections of the Essential Truth), compiled in 961 by Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975). The compiler of this massive text was one of the most prominent Buddhist monks of the Five Dynasties and early Song eras.<sup>1</sup> He was closely associated with the pro-Buddhist rulers of the Wuyue 吳越 kingdom (907–978), who from their capital in Hangzhou controlled an economically prosperous territory in south China. Renowned for his expansive learning and ecumenical outlook, Yanshou was greatly concerned about bridging the gap between Chan practice and doctrinal learning.

Even though he primarily saw himself as a member of the Chan School, in addition to his mastery of Buddhist canonical literature, Yanshou also promoted the complementarity between the teachings and practices of the Chan and the Pure Land traditions. From the later Song period onward, that elicited contemptuous criticisms in some Chan/Zen circles, in both China and Japan. Proponents of narrow visions of Chan orthodoxy, especially those operating within the sectarian milieus of the influential Linji/Rinzai lineages, tended to dismiss him as a syncretist, rather than acknowledge him as a “genuine” Chan teacher. That led to Yanshou’s relative marginalization, which to a considerable degree continued into the modern era.<sup>2</sup> The relative neglect of Yanshou

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1. For Yanshou’s earliest biography, see SGS 28, T 50.887a-b; he presumably also had a stele inscription, but its contents are no longer extant. For an extensive study of Yanshou’s life and thought, especially his ideas about Chan teachings and practices, see Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*.

2. See Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*, 11–12.

and his voluminous corpus is unfortunate, in part because his works articulate a different perspective on the nature and scope of Chan teachings, as well as on their relationship with canonical Buddhism. Moreover, his writings contain a wealth of information about various aspects of tenth-century Buddhism, including the texts and teachings associated with the Chan School that circulated at that time.

Notwithstanding Yanshou's largely negative reputation in some Chan/Zen circles, it is also true that over the centuries his ideas and writings continued to exert influence on significant developments within Chinese and Korean Buddhism. That was especially the case in specific historical contexts where there was an emphasis on the promotion of an ecumenical vision of Buddhist orthodoxy, along the lines of what Yanshou articulated in his voluminous writings. A case in point is the comprehensive systematization of Buddhism undertaken by Chinul 智訥 (1158–1210), who laid the foundation for an inclusive and syncretic tradition that, notwithstanding its detractors, still exerts influence on contemporary Korean Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> As is well-known, Yanshou's writings were one of the main sources of inspiration for Chinul, as he sought to bridge the gap between the practice of Chan meditation, on one side, and the study of canonical texts and doctrines on the other side.

*Zong jing lu* is Yanshou's major work. It is an intricate text of monumental proportions, organized into one hundred fascicles. Besides Yanshou's analysis and commentary, among the text's distinguishing features is the inclusion of numerous quotations from a broad range of Buddhist sources. While most of the quotations are from canonical works, especially important Mahāyāna scriptures, *Zong jing lu* also contains many quotations from early Chan records, some of which are no longer extant. That includes the materials about Mazu translated here. The inclusion of these kinds of materials makes *Zong jing lu* an important source for the study of early Chan history, doctrine, and practice.

On the whole, Yanshou's choice of quotations or excerpts to include in his seminal treatise, as well as his general treatment of Mazu and the Hongzhou School, reflects his conception of Mazu as a prominent Chan master who was also an erudite teacher of Buddhist doctrine. In essence, Yanshou underscores the close connection between Mazu's Chan teachings and the canonical tradition, which among other things is evident in the numerous scriptural

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3. For Chinul and his ecumenical vision, see the introduction in Robert E. Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul*.

quotations that are integrated into Mazu's sermons. This kind of depiction contrasts with the later reimagining of Mazu as a peerless iconoclast and champion of a radical form of Chan that set itself against the canonical tradition.

While Yanshou's fairly tame portrayal of Mazu was mostly ignored or marginalized by the later Chan tradition, it was very much in tune with Yanshou's ideas about the essential unity, or compatibility, of Chan and canonical Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, his representation of Mazu, while selective, is closer to the actual attitudes and ideas of Mazu and his disciples, especially when compared with the kinds of iconoclastic depictions we find in later Chan texts. *Zong jing lu* also contains transcribed sermons and dialogues of other important Chan monks associated with the Hongzhou School.<sup>5</sup> That includes Dayi, who is given a prominent position as a major disciple of Mazu and a leading Chan master of his generation.<sup>6</sup> In this case, once again, Yanshou's text is closer to the historical reality of Tang Chan: while Dayi was mostly ignored by the editors of the later Chan collections, during the early ninth century he was among the leading disciples of Mazu and among the main representatives of the Hongzhou School at the main Tang capital.<sup>7</sup>

The excerpts from Mazu's records included in Yanshou's text and translated here can be divided into five parts: two transcribed sermons, one short sermon excerpt, and two dialogues.<sup>8</sup> Yanshou's text also contains an additional dialogue that features Mazu: a shorter and less dramatic version of the story about Mazu's discussion with Lecturer Liang.<sup>9</sup> As that story already appeared in the translation of Mazu's entry in *Zu tang ji* (see Text 3), to avoid redundancy, I have not included it again in this section. As is the case with other translations in this volume, the division of the sermons and the dialogues into discrete sections is mine, as are the subheadings in the first two sermons.

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4. See Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*, 170–171, 178.

5. A listing of the quotations from the records of monks associated with the Hongzhou School that are preserved in ZJL can be found in Yanagida, "Basozen no sho mondai," 38–39.

6. ZJL 1, T 48.419a2-10; Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*, 187–188.

7. See Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 62–63.

8. Alternative translations of these materials, along with related discussion, can be found in Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*, 170–194.

9. ZJL 92, T 48.919b15-24; translated in Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*, 181–182.

*Sermon 1**Bodhidharma's Teaching and the Lan̄kāvatāra*

洪州馬祖大師云、達磨大師從南天竺國來、唯傳大乘一心之法。以楞伽經印眾生心、恐不信此一心之法。楞伽經云、佛語心為宗、無門為法門。何故佛語心為宗。佛語心者、即心即佛。今語即是心語。故云、佛語心為宗。

The great master Mazu, (who was) from Hongzhou, said, "When the great master Bodhidharma came from South India (to China), he only transmitted the One Mind teaching of the Great Vehicle. He used the *Lan̄kāvatāra Scripture* to authenticate the minds of living beings, fearing that others will not believe in this teaching about the One Mind. It is stated in the *Lan̄kāvatāra Scripture* that, according to the Buddha's teaching, mind is the essential principle, and that the lack of a particular point of entry is (the essence of) the teaching. Why did the Buddha state that mind is the essential principle? When the Buddha spoke about the mind, (he postulated) the identity of mind and Buddha. What I am talking about now is exactly that mind. Therefore (in the scripture) it is said that, according to the Buddha's teaching, mind is the essential principle.<sup>10</sup>

## Comments

- As noted in Text 3 and Text 6, other versions of this sermon, especially its early part, are included in Mazu's biographical entries in *Zu tang ji* and *Jingde chuan deng lu*. The same sermon is also included in *Mazu yulu*, where it is the first of the three sermons incorporated into the text. That version is very similar to the one in *Jingde chuan deng lu*, on which it is presumably based. There are considerable overlaps among the various versions of the sermon, and one could argue that the basic message is roughly the same. However, there are also some notable differences, as can be seen if we compare this version of the sermon with the *Zu tang ji* version translated earlier.<sup>11</sup>

10. ZJL 1, T 48.418b13-17.

11. For the MY version of this sermon, see X 119.810b-11a; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 17-22; and Cheng-Chien, *Sun Face Buddha*, 62-63. For the ZTJ and CDL versions, see the appropriate sections in Text 3 and Text 6.

- This part of the sermon also appears in the *Zu tang ji* version, with some variations. The main difference is that the first sentence of the *Zu tang ji* version is missing here.
- The allusions to the *Lañkāvatāra Scripture* are discussed in my comments on the *Zu tang ji* version of this sermon.
- In fascicle 97 of *Zong jing lu*, parts of this sermon, with some modifications, are presented as a different sermon—or rather a sermon excerpt—attributed to Mazu’s teacher Huairang. That sermon, which is notably shorter than this one, comes just before the three short dialogues featuring Mazu that are translated at the end of this section, and after a short sermon attributed to Huineng that also deals with the essential identity of mind and Buddha.<sup>12</sup>
- For additional comments on this and the other relevant sections translated here, see the comments on the *Zu tang ji* version of the sermon. Here I am primarily addressing concepts, quotes, and other relevant issues that did not appear before.

### *Emptiness and Form*

無門為法門者、達本性空、更無一法。性自是門、性無有相、亦無有門。故云、無門為法門。亦名空門、亦名色門。何以故。空是法性空、色是法性色。無形相、故謂之空。知見無盡、故謂之色。故云、如來色無盡、智慧亦復然。隨生諸法處、復有無量三昧門。遠離內外、知見情執。亦名總持門、亦名施門。謂不念內外善惡諸法。乃至皆是諸波羅蜜門。

Regarding (the statement) ‘the lack of a particular point of entry (into the truth) is (the essence of) the teaching,’ when one realizes that the original nature is empty, then there is no single thing (that remains). The nature itself is the point of entry, but given that the nature has no distinct characteristics, there is no particular point of entry (into the truth). Therefore it is said that the lack of a particular point of entry (into the truth) is (the essence of) the teaching. It is also called the point of entry of emptiness, as well as the point of entry of external forms. Why is that? Emptiness refers to the emptiness of underlying reality, while external forms refer to the external manifestations of underlying reality. Being without physical appearance and characteristics, it is identified as emptiness. Because knowledge and views are inexhaustible,

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12. ZTJ 97, T 48.940a29-b6.

it is identified as external forms. Therefore, it is said that 'the external form of the Tathāgata is inexhaustible; his wisdom is also like that.' In response to the creation of various phenomena, there are also limitless kinds of *samādhi*. These leave far behind (the distinction between) inner and outer, (as well as all) views and attachments. That is also called the entry point of *dhāraṇī*, as well as the entry point of giving. That implies not to think of all phenomena, whether internal or external, good or evil. Therefore, they are all entry points of the various perfections.<sup>13</sup>

## Comments

- This section of the sermon is completely missing in the *Zu tang ji* and *Jingde chuan deng lu* versions. It is possible that it was added by Yanshou, as additional explanations. The same could be said of the next section.
- The Chinese character *men* 門, which here I have translated as “point of entry,” has multiple connotations. At a most basic level, it means door, gate, or entryway. It can also mean school or sect, as in the “Chan School.” Finally, it can also mean teaching or approach (that leads to spiritual realization or liberation); in this sense, it is often paired with *fa* 法 (Dharma, truth, teaching), to form the compound *famen* 法門, which here I have translated as teaching. The use of this and other similar terms, here and in other passages, creates problems for the translator, as individual Chinese characters or compounds might contain (or imply) several overlapping connotations. In addition, they might also involve various word plays.
- The contrast between emptiness (*kong* 空) and form (*se* 色) is a prominent feature of Mahāyāna doctrine. It is especially associated with the perfection of wisdom scriptures and the philosophy of the Madhyamaka School.
- The term *faxing* 法性, which I have translated as “underlying reality,” literally means the “nature of dharmas (things/phenomena).” Usually identified as the Chinese equivalent of the Sanskrit term *dharmatā*, it is used to refer to the original or underlying nature of all phenomena, or the true nature of things. In medieval Buddhist texts, it is often used as a synonym for other technical Buddhist terms, such as suchness (*zhenru* 眞如) and the realm of reality (S: *dharma-dhātu*; C: *fajie* 法界).
- In the Chinese Buddhist context, the Sanskrit term *dhāraṇī* can be understood in the sense of complete grasp or retention in the mind (especially of the Buddha's teaching), or perhaps control of good and evil proclivities

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13. ZJL 1, T 48.418b15-25.

(or influences). It is also used to refer to magical formulas or ritual spells, which are interpreted as mnemonic devices that supposedly capture the essential meaning—or spiritual power—of specific canonical texts or passages. Although they are often associated with Tantric Buddhism, not all *dhāraṇī* are Tantric in origin or function.

- The statement “the external form of the Tathāgata is inexhaustible; his wisdom is also like that” comes from the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* (*Shengman jing* 勝鬘經), translated into Chinese by Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (394–468) in 436.<sup>14</sup>
- The perfections (S: *pāramitā*) are essential practices or virtues, to be perfected by the bodhisattvas on their way to Buddhahood. Most common is the list of six perfections, which is elaborated in great detail in the perfection of wisdom scriptures, but there are also groupings of ten or more perfections. Giving is the first of the bodhisattva perfections.

### *Buddhahood*

色身佛是實相佛家用。經云、三十二相、八十種好、皆從心想生。亦名法性家焰、亦法性功勳。菩薩行般若時、火燒三界內外諸物盡、於中不損一草葉。為諸法如相故。故經云、不壞於身、而隨一相。

The physical body of the Buddha is an outward manifestation of the true aspect of Buddhahood. The scripture says that the thirty-two physical marks and the eighty secondary characteristics (of a Buddha) are all created by the mind's thoughts. That is also called the flame of underlying reality, as well as the merit of underlying reality. When a bodhisattva cultivates *prajñā*, the fire (of wisdom) burns completely all inner and outer things in the three realms, without a single blade of grass being damaged. It is because all phenomena (manifest the true) character of reality. Therefore, the scripture says, ‘Without destroying the physical body, he accords with the singular aspect (of reality).’<sup>15</sup>

### Comments

- This section is also missing in the *Zu tang ji* version of the sermon.
- The term *yong* 用, which appears in the first sentence, is usually translated as “function.” Here I have rendered it as “outward manifestation.” In

14. *Shengman jing* 1, T 12.217a26; see also *Da bao ji jing* 119, T 11.673a7-8.

15. ZJL 1, T 48.418b25-29.

classical Chinese texts, it is regularly paired with *ti* 體, often translated as “essence.” While *ti* refers to the intrinsic nature of something, *yong* refers to its dynamic function or outward manifestation.

- In terms of the theory of three Buddha bodies, “the true aspect of Buddhahood” can be equated with the Dharma body (S: *dharmakāya*), which represents the essential aspect of Buddhahood. Mahāyāna texts often contrast the physical body of the Buddha with his Dharma body.
- The sentence about the thirty-two physical marks and the eighty secondary characteristics of the Buddha is not a direct quotation, but a similar passage appears in the *Guan wuliang shou fo jing* 觀無量壽佛經.<sup>16</sup>
- *Prajñā*, or wisdom, is the highest of the six bodhisattva perfections. By cultivating it to the highest degree, a bodhisattva can develop the supreme wisdom of Buddhahood.
- The last quotation comes from the “Disciples” chapter of the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*.<sup>17</sup>

### *Knowing the True Nature*

今知自性是佛、於一切時中、行住坐臥、更無一法可得。乃至真如、不屬一切名、亦無無名。故經云、智不得有無。內外無求、任其本性、亦無任性之心。經云、種種意生身、我說為心量。即無心之心、無量之量。無名為真名。無求是真求。經云、夫求法者、應無所求。

Now that you know that your self-nature is the Buddha, at all times, whether you are walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, there is not a single thing that can be obtained. Even when it comes to ultimate reality, we cannot ascribe any name to it, but also it is not the case that there is no name. Therefore, the scripture says, ‘Wisdom does not allow for either existence or nonexistence.’ Without seeking either inside or outside, simply accept the original nature as it is, but without a conscious awareness of accepting the (original) nature. The scripture says, ‘As to the various (bodhisattva) bodies that are mentally produced, I say that they belong to the category of mind (of ordinary persons).’ Namely, the mind of no-mind has a capacity that is limitless. When there is no name—that is the true name. When there is no seeking—that is true

16. See *Foshuo guan wuliang shou fo jing* 1, T 12.343a18-23.

17. WMJ 1, T 14.540b24; see also Burton Watson, *The Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, 41–42.

seeking. As is said in the scripture, “Those that seek the truth should not seek anything.”<sup>18</sup>

## Comments

- This is another section that is missing in the *Zu tang ji* version, with the exception of the last sentence.
- The first quotation, “Wisdom does not allow either existence or nonexistence,” comes from the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*, where it is repeated several times as part of a larger verse.<sup>19</sup>
- The second quotation, which starts with “As to the various (bodhisattva) bodies that are mentally produced,” also comes from the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*.<sup>20</sup>
- The phrase “the mind of no-mind” also appears in the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*, although it is not clear if Mazu is citing the relevant scriptural passage.<sup>21</sup> The notion of “no-mind” is often discussed in the records of Chan masters from the Tang era. It also appears in a number of canonical texts. Numerous examples of its usage, in the overall context of a Chan discourse about practice and realization, can be found in the records of Huangbo.
- The last quote, which also appeared in the *Zu tang ji* version of this sermon, is from the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*. Variations on the same theme also appear in other canonical sources, as well as in the records of various Chan teachers.

## *Identity of Mind and Buddha*

心外無別佛、佛外無別心。不取善、不作惡、淨穢兩邊、俱不依。法無自性、三界唯心。經云、森羅及萬像、一法之所印。凡所見色、皆是見心。心不自心、因色故心。色不自色、因心故色。故經云、見色即是見心。

There is no other Buddha (to be found) outside of the mind, and there is no other mind (that exists) outside of the Buddha. (You should) not grasp goodness and (should) not do evil; (you should also) not rely on either of the two extremes of purity and defilement. Phenomena do

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18. ZJL 1, T 48.418b29-c6.

19. *Lengqie jing* 1, T 16.480a28-b3; see also T 16.590c1-5.

20. *Lengqie jing* 3, T 16.500b17.

21. *Lengqie jing* 3, T 16.500b1.

not have self-nature, and 'the three worlds are nothing but mind.' The scripture says that 'all things in the universe are marked by a single truth.' Whenever you perceive external forms, they are all perception of the mind. The mind, however, does not exist in and of itself: it is because of external forms that there is mind. External forms also do not exist in and of themselves: it is because of the mind that (there are) external forms. Therefore the scripture says, 'When perceiving external forms, it is the same as perceiving the mind.'<sup>22</sup>

## Comments

- This section can also be found in *Zu tang ji* and *Jingde chuan deng lu*, with the exception of the last sentence. For additional comments, see the translation of the *Zu tang ji* version.
- It is perhaps interesting to note that while the *Zu tang ji* version has "not grasp goodness and not reject evil," here we have "not grasp goodness and not do evil." It is possible to interpret this as a significant difference, but it could also be a typo or a minor editorial modification.
- It is not clear which canonical text is quoted, or perhaps misquoted, in the last sentence. According to Iriya, who is following an earlier suggestion made by Shimura Yoshiya 志村良哉, Mazu is alluding to a passage (or an idea) from the *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture*.<sup>23</sup>

## Sermon 2

### *Knowing the Mind*

馬祖大師云、汝若欲識心、祇今語言、即是汝心。喚此心作佛、亦是實相法身佛、亦名為道。經云、有三阿僧祇百千名號、隨世應處立名。如隨色摩尼珠、觸青即青、觸黃即黃、體非一切色。如指不自觸、如刀不自割、如鏡不自照。隨緣所見之處、各得其名。

The great master Mazu said, "If you want to know the mind, precisely that which is talking right now is nothing else but your mind. It is this mind that is called Buddha; it is also the Buddha of the real Dharma body; it is also called the Way. The scripture says that within

22. ZJL 1, T 48.418c6-10. For a Japanese translation of the whole sermon, with the original Chinese text, see Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 190-197.

23. Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 197.

the three timeless eons there are innumerable names, and that names are established in accord with times and in response to specific predicaments. It is like a *maṇi* jewel that changes its color: when it comes in contact with green (objects), it becomes green, and when it comes in contact with yellow (objects), it becomes yellow, even though the jewel itself does not have any color. It is also like a finger that cannot touch itself, or a knife that cannot cut itself, or a mirror that cannot reflect an image of itself. In accord with circumstances and perceptions, they are each given (different) names.<sup>24</sup>

### Comments

- This sermon appears only in *Zong jing lu*. However, parts of the sermon overlap or are similar to a sermon attributed to Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (d. 740), which appears in fascicle 98 of *Zong jing lu*.<sup>25</sup> The main overlap is the initial passage just translated, which is quite similar in both versions. Given that during his lifetime Xingsi was a marginal figure—who, within Chan circles, only rose to relative renown retroactively as the teacher of Shitou—it is unlikely that this attribution is reliable. Also, the general tenor of the sermon, along with its terminology and the ideas expressed in it, are very much in tune with the teachings of Mazu and other prominent monks associated with the Hongzhou School.
- Within the Huayan School’s doctrinal analysis of the three bodies of the Buddha, the Dharma body is further subdivided into five kinds or aspects. The real Dharma body (*shixiang fashen* 實相法身) is one of the five.
- The scriptural allusion that starts with “there are innumerable names,” while not an exact quotation, is based on a passage with similar meaning from the *Laṅkāvatāra Scripture*.<sup>26</sup>
- The “three timeless eons” (S: *asamkhyeya-kalpa*) refers to an immensely long period of time that is beyond an ordinary human capacity to count or understand. According to Indian canonical interpretations, that is how long it takes a bodhisattva to perfect the path and reach Buddhahood.
- According to Buddhist mythology, the *maṇi* jewel (also translated as pearl), which symbolizes the Buddha and his teachings, is able to fulfill all wishes. Also referred to as the “wish-fulfilling jewel” (*cintāmaṇi*), it is one of the seven

24. ZJL 14, T 48.492a10-16.

25. ZJL 97, T 48.940b15-20.

26. *Lengqie jing* 4, T 16.506b4-7; see also *Ru lenqie jing* 5, T 16. 551a14-16.

precious things enumerated in Buddhist canonical texts. The same idea is also shared by the Hindu tradition. The Sanskrit term *maṇi* by itself has the general meaning of jewel or gem. The metaphor of the *maṇi* jewel is used extensively by Zongmi in his discussion of the teachings of the various lineages of Tang Chan.<sup>27</sup>

### *Mind's Characteristics*

此心與虛空齊壽。乃至輪迴六道、受種種形、即此心未曾有生、未曾有滅。為眾生不識自心、迷情妄起、諸業受報。迷其本性、妄執世間風息。四大之身、見有生滅、而靈覺之性、實無生滅。汝今悟此性、名為長壽、亦名如來壽量。喚作本空不動性。前後諸聖、祇會此性為道。

This mind is of the same age as empty space. Even though one might transmigrate through the six destinies and receive various kinds of forms, this mind has never experienced any birth, nor has it experienced any death. As living beings do not know their own minds, they are confused by emotions, give rise to falsehood, and receive various kinds of karmic recompense for their actions. Confused about their original nature, they falsely attach to worldly affairs. The physical body, composed of the four elements, has birth and death, but the (true) nature, which is numinous and aware, does not really have birth and death. If you can now awake to this nature, it can be called long life; it can also be called the lifespan of the Tathāgata. It is known as the nature that is originally empty and unmovable. All sages, of the past and the future, only know this nature as being (identical with) the Way.<sup>28</sup>

### Comments

- The six destinies, or potential realms of transmigration, are those of the gods, demigods, humans, animals, ghosts, and denizens of the hells (listed from the highest to the lowest).
- In traditional Buddhist cosmology, the four elements are earth, water, fire, and wind.

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27. See *Zhonghua chuan xindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu* 1, X 110.872a17-73a4; Jeffrey Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, 89-92.

28. ZJL 14, T 48.492a16-22.

- According to a widely read section in the *Lotus Scripture*—in chapter 16, titled “Tathāgata’s Lifespan”—the lifespan of the Buddha (the Tathāgata) is limitless.<sup>29</sup> To put it another way, the Buddha is eternal. He only appeared to be born and to attain supreme awakening under the *bodhi* tree in ancient India.

### *Realizing the Original Nature*

今見聞覺知、元是汝本性、亦名本心。更不離此心別有佛。此心本有、今有、不假造作。本淨今淨、不待瑩拭。自性涅槃、自性清淨、自性解脫、自性離故。是汝心性、本自是佛、不用別求佛。汝自是金剛定、不用更作意凝心取定。縱使凝心斂念作得、亦非究竟。

That which presently sees, hears, feels, and knows is, fundamentally, your original nature; it is also called the original mind. Furthermore, there is no other Buddha outside of this mind. This mind originally existed and it exists right now—it is not something that is created. Originally it was pure, and it is pure right now—it does not need to be wiped clean. The self-nature is Nirvāṇa; the self-nature is purity; the self-nature is liberation; because the self-nature leaves behind (all defilements and delusions). It is the (true) nature of your mind, which originally is (the real) Buddha, so you need not seek the Buddha elsewhere. You are the diamond absorption, so you need not deliberately try to freeze the mind in order to attain meditative absorption. Even if you are able to freeze the mind and control your thoughts, that is still not the ultimate (realization).<sup>30</sup>

### Comments

- In some Yogācāra texts, the “Nirvāṇa of the pure self-nature” is listed as one of the four kinds of Nirvāṇa. The other three are Nirvāṇa with residue, Nirvāṇa without residue, and Nirvāṇa of nonabiding.
- “Diamond absorption,” or *vajrasamādhi*, represents a state of deep meditative awareness or concentration, in which the meditator has destroyed all

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29. T 9.42a29–44a4.

30. ZJL 14, T 48.492 a22-27. For a Japanese translation of the whole sermon, see Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 198–200.

defilements and has obtained subtle knowledge of reality. It is associated with the highest stage of the bodhisattva path.

- The expression “deliberately try to freeze the mind in order to attain meditative absorption” echoes Shenhui’s critique of the Northern School’s teachings about meditation practice. That is summarized by the four well-known statements that Shenhui attributed to Shenxiu: “freezing the mind to enter absorption; stopping the mind to view purity; activating the mind for outward illumination; and concentrating the mind for inner realization” (凝心入定、住心看淨、起心外照、攝心內證).<sup>31</sup> The Chinese term *ding* 定 can also be rendered as *samādhi*.

### *Sermon Excerpt*

馬祖大師云、若此生所經行之處、及自家田宅處所、父母兄弟等、舉心見者、此心本來不去。莫道見彼事、則言心去。心性本無來去、亦無起滅。

The great master Mazu said, “If you consider all things you have experienced or perceived with your mind in this life, including the places you have visited during your travels, the area with your family’s land and home, your parents and siblings, and so on, fundamentally this mind is not gone away. Do not say that, having seen those things, the mind is gone away. The mind’s nature originally has no coming and going; it also has no arising and extinction.”<sup>32</sup>

### Comments

- This short sermon excerpt only appears in *Zongjing lu*.
- The precise meaning of the entire passage is not completely clear. The basic idea is that, in its true modality, the mind is neither arising nor coming to an end.
- In the original text, this excerpt is immediately followed with a commentary by Yanshou.<sup>33</sup> In it Yanshou relates Mazu’s somewhat sketchy ideas about the

31. *Putidamo nanzong ding shifei lun* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論, in Yang Zengwen, ed., *Shenhui heshang chanhua lu*, 29–31; translation from John McRae, “Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment,” 246–247.

32. ZJL 49, T 48:707b16–20. Japanese translation in Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, 189–190.

33. For a translation of Yanshou’s commentary, see Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu*, 180–181.

mind's nature to the Yogācāra theory of the eighth consciousness, also known as the storehouse consciousness (S: *ālayavijñāna*), which is the repository of all memories and impressions.

- The basic idea communicated here, that the true nature of reality has no coming and going, appears in several canonical texts. Pertinent examples include the *Huayan Scripture*<sup>34</sup> and a couple of scriptures from the perfection of wisdom corpus.<sup>35</sup>
- According to Yanshou's commentary, since the habitual flow of thoughts that fill the mind is based on karmic seeds accumulated in the past, but is not directly connected with the mind's true nature, which shares the same fundamental essence as the real nature of reality, there is no need to try to put an end to those thoughts.

### *Dialogue with a Student*

有學士問馬祖和尚。如水無筋骨。能勝萬斛舟時如何。師云。我遮裏水亦無。舟亦無。說什麼筋骨。

There was a student who asked Revered Mazu, "Given that water has no muscles and bones, how is it possible that it can provide support for a boat that weights ten thousand *hu*?"

Mazu said, "Here I have neither water nor boat. What kind of muscles and bones are you talking about?"<sup>36</sup>

### Comments

- This dialogue also appears in *Jingde chuan deng lu* and *Mazu yulu*, although there the second protagonist is identified as Pang Yun (also known as Layman Pang), Mazu's best-known lay disciple.<sup>37</sup> The same exchange is also cited in one of Nanquan's sermons,<sup>38</sup> as well as in many later texts, including Pang Yun's record of sayings.<sup>39</sup> For a translation of the *Jingde chuan deng lu* version of the dialogue, see the section titled "Dialogue with Pang Yun" in Text 6.

34. HYJ 49, T 10.261a23.

35. See T 7.898c19 and T 8.912a26.

36. ZJL 92, T 48.919b24-26.

37. CDL 6, T 51.246a26-28; MY, X 119.815b5-6. See also Text 6.

38. CDL 28, T 51.445c17-18.

39. *Pang jushi yulu*, X 120.55b1-3.

- *Hu* 斛 is an ancient Chinese measuring unit, used for the calculation of volume. Originally, one *hu* was equal to ten *dou* 斗 (sometimes translated as Chinese peck); later it changed to being equal to five *dou*. It is difficult to render it exactly in terms of modern measurements, as its precise value differed at various times and places; sometimes one *hu* is interpreted to be roughly equivalent to fifty liters. Basically, the text wants to emphasize that the boat is very large and heavy.

### *Dialogue with Huairang*

馬大師問曰、如何用意、合禪定無相三昧。師曰、汝若學心地法門、猶如下種。我說法要、譬如天澤。汝緣合故、當見于道。

The great master Mazu asked, “How should one train mentally in order to be able to harmonize with the meditative absorption and the signless *samādhi*?”

Huairang said, “When you learn the teaching of the essential mind, it is like sowing seeds. When I expound the fundamental meaning of the teaching, it is like rain coming down from heaven. Since for you these (two) conditions have come together, you should be able to perceive the Way.”

馬大師又問曰、和尚云見道。道非色故、云何能觀。師曰、心地法眼、能見于道。無相三昧、亦復然矣。

The great master Mazu also asked, “You, revered sir, have spoken about perceiving the Way. Since the Way has no form, how can one see it?”

Huairang said, “The eye of truth of the essential mind can perceive the Way. The signless *samādhi* is also like that.”

馬大師[問]曰、有成壞不。師曰、若契此道、無始無終、不成不壞、不聚不散、不長不短、不靜不亂、不急不緩。若如是解、當名為道。汝受吾教、聽吾偈言。

The great master Mazu asked, “Is there creation and destruction?”

Huairang said, “If one conforms to the Way, then there are no beginning and end, no creation and destruction, no coalescing and scattering, no longness and shortness, no quietude and disturbance, no urgency and postponement. If it is understood like this, then it can be called the Way. Having received my teaching, listen to my verse:

心地含諸種、遇澤悉皆萌。三昧華無相、何壞復何成。

The mind contains various seeds,  
 When the soil is moist they all sprout.  
 The flower of *samādhi* is without any signs,  
 So what is there to be destroyed or created?"<sup>40</sup>

### Comments

- This dialogue is usually included in the various biographical entries of Huairang. In some texts it follows the famous exchange between the young Mazu and his teacher Huairang about the seeming futility of formal meditation practice, demonstrated in a dramatic fashion by Huairang's polishing of a brick, ostensibly in order to turn it into a mirror. The dialogue exists in several versions, including those in *Zu tang ji* (Huairang's entry) and *Mazu yulu*.<sup>41</sup> There are notable differences among the various versions of this dialogue.
- The text refers to Huairang simply as "the master," but the overall context makes it clear whom the text is referring to.
- According to canonical formulations, when a bodhisattva acquires the "eye of truth" or the "Dharma eye" (S: *dharma-cakṣus*), his or her vision supposedly becomes purified; namely, he or she becomes able to perceive the subtle principle(s) of reality.
- The phrase "essential mind," which appears at the beginning of the dialogue, has the literary meaning of "mental ground" or "mind ground." See also my comments on the same term in Text 3 (in the sermon about mind and Buddha). Depending on the context, in other places (including the closing verse) I have simply translated it as "mind."
- In the first part of the dialogue, Huairang suggests that authentic realization of the ultimate truth, to which Buddhist teachings are meant to point, requires individual effort and practice, but it is also dependent on receiving the right instructions from a qualified teacher.
- At the beginning of the last part of the dialogue, the Chinese text seems to be missing the character *wen* 問 (ask; question), which I have added.

40. ZJL 97, T 48.940b6-15.

41. ZTJ 3, 191-92; MY, X 119.810a19-b2.

- Within the Tiantai tradition, the sowing of seeds is interpreted as the first of the three stages (or periods) in Buddha's teaching. It is when the seeds of the teaching are sown in the listener's heart. At the second stage, the seeds ripen, and at the final stage, they come to fruition and are ready to be harvested.
- "Perceive the Way" is a literal translation. It roughly has the meaning of "realize the truth."
- The signless *samādhi* (S: *animitta-samādhi*), or the *samādhi* of no marks (signs), is one of the three main types of meditative absorption discussed in various canonical texts.

## Text 5

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# *Biographical Entry* *in Song gao seng zhuan*

### *Introduction*

SONG GAO SENG ZHUAN 宋高僧傳 (Song [Era] Biographies of Eminent Monks) was compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), a prominent cleric and historian, during the early decades of the Song dynasty. It was initially “published” in 988, following an imperial commission issued in 982.<sup>1</sup> In addition to his exemplary erudition and wide-ranging scholarship, which included extensive knowledge of the Vinaya and mastery of a broad assortment of non-Buddhist texts and traditions, Zanning also held important offices in the monastic bureaucracy. He was well-connected at the Song court and had personal ties with a number of leading figures among the officials and the literati.<sup>2</sup>

The initial impetus to compile the text was linked with a formal degree issued by the court of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (976–997), the second ruler of the Song dynasty, and its compiler was one of the leading Buddhist scholars and prelates at the imperial capital, Kaifeng 開封. Accordingly, from the beginning *Song gao seng zhuan* had an official stamp of approval. To a notable degree, its target audiences included the emperor and the sociopolitical elites of Song China, although over the centuries the text was also widely used within the Buddhist community.

Zanning compiled the text in accord with an established literary model, namely, the so-called biographies of eminent monks discussed in chapter 4.

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1. For the standard version of the original Chinese text, see T 50.709–900. There is also a modern punctuated edition, in two volumes, published by Zhonghua shuju in 1987.

2. For more about Zanning, especially his connections with leading officials and literati, see Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 163–174.

The text is quite voluminous: it consists of thirty fascicles, which contain the biographies of more than five hundred monks. While the majority of monks featured in the text receive standard biographical entries, there are also over a hundred shorter entries appended to the standard biographies. A pertinent example of that is Xitang's brief entry, which is attached at the end of Mazu's much longer entry. The biographies are divided into ten major categories, which for the most part overlap with the categories deployed in the earlier texts produced by Huijiao and Daoxuan, although there are also some differences, especially when compared with the Liao-era version.<sup>3</sup>

There is less of a divergence from the basic model deployed in *Xu gao seng zhuan*, also known as *Tang gao seng zhuan* (Tang Biographies of Eminent Monks), as Zanning used the same basic categories, which he also arranged in the same order. Nonetheless, there are some differences in emphasis, reflected in the number of biographies included in particular sections. For instance, there is a notable decrease in the space allocated to the category of exegetes (*yijie* 義解). While in the Tang-era text the exegetes are allocated eleven fascicles (out of thirty), by far the most of all groups of monks, in Zanning's text they only receive seven fascicles (that contain seventy-two standard and twenty-two abbreviated biographies).

Mazu's biographical entry in Zanning's influential collection is placed at the beginning of fascicle 10, the third of the six fascicles dedicated to the biographies of "practitioners of meditation" (*xichan* 習禪). The same category was already featured as one of the primary groupings of eminent monks in the two earlier precursors to Zanning's compilation. However, by the early Song era the practitioners of meditation category became even more important. That is reflected in the large number of biographical entries included in it: 103 standard biographies, plus twenty-nine abbreviated entries. That easily makes it the largest of the ten categories of monks included in the text. Moreover, in Zanning's text the category is dominated by monks associated with the Chan School, although there are also other monks included in it. To a large degree, that reflects notable historical shifts that took place in Chinese Buddhism during the Tang-Song transition, including the emergence of Chan as the main tradition of elite Chinese Buddhism.

The form and contents of Mazu's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan* are very much in tune with the conventions of the genre. They were also influenced by the circumstances and contingencies that shaped its compilation. It should be pointed out that although Zanning was largely sympathetic toward

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3. The ten categories are listed at the end of chapter 4.

the Chan School, he was not a member of any Chan lineage. Generally speaking, he was an important spokesperson for Buddhism as a whole, and his basic view of the religion was expansive and ecumenical. Accordingly, the collection as a whole transcends narrow sectarian boundaries and presents a pan-Buddhist vision that positions the religion, as embodied by its illustrious monks, as an important and integral part of Chinese culture and society. That makes the text unique, especially when compared with the various Chan texts discussed in this volume. Zanning's collection, while incorporating multiple perspectives, to a large extent speaks with a voice that is outside of the established parameters of Chan orthodoxy. To a notable degree, it also lacks some of the quasi-sectarian angles or agendas, observable in a number of Chan texts, including the oft-cited notion that Chan is a unique tradition that is superior to all other forms of Buddhism.

Although Zanning is often identified as the author of *Song gao seng zhuan*, he did not really write most of the text. As was customary at the time, for the most part he used a wide range of earlier sources, which he copied, edited, and integrated into the overall structure of his compilation. Nonetheless, on the whole, Zanning packaged and presented the text in ways that reflected prevalent literary tastes, with keen awareness of established conventions and in tune with the horizons of expectation of his target audiences, including the Song literati. In many places, including Mazu's entry, he tends to use flowery language and convoluted vocabulary. That enables him to showcase his literary skill and considerable learning, but perhaps at the expense of clarity and readability. In the same vein, his prose tends to be replete with arcane metaphors and contains numerous references to non-Buddhist themes, symbols, and images.

Among the primary sources Zanning utilized were the various historical records and stele inscriptions. With regard to the Mazu biographical entry, one of the primary sources Zanning used was a memorial inscription compiled by Bao Ji 包佺 (dates unknown), a mid-Tang official and literatus who later in life was enfeoffed as the duke of Danyang 丹陽.<sup>4</sup> This inscription, which is mentioned by Zanning at the end of Mazu's biographical entry, was presumably composed soon after Mazu's passing away. Unfortunately, it is no longer extant, although apparently it was still in existence during the early Song era, and presumably Zanning had an access to it (or perhaps to a copy of its text).

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4. Bao Ji does not have an official biography in JTS, but there is a short biography in XTS 149.4798–99.

### *Section Heading*

唐洪州開元寺道一傳

Biography of Daoyi, from Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou,  
(who lived during) the Tang (era).

### Comments

- The heading for Mazu's biographical entry follows the standard format used in *Song gao seng zhuan*. It includes the dynasty under which he lived, the name of the monastery most closely associated with him, the location of that monastery, and his name.
- As is the case with most other monks included in the collection, Zanning refers to Mazu by his formal ordination name, Daoyi, which later in the text he abbreviates to Yi (lit. "one").

### *Early Life*

釋道一、姓馬氏、漢州人也。華以喻性、不植於高原。浪以辯識、發明於溟海。生而凝重、虎視牛行。舌過鼻準、足文大字。根塵雖同於法體、相表特異於幻形。既云在凡之境、亦應隨機之教。年方稚孺、厭視塵躅。脫落愛取、遊步恬曠。

Shi Daoyi, whose family's surname was Ma, was a native of Hanzhou. Flowers, which can be used as a simile for the (true) nature, cannot grow in the highlands. Waves, which can be used as a metaphor for consciousness, issue forth from the vast ocean. When he was born, he already had dignified (appearance), with the gaze of a tiger and the gait of a bull. (When outwardly extended,) his tongue would pass the tip of his nose, and on (the bottom of) his feet there were large markings. While the sense faculties and the objects perceived by them are, (in the end,) identical with the essential (nature) of all phenomena, still his physical appearance was exceptional and unlike other illusory bodies. Since (we are all) still in the mundane realm, the teaching also needs to accord with actual circumstances. Even when he was a young child, he disliked the vestiges (of the mundane world). Letting go of likes and attachments, he roamed freely in the tranquil and empty (domain of reality).

## Comments

- “Shi” is often used as a surname (of sorts) for Chinese monks and nuns. It is an abbreviation that stands for Shijia or Shijia mouni 釋迦牟尼—namely, Śākyamuni, the Sage of the Śākya—which is one of the epithets of the Buddha. This naming custom was first introduced by Daoan 道安 (312–385), the renowned monastic leader during the Eastern Jin 東晉 dynasty (317–420). It is still followed, to a large degree, by Chinese monastics.
- Hanzhou is a town in central Sichuan. It was already discussed in the comments to Text 3.
- The oft-cited simile of the lotus flowers that cannot grow in the mountain highlands, but only grow in the mud of the wetlands, appears in two well-known canonical texts: the *Da bao ji jing* 大寶積經 (Collection of Great Treasures Scripture) and the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*.<sup>5</sup> There it is used to highlight the notion that the practice of the bodhisattva path unfolds within the muddy waters of everyday reality, where the bodhisattva confronts human imperfections and interacts with ignorant persons, not in the rarefied realm of absolute reality.
- The metaphor of the ocean with its waves, which is used to illustrate the workings of human consciousness, appears in a number of canonical texts, including the *Huayan Scripture* and the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*.<sup>6</sup> The same metaphor also plays an important part in the *Awakening of Faith*. There we find the idea of original enlightenment, which implies that the true nature of each person is essentially pure, but when stirred by the forces of ignorance, it gives rise to deluded consciousness and discriminating thoughts. That is compared to the surface of the ocean, which when calm can clearly reflect external reality, with its multiplicity of objects, as well as its underlying unity. However, when stirred by the winds of ignorance, the previously calm water of the mind gives way to the waves of conceptual proliferation and deluded thinking, which obscure the true nature of reality.<sup>7</sup>

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5. *Da bao ji jing* 112, T 11.634b17, and WMJ 2 (“The Buddha’s Path” chapter), T 14.549b6-7.

6. HYJ 9, T 10.704b25-c1; *Ru Lenjie jing* 1, T 16.515a6-8. For additional references from the ten-fascicle version of the *Lankāvatāra*, translated in 513 by Bodhiruci 菩提留支, which are relevant in this context, see T 16.523b19-c2, T 16.523c10-19, T 16.538c14-16, and T 16.566c3-6. There are also a number of similar references in the other two Chinese translations of the same scripture.

7. T 32.585b7-10. See also Gregory, *Tsung-mi*, 160–161.

- The statements about the young Mazu's exceptional physical appearance echo the similar passages in Quan Deyu's inscription and other records. For additional information, see the relevant comments in Text 1.
- "The sense faculties and the objects perceived by them" is a technical Buddhist term. It refers to the six sensory faculties or sense organs, namely, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and the corresponding six objects that are perceived or experienced by them: external forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile objects, and mental objects.
- In the third-to-last sentence, the text seems to try to reconcile the exultation of Mazu's unique physical features, which in a typical fashion are introduced as signs of his special spiritual aptitude, with the basic Buddhist teaching about the illusory nature of all external forms. All physical forms are, in the essential nature, empty and unreal. Consequently, enlightened Buddhists are not supposed to be obsessing about them. However, in accord with the popular notion of expedient means, there is a need to point to the profundity and efficacy of Buddhist teaching by evoking appropriate external forms, including the distinctive appearances of Buddhist sages.

### *Entry into Monastic Life*

削髮於資州唐和尚。受具於渝州圓律師。示威儀之旨、曉開制之端。浣衣鍛金、觀門都錯。大龍香象、羈絆則難。權變無方、機緣有待。

Mazu had his head shaved in Zizhou, under Rev. Tang. He received the full monastic precepts in Yuzhou, under Vinaya Master Yuan. He was imparted the essential meaning of dignified conduct and had an insight into the origins of what is approved and prohibited (in the Vinaya). The meditation methods of (the two monks, who were earlier engaged in) the washing of robes and the molding of gold, were both wrong. (Although one may be as talented as) great dragons or fragrant elephants, various hindrances make (the realization of awakening) difficult. Adeptly flexible and without (any attachment to a fixed) method, (Mazu) awaited a (better) opportunity.

### Comments

- The shaving of Mazu's head marks his entry in monastic life as a novice. That is the first step toward official entry into the monastic order.
- Revered Tang 唐和尚 (684–734), also known as Chuji 處寂 (his ordination name), was Mazu's first Buddhist teacher. He was a locally prominent Chan

teacher in Sichuan. At the time he met Mazu, Chuji probably resided at Dechun Monastery 德純寺 in Zizhou.<sup>8</sup> Traditionally, he is listed as a disciple of Zhishen 智誡 (609–702), a major disciple of Hongren 弘忍 (601–674), the reputed fifth patriarch of Chan in China. Chuji also has a standard biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan* (the first entry in fascicle 20), although it is included under the category of “spiritual resonance” (*gantong* 感通), which corresponds to the category of miracle workers (*shenyi* 神異) in Huijiao’s earlier collection of monastic biographies.<sup>9</sup>

- Yuzhou 渝州 is also known as Ba 巴 county. It corresponds to the modern city of Chongqing 重慶, formerly in Sichuan province.
- The identity of Mazu’s preceptor, Vinaya master Yuan 圓律師, under whom Mazu received the complete precepts and became a full-fledged member of the monastic community (S: *bhikṣu*), is uncertain. Brief references of this kind, about the senior prelate under whom a particular monk became a full-fledged member of the monastic order, are quite common in the biographies of Chan masters, although they do not necessarily indicate that the two monks in question had a close personal relationship.
- The metaphor of the robe washer and gold molder refers to a passage in an Āgama scripture.<sup>10</sup> There we find the story about two students of Maudgalyāyana (C: Mulian 目連), the great disciple of the Buddha, who have been unsuccessfully engaged in the practice of meditation. After learning about it, Śāriputra identifies the problem with their methods of meditation, which are not appropriate for their personalities and backgrounds. One disciple, who before becoming a monk worked as a washer of clothes (or robes), was originally engaged in the practice of mindfulness of breathing. The second disciple, who previously worked as a goldsmith, was instructed by Maudgalyāyana to practice contemplation of bodily impurity. Śāriputra tells Maudgalyāyana that they were given wrong instructions and suggests switching their methods of meditation. Following Śāriputra’s advice, the robe washer starts to practice contemplation of bodily impurity, while the gold molder (goldsmith) starts to practice mindfulness of breathing. Before long, they both meet with success in their contemplative practice.
- Dragons and elephants are two auspicious symbols. In Chinese Buddhism, the traditional symbolism attached to the dragon, which in ancient China

8. *Lidai fa bao ji* 1, T 51.184c9.

9. SGS 20, T 50.836b. See also Chuji’s brief biographical entry in *Lidai fa bao ji*, T51.184c3-16; also included in Yanagida, *Shoki no zenshi II*, 140–142. His name is also listed in CDL 4, T 51.224b, 226a.

10. *Da zhuangyan lun jing* 7, T 4.293b2-12.

was depicted as an auspicious mythical creature with great power, was sometimes merged with the traditional Buddhist concept of the *nāga*, a serpentlike creature often evoked in canonical literature. In a Buddhist context, when combined together, the two symbols (dragons and elephants) represent advanced practitioners.

- The final sentence, which is quite formulaic, seems to be indicating that the instructions the young Mazu received from his early Chan teacher in Sichuan were somewhat lacking. Consequently, when he heard about a superior Chan teacher staying at Nanyue, he promptly decided to avail himself of that opportunity and embarked on the long journey.

### *Meeting with Huairang*

聞衡嶽有讓禪師、即曹溪六祖之前後也。於是出岷峨玉壘之深阻。詣靈桂貞堂之幽寂。一見讓公、泯然無際、頓門不俟於三請、作者是齊於七人。

Mazu heard that at Hengyue there was Chan master Rang, who was a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch from Caoxi. Thereupon he left Sichuan and went on the long and arduous journey. Eventually he arrived at (Hengyue, a place of) deep solitude, with numinous cassias and pure bamboo. As soon as he met Master Rang, (he realized that,) being vast and without boundaries, the sudden approach does not depend on asking (your teacher) three times; (so far,) the practitioners who have perfected (this path) were seven in number.

### Comments

- “Chan master Rang” refers to Huairang, who is traditionally regarded as Mazu’s main teacher. For more on him, see the relevant comments in Text 1.
- Hengyue, also known as Nanyue, is also discussed in the comments in Text 1.
- Caoxi 曹溪 (which already appeared in Text 1) is in Guangdong province, in the vicinity of the modern city of Shaoguan. Here it refers to the location of the monastery of Huineng, the reputed Sixth Patriarch of Chan in China. Called Nanhua Chan Monastery 南華禪寺, it is still one of the main monasteries in that part of China.
- Instead of Sichuan, in the second sentence the Chinese text literally reads “Min, E, and Yulei,” which in this context means “the land of Mt. Min, Mt. Emei, and Mt. Yulei.” For the sake of clarity, I have opted for a less

literal rendering. These three mountains are all located in Sichuan, Mazu's native province. The first two are also often jointly referred to as Min-e 岷峨. Min can also refer to the river with that name (岷江), an important tributary to the Zhanjiang, which is also located in Sichuan. In Buddhist circles, the best known of these three mountains is Mount Emei, a major pilgrimage site associated with Puxian 普賢 (Samantabhadra), the celestial bodhisattva who personifies practice, although its rise to importance as one of the four main Buddhist mountains in China was, on the whole, a later development.

- The vague reference to seven spiritually advanced individuals seems to imply the notion of seven Chan patriarchs, which appears in some early Chan texts. While the identities of the first six were fixed when Huineng (rather than Shenxiu) was established as the sixth Chan patriarch, the identity of the next patriarch in the orthodox line of transmission remained a contested issue. Here the text appears to be suggesting that Mazu's teacher, Huairang, was the seventh Chan patriarch (rather than Shenhui or other contenders for that distinction).

### *Move to Jiangxi*

以為法離文字、猶傳蠹露。聖無方所、亦寄清源。遂於臨川棲、南康龔公、二山。所遊無滯、隨攝而化。

(Mazu) recognized that the teaching is beyond words and letters, and its transmission is (ephemeral), like the (lifespan of) moths and morning dew. A sage is without a fixed abode, but he has (a preference for) staying at the pure source. (Accordingly,) afterwards (Mazu) went on (to reside at) the two mountains: Xi in Linchuan and Gonggong in Nangkang. He was unimpeded wherever he went, teaching those that came to him.

### Comments

- The mention of “pure source” is an indication of Mazu's preference for living in a pure, quiet, and natural environment, like the two mountains mentioned in the next sentence.
- Mount Xi (the same character is also pronounced as *qi*) presumably refers to Xili mountain 西裡山 in Fuzhou (i.e., Linchuan), which is mentioned in Quan Deyu's stele inscription. Both Xili and Gonggong mountains are in Jiangxi province. For additional details, see the relevant comments in Text 1.

### *Pacifying the Mountain Demons*

先是此峯岫間魑魅叢居。人莫敢近、犯之者炎燄立生。當一宴息于是、有神衣紫玄冠致禮言、捨此地為清淨梵場。語終不見。自爾猛鷲毒螫、變心馴擾。沓貪背憎、即事廉讓。

Formerly, a host of malevolent demons resided amid the mountain peaks. The (local) people did not dare to come near (the mountain), and those who offended (the demons) immediately encountered various calamities. When Mazu went there to meditate, there were spirits with purple cloaks and black hats who came to salute him, after which they said, "We willingly give up this place, so that it can become a tranquil sanctuary for spiritual practice." After they said that, they were never seen again. From then on, ferocious birds and poisonous creatures (also) had a change of mind and became tamed. Those prone to avarice and hatred (were transformed), becoming honest and modest as they responded to circumstances.

### Comments

- The story about Mazu's entry into a mountain populated by malevolent demons, which echoes a familiar theme of a sagely monk pacifying local divinities and opening up a site for the establishment of a Buddhist hermitage or monastery, is discussed in chapter 3.
- Most probably the story takes place at Gonggong Mountain, where Mazu stayed much longer. That was also a site that was much more important for the development of his monastic congregation.
- In the Yuan-era version of the Chinese text, in the last sentence the character *seng* 僧 (monk) is replaced by the character *zeng* 憎 (hate; resent). Here I am following the second option, as it makes more sense in the present context.

### *Official Pei and the Study of Buddhism*

郡守河東裴公、家奉正信。躬勤諮稟。降英明簡貴之重。窮智術慧解之能。每至海霞歛空、山月凝照、心與境寂、道隨悟深。自明者、在乎周物。博施者、期乎濟眾。居無何、裴公移典廬江、壽春二牧。於其進修惟勤、率化不墜。

The family of the local prefect, the honorable Pei of Hedong, were pious followers of Buddhism. Often he respectfully consulted (with Mazu) in person. He valued (traditional virtues such as) wisdom and nobility. He also fully developed the ability to be intelligent and resourceful. When the colored clouds vanished (into the distance) and the mountain moon shone brightly, his mind and the external environment became tranquil; accordingly, he comprehended the Way deeply. Those who realize (the Way) by themselves take to heart (the quest for) perfection. Those who are generous toward all decidedly apply themselves to helping the multitude. After staying there for a while, Pei was reassigned to two other posts, becoming the official in charge of Lujiang and Shouchun. There he diligently practiced and was unflinching in his commitment to educate (others).

### Comments

- “Pei of Hedong” is Pei Xu; for more about him, see the relevant comments in Text 1.
- Hedong, the ancestral land of the Pei clan, was a province in Tang times that roughly corresponds to the present-day Shanxi province in northern China.
- The presence of this rather long section about a somewhat obscure official, in the middle of Mazu’s biography, points to the importance that Zanning—like other Buddhist writers before and after him—attached to the close connections between the literati and prominent Buddhist monks such as Mazu.
- Here a depiction of aspects of the Buddhist path is integrated into a discussion of Pei’s personal character and official postings. That points toward the kind of rarefied vision of Chan practice that supposedly appealed to literati such as Pei Xu.
- Lujiang is in Anhui 安徽. It is located in the present-day county with the same name, which is under the political jurisdiction of Hefei, the capital city of Anhui.
- Shouchun is an old city in Anhui, at present in the area of Shouxian 壽縣. During the late part of the Warring States period (241–224), it was the capital of the state of Chu 楚.
- The last sentence is a bit vague. I take it to mean that Pei Xu diligently applied himself to the study of Buddhism and tried to apply its teachings in his personal and public life.

*Move to Hongzhou and Connections  
with Local Officials*

大曆中、聖恩溥洽、隸名於開元精舍。其時連率路公、聆風景慕。以鍾陵之壤、巨鎮奧區。政有易柱之絃、人同湊轂。禪宗戾止、降祥則多、順而無違。居僅十祀。日臨扶桑、高山先照。雲起膚寸、大雨均霑。建中中、有詔僧如所隸、將歸舊壤。元戎鮑公、密留不遣。

During the Dali era, receiving the emperor's vast benevolence, Mazu was (officially) registered at Kaiyuan temple. At that time the civil governor Lu heard about (Mazu's) reputation, and he came to respect and admire (Mazu). (At the time) Zhongling was an important region and was (considered to be) a heartland (of the empire). The government initiated a political reshuffle, and (as) many people gathered (there was an increase in the area's population). As the Chan School arrived (in the area), many propitiously accepted (its teachings), following them without a breach. (Mazu) took up residence there for only ten years. It was like the sun, looking down at the (mythical) *fusang* tree, as it first illuminates the high mountains. The clouds gradually rise and gather (before a rain), and the downpour equally moistens (all plants). During the Jianzhong era, there was an imperial decree that monks should return to the original places where their names were registered. However, Chief Commander Bao secretly allowed Mazu to remain (in Hongzhou), so he did not have to leave.<sup>11</sup>

### Comments

- The Dali era lasted for fourteen years, from the eleventh lunar month of 766 to the twelfth lunar month of 779. It coincided with the reign of Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779) and was the last of the three reign eras instituted by his royal court.
- In other contexts, the term *sheng en* 聖恩 can also be used to refer to the benevolence of the Buddha or other deity. However, in this context it is used in its common sense, to refer to the great benevolence that supposedly emanates from the reigning emperor.

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11. In the second sentence of the Chinese text, both the Taishō and the CBETA editions have *qín* 聆, which is probably a misprint. I have changed that to *ling* 聆 (listen; hear; understand clearly), following the Zhonghua shuju edition.

- Kaiyuan, which here is referred to as *jingshe* 精舍 (temple), rather than the usual *si* 寺 (monastery), was part of the state network of official monasteries discussed in the comments to Text 1.
- “Civil governor Lu” refers to Lu Sigong, who is discussed in the comments in Text 1.
- For Zhongling, see the comments in Text 1.
- The text seems to be referring to some of the significant population changes that took place in the aftermath of the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755–763), as well as to the increasing economic and political importance of the south as a vital part of the Tang empire.
- The *fusang* is a mythical tree, mentioned in the *Shanhai jing*. It grows in the east, from where the sun rises in the morning. According to legend, the sun rises from beneath the tree, which is thus associated with sunrise. By extension, the name is also used to refer to a mythical land located in the eastern direction, usually identified as Japan.
- The metaphor of the morning sun that first illuminates the highest mountains comes from the *Huayan Scripture* (“Manifestation of the Tathāgata” chapter).<sup>12</sup> The sun represents the teaching of the Buddha, which illuminates the whole universe and is impartially given to all beings. However, its bright light of illuminating wisdom first reaches the advanced bodhisattvas, who have perfected their practice and are endowed with superior abilities. The same metaphor is also used by the Tiantai School in its well-known classification of the whole range of Buddhist teachings in terms of five distinctive periods. In that context, it symbolizes the first teaching that the Buddha supposed gave immediately after his awakening, which is identified with the *Huayan Scripture*. Being exceedingly abstruse, that teaching was not understood by the Buddha’s disciples, so he had to resort to various expedient means to get his message across. Accordingly, he went on to articulate easier and more elementary teachings, to be able to gradually guide his disciples along the path to perfect Buddhahood.
- The metaphor of a great rain (or heavy downpour) that equally moistens all plants, despite their differences, comes from the *Lotus Scripture*. It is deployed to highlight the key notion of expedient means, which permeates the scripture. There the Buddha’s preaching is often compared to the showering of Dharma rain. Here the text is specifically referring to a well-known passage from the “Parable of Medicinal Herbs” chapter. The scripture explains that although the rain falls on all plants, without any discrimination, they absorb its moisture according to the peculiar nature and

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12. HYJ 50, T 10.266a20-c29; Cheng-Chien, *Manifestation of the Tathāgata*, 70–72.

characteristic of each plant. In the same vein, the Buddha, whose appearance in the world is compared to the raising of great clouds, preaches with the same voice, equally bestowing to all beings the peerless truth that leads to ultimate salvation. However, in accord with the peculiar abilities and unique circumstances of each individual, they receive the teaching differently, in specific ways providing them with proper spiritual nourishment.<sup>13</sup>

- The Jianzhong era lasted for almost four years, from the first month of 780 until the twelfth month of 783. It concurred with the reign of Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805).
- “Chief Commander Bao” refers to Bao Fang 鲍防 (723–790), who in 780 assumed the post of civil governor of Jiangxi.<sup>14</sup>

### *Passing Away*

至戊辰歲、舉措如常、而請沐浴。訖儼然加趺歸寂。享年八十、僧臘五十。先於建昌鄱山名石門、環以絕巘、呀為洞壑。平坦在中、幽偏自久。是謀薪火塵劫之會、非議岡阜地靈之吉。

When the fifth year in the sixty-year circle arrived, conducting himself as usual, Mazu requested to take a bath. After he was finished, solemnly he sat cross-legged, and then he passed away. He was eighty years old at the time, and had been monk for fifty years. Beforehand, at a remote mountain called Shimen, located in Jianchang, (Mazu went to) an area where an expansive valley was surrounded by steep peaks. At the center there was a flat spot, which has been secluded for long time. Thereupon, he made a plan about his remains being placed there, without any further indication regarding the auspiciousness of the mountain's numinousness.

### Comments

- In the first sentence, the year in question is 788. Its designation, *wùchén* 戊辰—which is part of a stem-branch cycle that contains a total of sixty years—is created by combining the fifth of the ten “heavenly stems” with the fifth of the twelve “earthly branches.” That was also the sixteenth year of the Kaiyuan era. In terms of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac, it was a year of the dragon.

13. FHJ 3, T 9.19a27-c6; Burton Watson, *The Lotus Sutra*, 98–100.

14. For Bao Fang, see his biographies in JTS 146.3956 and XTS 159.4949–50.

- Jianchang was the name of a prefecture in Tang China, located in what is now the northwestern part of Jiangxi province. It is also mentioned in Quan Deyu's inscription.
- The final part of this passage indicates that Mazu had a premonition about his impending death, which is a common trope in monastic biographies of this kind.

### *Funeral*

亞相觀察使、隴西李公、藩寄嚴厲、素所欽承。于以率徒依歸。緬懷助理、爰用營福。道在觀化、情存飾終。輟諸侯之旌旗、資釋子之幢蓋。其時日變明悔、人萃遐邇。楫覆水而為陸、炬通宵而成晝。山門子來、財施如積。邑里僧供、飯香普熏。自昔、華嚴歸真於嵩陽、善導瘞塔於秦嶺。禮視齋(齊?)斬、人傾國城。哀送之盛、今則三之。

The honorable Li from Longxi, who occupied the positions of Chief Censor and Surveillance Commissioner, scrupulously performed his official duties and was always respected by others. Thereupon, leading his followers, he took refuge (with Mazu). Cherishing (Mazu's) spiritual guidance, he used (what he had learned) to benefit others. Although (cultivation of) the Way implies contemplation of the changing (nature of all phenomena), in light of the (disciples' natural) emotions, they gave (Mazu) a lavish funeral. They suspended the banners of the local officials and provided for the banners and canopies of the Buddha's disciples. At that time the sun changed, (as if to show its) regret, while people from far and near all assembled together. The boat was overflowing with water, and yet it was like (being on) dry land; the torch burned throughout the night, which made it appear like daylight. The disciples from the monastery came, and they made considerable donations. The villagers made offerings to the monks, and everywhere there was the smell of food and incense. In the past, Huayan passed away at Songyang, while Shandao was buried at Qinling. At that time, (large crowds of) people wearing mourning garments overfilled the country's (two) capitals.<sup>15</sup> At this time, the (number of people) who came to mourn (Mazu) was three times (as large).

15. In the second-to-last sentence of the Chinese text, I read *qí* 齊, rather than *zhāi* 齋, which I presume is a misprint. The two characters are sometimes used interchangeably.

## Comments

- Li Jian, who was the civil governor of Jiangxi at the time of Mazu's passing away, is discussed in the comments in Text 1.
- Longxi, which here refers to the ancestral home of the Li family, is the ancient name of a region that corresponds to the southern part of Gansu province. It is also an alternative name for Gansu province (as well as the name of a county in the modern province).
- "At that time the sun changed, (as if to show its) regret" is a tentative translation of the original Chinese text. However, if we take the character *hui* 悔 (regret) to be a misprint for *hui* 晦 (dark; night), then the same text can be translated as "At that time the sun changed, from bright to dark." While the second translation makes more sense, I am unable to ascertain if we are dealing with a misprint.
- Songyang is the area south of Songshan 嵩山, the famous sacred mountain. It is located in the vicinity of Luoyang, the secondary Tang capital.
- Huayan refers to Puji 普寂 (651–739), a prominent disciple of Shenxiu and one of the leading figures in the Northern school of early Chan.
- Shandao 善導 (613–681) is the famous propagator of faith in Amitābha Buddha and his Pure Land.
- Qinling mountains, also known as Zhongnan mountains 終南山, are located south of present-day Xi'an, or Tang-era Chang'an, the main Tang capital.
- Here Zanning compares Mazu's funeral service to the grand ceremonies performed at the burials of these two well-known monks, both of whom lived during the early part of the Tang era. Since these monks were buried in the vicinities of the two Tang capitals, the text seems to imply that although Mazu's burial site was in northern Jiangxi, far away from the main cultural and political centers of Tang China, his burial was a grand affair, exceeding in scale the well-attended burials of the two influential monks who were active at the two imperial capitals.

## *Premonition*

初於林中經行、座下開示、平等垂法、不標於四科。安恬告盡、刻期於二月。此明一終之先兆也。示疾云、逝俾葬遠山。凡百攀援、願留近郭。終遂窮僻、式遵理命。此又明一晦跡之素誠也。

Formerly, while walking through the grove, Mazu instructed his disciples about equally transmitting the teaching, without distinguishing the four subjects. He became peaceful and calm after he had finished

speaking, having set a date for the second month. This was a clear omen about his impending demise. Then, as he became ill, he told (his disciples) to bury him at the remote mountain after he passed away. As all (monastic and lay disciples) depended on him, they wished that he remain near the city walls. After he died, (his remains) were taken to the remote place, and the rites were done according to his final instructions. That was also an indication of his abiding fondness for reclusion.

## Comments

- It is not clear which “four subjects” the text is referring to. The same two characters can also be translated as “four divisions,” “four types,” or “four sections.” In the Vinaya tradition, for instance, the analysis of the precepts is sometimes divided into four sections: teachings about the precepts, the essence of the precepts, the practice of the precepts, and the characteristics of the precepts. However, that does not seem to be the meaning implied here. In a different context, the “four subjects” might be referring to the four areas of study—or four sets of abilities that are cultivated via proper education—described in classical Confucianism: moral conduct, speech, governmental affairs, and literature.
- Premonition about one’s impending death is a common motif in Buddhist literature. The general tenor of this whole passage resonates with parts of Quan Deyu’s stele inscription, as well as with similar depictions of premonitions related to death that appear in the hagiographies of prominent monks.
- The last part of this passage involves a play on the familiar contrast between the noise and bustle of the city, in this case Hongzhou, and the quietude of the mountain, here represented by Shimen. The text implies that, as is to be expected from an awakened Chan master, Mazu had a clear preference for reclusive life and was fond of mountain solitude, even though circumstances led him to spend most of the final decade of his life in Hongzhou.

## *Supernatural Occurrences*

將歸靈龕、爰泝淺瀨。人力未濟、舟行為遲。膏雨驟下於遠空、窮溪過變於深涉。此又明一通神之應感也。惟一知真在空、無我於有。是二俱離、假一為乘。示生死者、人能作佛。辨邪正者、魔亦似聖。現身不留於大士、負手俄萎於哲人。

As they were about to encase (Mazu's remains), the shallow rapids (of the local river) started to move upstream. Not yet able to reach the other shore by the means of manpower, the boat's movement slowed down. Nourishing rain started to pour down in the distant sky, and quickly the dried-up stream became filled with water. These unusual events were also instances of supernatural responses. Only Mazu knew the truth (that is to be located within the realm) of emptiness, and the absence of self (that is to be found) within the (realm of conventional) existence. (However,) both of them have to be given up, and then one should use the One as a vehicle (that leads to liberation). That shows how within the realm of samsara an (ordinary) person can become a Buddha. Even though it is possible to distinguish between falsehood and truth, Māra is still not unlike a holy person. His physical body did not retain (the form of) a great being; fully at ease, he promptly faded away as a sage.

### Comments

- The first part of this passage describes the supernatural occurrences that supposedly took place at the time of Mazu's funeral. The manifestation of these kinds of miraculous events, typically interpreted as auspicious signs indicative of the departed sage's high stage of spiritual development or his possession of thaumaturgic powers, are a common theme in Buddhist literature. Similar ideas are also present in the literatures and oral narratives of other religious traditions.
- The notion of an ordinary person becoming a Buddha is an idea that had—and still has—wide circulation within Chinese Buddhism.
- Māra (lit. “demon”) is the Buddhist embodiment of evil. In traditional Buddhist literature and iconography, he is often depicted as a demon who tries to tempt or hinder the Buddha. By extension, he personifies all unwholesome impulses, qualities, or influences that hinder spiritual development. Here the passage is pointing out that, although at the level of conventional truth there is clear distinction between truth and falsehood, good and evil, in terms of their essential nature, the sage and the villain are not different.
- In classical Chinese texts, the term *dashi* 大士, here translated as great being, denotes a person of high moral character. In Buddhist texts, it is sometimes used as a translation of the Sanskrit term Mahāsattva (lit. great being), which is often used interchangeably (or in conjunction) with the term bodhisattva.

### *Posthumous Honors*

弟子、智藏、鎬英、崇泰等、奉其喪紀。憲宗追諡曰、大寂禪師。丹陽公包佶、為碑紀述。權德輿、為塔銘。今海昏縣、影堂存焉。

Mazu's disciples, including Zhizang, Gaoying, and Chongtai, observed the (proper) funerary rituals. Emperor Xianzong bestowed on him the posthumous title "Chan Teacher of Great Quiescence." Bao Ji, the duke of Danyang, wrote a commemorative inscription for Mazu. Quan Deyu composed the epitaph for his memorial pagoda. At present, it is still preserved in the ancestral image hall, (located) in Haihun county.

### Comments

- The earliest list of Mazu's disciples appears in Quan Deyu's stele inscription. See the relevant comments in Text 1 for these three monks, as well as the other disciples mentioned in Quan Deyu's text.
- Emperor Xianzong (r. 805–820) was to a large extent able to curb the power of local leaders and reestablish central control over most of the Tang empire, much of which was ceded by the imperial government in the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion. Traditional historians tend to hold him in high esteem and credit him with restoring the fortunes of the Tang dynasty, which managed to outlive him by almost a century.
- The conferral of posthumous titles was a common practice during the Tang dynasty. This kind of imperially bestowed honor symbolizes the close relationship between Buddhism, as represented by its eminent monks, and the reigning dynasty.
- As noted in the introduction, Bao Ji was a Tang official and literatus. Most likely he met with Mazu around 780, when he was posted to serve as a prefect in Jiangzhou, which was adjacent to Hongzhou. He was also on close terms with Quan Deyu and Li Jian, the two prominent officials associated with Mazu and his disciples.
- Haihun is the ancient name, first attested at the end of the Han dynasty, of the area that corresponds to the modern Yongxiu county 永修县, located in the northern part of Jiangxi. The same place name is also mentioned by Quan Deyu at the beginning of his inscription.
- The ancestral image hall mentioned in the text was presumably located at Shimen, the site of Mazu's burial. We can assume that it contained an image of Mazu.

## Text 6

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# *Biographical Entry in* Jingde chuan deng lu

### *Introduction*

*JINGDE CHUAN DENG LU* 景德傳燈錄 (Record of the Lamp's Transmission from the Jingde Era) is arguably the best known and most influential of the various Chan texts that belong to the transmission of the lamp chronicle genre.<sup>1</sup> In a way, its structure and contents can be seen as classical models for the genre as a whole. Soon after its “publication” in 1004, this voluminous collection—which consists of thirty fascicles—attained the status of a major record of the Chan School's sacred history. Before long, it largely eclipsed the earlier literary precursors composed in the burgeoning genre, including *Zu tang ji*, which as we saw was eventually lost in China and left little mark on subsequent developments in the literary and historical spheres. Organized in a genealogical manner, the text was meant to cover the whole transmission of Chan, in both India and China, from the time of the historical Buddha down to the latest generation of Chan masters active in China at the time of compilation.<sup>2</sup> Altogether, it contains information about over 1,700 individuals—the vast majority of them monks—who over the centuries were purportedly associated with the Chan tradition.

At the very beginning (the first half of fascicle 1), the text covers the seven Buddhas of remote antiquity, including the six mythical Buddhas that preceded Śākyamuni, the Buddha of the present age. According to tradition, Śākyamuni is

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1. T 51.196b–467a. There are two partial English translations, geared toward a general audience and lacking in critical scholarly apparatus, both of which contain Mazu's biographical entry. See Sōhaku Ogata, *The Transmission of the Lamp: Early Masters*, 187–191, and Chung-yuan Chang, *Original Teachings of Chan Buddhism*, 148–152.

2. The text also includes biographical entries for several Korean monks.

depicted as the original progenitor of the Chan lineage within this world. He is followed by the well-known ancestral lineage of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, the last one of whom is Bodhidharma. The great majority of historical figures featured in the text are clearly identified as members of the Chan lineage. That is very much in tune with its basic conception as a comprehensive spiritual genealogy of the Chan School, framed in terms of expansive series of interlinked hagiographical narratives of varied lengths.

In many instances where the compilers did not have any legendary or biographical information at their disposal, they simply listed the names of individual monks. Most of these monks occupy fairly marginal positions in the overall pantheon of Chan sages. Nonetheless, their inclusion contributes to an expansive sense of the scope and influence of Chan, including its impact on the intuitional footprint of Buddhism in Chinese society. Their names are deliberately situated at fixed positions within the larger genealogical grid by establishing a clear master-disciple relationship with a more prominent Chan master who is given a proper biographical entry.

On a basic level, the text's genealogical structure is meant to facilitate an understanding of how the individuals featured in it are related to each other, as members of a timeless lineage that transmits the living flame of the Buddha's awakening. At the same time, the compilers were apparently not that concerned with the unique aspects of each individual's life or private persona. Instead, within the overarching structure of the text as a whole, the primary role of each individual is to serve as an embodiment of certain ideal type—or *Idealtypus* in German, to use the typological designation popularized by Max Weber (1864–1920). To put it in slightly different terms, a Chan teacher such as Mazu is principally represented, or reimagined, as a paradigmatic exemplar of a specific religious ideal. Effectively, that kind of treatment of individual monks facilitated the establishment of distinct parameters of orthodoxy, within an ideological paradigm centered on unbroken lines of transmission that, among other things, link the past with the present. By extension, such direct linkages helped legitimize the current generation of Chan masters in Song China, primarily by establishing their status as rightful heirs of the great sages of yore, all the way back to the Buddha himself.

In addition to its inclusive outlook toward the Chan traditions as a whole, *Jingde chuan deng lu* also contains biographical entries for prominent monks who are primarily associated with other Buddhist traditions. Pertinent examples include Zhiyi 智顓 (538–597), the famous Tiantai patriarch, who is given a fairly extensive biographical entry,<sup>3</sup> as well as his teacher Huisi 慧思 (515–577),

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3. CDL 27, T 51.431c9–433a3.

who in addition to his considerable doctrinal expertise was also known as a prominent teacher of meditation.<sup>4</sup> While these prominent monks are not recognized as full-fledged members of an orthodox Chan lineage, they are included as honorary representatives of a broader cohort of “Chan masters” (a term that, in this context, is simply understood as masters of meditation, which at any rate is the literal meaning of the term). To a large extent, that treatment reflects some of the ambiguities that were built into the Chan School’s corporate identity, as well as the porous lines that separated Chan masters, narrowly defined, from other types of meditation specialists. Another noteworthy inclusion of an important non-Chan figure is Chengguan, the renowned fourth patriarch of the Huayan School. While he is not given a proper biographical entry, the last fascicle contains one of Chengguan’s texts, a brief and somewhat abstruse essay on the “essentials of mind” (*xinyao* 心要).<sup>5</sup> Composed as a response to a query from the crown prince, the essay bears resemblance to some of the Chan sermons from the Tang era.

The initial manuscript of *Jingde chuan deng lu* was compiled by Daoyuan 道原 (dates unknown), during the Jingde era (1004–1007) of Emperor Zhenzong’s 真宗 (r. 997–1022) reign, as indicated by the first two characters in the title.<sup>6</sup> Its compilation occurred at a critical junction in the historical growth of the Chan School, which at the time was solidifying its position as the main tradition of elite monastic Buddhism within the unified Song empire. The text was subsequently revised under the direction of Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020)—a prominent poet, writer, and official at the Northern Song court—with the participation of Li Wei 李維 (961–1031) and other prominent literati active at the Song capital. In addition, Yang Yi, who was also a scholar at the imperial Hanlin 翰林 academy, wrote the preface that is included in the standard edition.<sup>7</sup> Since the original text compiled by Daoyuan is no longer extant, there is uncertainty about the nature and extent of the editorial changes introduced in the revised version. Ishii Shūdō has argued that the changes might have been significant, leading to the creation of a text that was more sectarian than the one originally envisioned by Daoyuan.<sup>8</sup>

As a prominent cleric and a member of the Fayan 法眼 lineage, which traced its spiritual ancestry back to Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958), Daoyuan

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4. CDL 27, T 51.431a14-c8.

5. CDL 30, T 51.459b22-c22.

6. For a brief biographic excerpt about Daoyuan, see TGL 27, X 135.437a-b. For his life and work, see Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 29–30.

7. CDL 1, T 51.196b12-197a9.

8. Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 8–25.

adopted an inclusive approach in his selection of historical figures and textual materials to be incorporated into his wide-ranging compilation. On the whole, he conceived of Chan as a multibranch or multilinear tradition. That stood in contrast to some of the unilinear conceptions of lineage that had currency in early Chan. Consequently, his text was instrumental in establishing such view as a broadly accepted orthodoxy within Chan circles, notwithstanding later factional squabbles, such as the partisan struggle that pitted representatives of the Linji and Caodong lineages during the later Song period. As is well known, in the twelfth century the main factional conflict centered around the contrasting approaches to Chan meditation advocated by Dahui Zonggao and Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 (1091–1157), or more broadly the two opposing groups of followers of these two monks.<sup>9</sup> The fairly ecumenical perspective adopted by Daoyuan is also indicated by his inclusion of Chan monks associated with what, by his time, were considered to be collateral lineages of early Chan. Prime examples of that are prominent monks affiliated with the Niutou, Northern, and Baotang 保唐 schools (included in fascicle 4), such as Niutou Farong,<sup>10</sup> Shenxiu,<sup>11</sup> and Wuzhu 無住 (714–774).<sup>12</sup>

It seems that, generally speaking, Daoyuan espoused relatively tolerant views that resonated with the kinds of inclusive perspectives that at earlier times were promoted by other prominent Chan teachers. Pertinent examples include Zongmi and Yanshou, both of whom were inclined to see Chan teachings as being compatible with the canonical tradition, even though in Zongmi's case he was also concerned with establishing a clear hierarchy among the various schools of early Chan. In contrast, the main editors responsible for the final version of the text were associated with the Linji lineage, which at that time exhibited quasi-sectarian predilections. Prominent figures connected with the Linji lineage were also leading proponent of the familiar notion of Chan as a unique transmission of the essence of Buddhism, which by definition made it superior to other Buddhist traditions.<sup>13</sup>

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9. For more details about these factional struggles within Song Chan, see Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*.

10. CDL 4, T 51.226c26–228b8.

11. CDL 4, T 51.231b12–29. Shenxiu's biographical entry is rather short, especially when compared with those of other monks of equal or lesser stature.

12. CDL 4, T 51.34b10–235a7.

13. In addition to Ishii's publication cited earlier, the introduction of editorial changes in the later version of CDL is also discussed in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 477–478; Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 172–186; and Albert Welter, "Lineage and Context in the Patriarch's Hall Collection and the Transmission of the Lamp," 156. My discussion is indebted to all these sources.

Mazu's main biographical entry in *Jingde chuan deng lu* is presented at the beginning of fascicle 6.<sup>14</sup> He is listed as the main successor of Huairang, as well as first among the orthodox Chan masters of his generation, that is, ahead of his contemporary Shitou, whose biographical entry appears at the beginning of fascicle 14. Mazu's biographical entry is followed by the entries of his disciples, which are more in number than the entries of the disciples of any other Chan teacher. They also occupy much more space in the text—three fascicles in total, namely, fascicles 6, 7, and 8—than the disciples of any other Chan teacher. Altogether, they comprise around 10% of the whole text. For the sake of comparison, all disciples of Mazu's direct disciples (i.e. Mazu's second-generation disciples), who include major Chan figures such as Huangbo and Zhaozhou, receive noticeably less space (namely, the next two fascicles).<sup>15</sup>

In addition to his biographical entry, Mazu also appears in the entries of a number of his disciples. Examples include the entries for Baizhang,<sup>16</sup> Xitang,<sup>17</sup> Wuye,<sup>18</sup> Nanquan,<sup>19</sup> Magu Baoche 麻谷寶徹 (dates unknown),<sup>20</sup> and Deng Yinfeng 鄧隱峰 (dates unknown),<sup>21</sup> to mention a few. Some of the sayings attributed to Mazu, such as the oft-cited statement in which he equates the mind of each person with the mind of the Buddha (see later), as well as some of the stories that feature him as a major protagonist, are also quoted or alluded to in the entries of other Chan teachers, such as Shitou,<sup>22</sup> Danxia,<sup>23</sup> and Dongshan.<sup>24</sup> In most of those instances, key aspects of Mazu's religious persona, which tends to be constructed retroactively, are presented via the literary format of the encounter dialogue.

The general tendency to emphasize the encounter dialogue model—and by extension to convey a radical image of Mazu and the broad Chan movement

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14. A general survey of the contents of CDL is available in Welter, "Lineage and Context in the Patriarch's Hall Collection and the *Transmission of the Lamp*," 156–170.

15. For more on Mazu's disciples, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 234–236.

16. CDL 6, T 51.249b26-c16.

17. CDL 7, T 51.252a23-b8.

18. CDL 8, T 51.257a7-15.

19. CDL 8, T 51.257b23-24.

20. CDL 7, T 51.253c20-23.

21. CDL 8, T 51.259b6-20.

22. CDL 14, T 51.309b22-27.

23. CDL 14, T 51.310b24-c11.

24. CDL 15, T 51.321b23-27.

that followed him—is one of the defining features of *Jingde chuan deng lu*. In that sense, the text was very influential in the construction of the familiar image of Chan as an iconoclastic tradition, with a unique ethos and exceptional mode of instruction that purportedly made it stand in sharp contrast to conventional Buddhism.

In addition to Mazu's main biographical entry translated here, *Jingde chuan deng lu* also includes another entry in fascicle 28, a transcript of one of his sermons. That text (Text 7) is presented separately in the next section.

### *Early Life*

江西道一禪師、漢州什邡人也。姓馬氏。容貌奇異、牛行虎視。引舌過鼻、足下有二輪文。幼歲依資州唐和尚落髮。受具於渝州圓律師。

Chan teacher Daoyi from Jiangxi was a native of Shifang in Hanzhou. His family's surname was Ma. His physical appearance was exceptional: he had the gait of an ox and the stare of a tiger. When stretched outwardly, his tongue went over (the tip of) his nose; on his soles there were two marks in the shape of wheels. During his youth he had his head shaved under the tutelage of Rev. Tang from Zizhou. He received the full (monastic precepts) at Yuzhou under Vinaya master Yuan.

### Comments

- All the basic information given here, including the places of Mazu's birth and ordination, as well as the identities of his ordination masters, already appeared in the earlier texts translated before. Consequently, here I am not providing additional notes or cross-references. Interested readers can find this kind of information in my comments to the other translations, especially in Texts 1, 3, and 5. For the most part, the same applies to the rest of the material translated in this section.

### *Meeting with Huairang*

唐開元中、習禪定於衡嶽傳法院。遇讓和尚。同參九人、唯師密受心印。

During the Kaiyuan era of the Tang dynasty, Mazu was practicing meditation at Chuanfa Temple on Hengyue Mountain. There he met

Reverent Huairang. There were nine disciples who together studied (under Huairang), but it was only Mazu who intimately received the mind-seal.

### Comments

- Chuanfa Temple, at Hengyue (Nanyue) Mountain, where Mazu is said to have practiced meditation, is not mentioned in any pre-Song source. While this is its earliest mention, the same information also appears in *Mazu yulu* and is repeated in many later sources. The temple is also known as Mazu an 馬祖庵 (Mazu's hermitage), and it still exists at Nanyue.
- Huairang, Mazu's main teacher, already appeared several times in the other texts translated earlier.
- "Mind-seal" usually refers to the Buddha mind, which according to normative Chan belief is intimately transmitted from a master to a disciple.

### *Interlinear Commentary: Stature and Prophecy*

讓之一、猶思之遷也。同源而異派。故禪法之盛、始于二師。劉軻云、江西主大寂、湖南主石頭。往來憧憧、不見二大士、為無知矣。西天般若多羅記達磨云、震旦雖闊、無別路。要假(假)姪孫、腳下行。金雞解銜一顆米、供養十方羅漢僧。又六祖能和尚、謂讓曰、向後佛法、從汝邊去、馬駒蹋殺天下人。厥後江西法嗣、布於天下。時號馬祖焉。

There was Daoyi, (who was a disciple) of Huairang; likewise, there was Xiqian, (who was a disciple) of Xingsi. Coming from the same source, they formed different branches (of the Chan School). Accordingly, the flourishing of the Chan School started with these two masters. Liu Ke stated, "Daji was the leading master in Jiangxi, while Shitou was the leading master in Hunan. Those who irresolutely went back and forth, but did not really meet these two teachers, were deemed to be ignorant." Prajñātāra of India told Bodhidharma, "Although China is vast, there is no other way. If you want to go to connect with our descendants, you should now embark on that journey."<sup>25</sup> The golden pheasant holds a grain of rice in its mouth,

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25. In the second sentence from the quotation attributed to Prajñātāra, the original Chinese text has *jiǎ* 假 (false), which I am instead reading as *jia* 假 (arrive, come).

which it offers to all Arhat monks in the ten directions. Furthermore, the sixth patriarch, Reverent Huineng, told Huairang, “In the future, the Buddhist teaching will issue forth from (someone) beside you. A colt will trample to death the people in the world.” Thereupon the Dharma descendants (of Mazu, who taught) in Jiangxi, spread all over the world. At that time he came to be known as Patriarch Ma (Mazu).

### Comments

- This section is inserted as an interlinear commentary into the original text. It is uncertain who the author is, but on the whole its contents resonate with information that is available in other sources, including the inscription by Liu Ke cited in the text. Its basic purpose is to highlight the great stature and immense historical importance of Mazu.
- Xiqian (simply referred to as Qian in the text) refers to Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790), the well-known Chan master who was Mazu’s contemporary. During his lifetime he led a relatively small community at Nanyue and was not very famous or influential, especially when compared with Mazu. Because of that, there is a paucity of early data about him. Moreover, he is also largely ignored by Zongmi in his writings about Chan history and doctrine. That changed when he became recognized, together with Mazu, as one of the two progenitors of all subsequent Chan lineages. From the tenth century onward, Shitou is regularly featured as a major patriarchal figure in virtually all works on Chan history.<sup>26</sup>
- Xingsi (referred to as Si in the text) refers to Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (d. 740), traditionally considered to be the teacher of Shitou, as well as a disciple of Huineng.
- The second and third sentence point to the normative division of the so-called Southern School of Chan into two main branches, anchored by Mazu and Shitou. Traditionally, these two monks are celebrated as the two key figures in the widely accepted version of the Chan School’s comprehensive genealogy, which is embedded into the basic structure of *Jingde chuan deng lu*. Accordingly, all later schools or lineages of Chan traced their spiritual genealogy back to one of these two masters.

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26. For the relationship between Mazu and Shitou, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 97–99.

- The “common source” alluded to in the text is Huineng, the putative sixth patriarch, who according to tradition inherited the orthodox line of transmission, initially brought into China by Bodhidharma.
- Liu Ke 劉軻 (fl. c. 835), a late Tang literatus known for his prose and historical writing, was a follower of the “ancient prose” (*guwen* 古文, also referred to as classical prose) movement. He wrote a number of commemorative inscriptions for Chan monks who were active during the late eighth and early ninth century. That includes Shitou (see next comment), Danxia, Nanquan, Dongsì Ruhui 東寺如會 (744–823), and Zhaotì Huilang 招提慧朗 (738–820).
- The quoted passage comes from Shitou’s stele inscription, which was composed by Liu Ke during the 821–824 period, several decades after Shitou’s death, in response to a request made by Shitou’s disciples in Hunan. The inscription is no longer extant, but it is quoted in Shitou’s biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*.<sup>27</sup>
- Daji (Great Quiescence) refers to Mazu. It is his posthumous name (see the end of Text 5, as well as the end of this text).
- According to the standard Chan genealogy of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, Prajñātāra is the twenty-seventh Chan patriarch and the teacher of Bodhidharma.
- Zhendan 震旦 is a Chinese transliteration of an ancient Indian name for China. Here it is probably used for literary effect, to make it appear that the (presumably apocryphal) conversation between the two patriarchs took place in India, before Bodhidharma’s coming to China.
- The image of a golden pheasant (or perhaps a golden fowl) with divine attributes appears in ancient Chinese mythology.
- Arhat is a Buddhist saint who, having followed the teachings of the Buddha, has achieved liberation from the circle of birth and death. In Mahāyāna literature, the arhats are sometimes criticized for their selfishness and lack of genuine insight into the ultimate truth. Nonetheless, in medieval China there was a thriving Arhat cult, and numerous Arhat figures were integral parts of standard Buddhist iconography and popular lore.
- The two prophecies—by Prajñātāra and Huineng—are meant to highlight Mazu’s imposing historical stature and his momentous impact on the development of Chan Buddhism. The making of prophecies, which appear in a number of scriptures, including the *Lotus Scripture*, is a notable feature of both canonical and popular Buddhism. It also has counterparts in similar

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27. SGS 9, T 50.764a; also quoted in Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, 19, and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 98.

cultural practices that were in vogue in traditional Chinese society, some of which predated the introduction of Buddhism.

- The mention of a “colt” in Huineng’s prophecy involves a play of words on Mazu’s name (*ma* meaning horse).

### *Early Teaching and Rise to Fame*

始自建陽佛迹嶺、遷至臨川。次至南康龔公山。大歷中、隸名於開元精舍。時連帥路嗣恭、聆風景慕、親受宗旨。由是四方學者、雲集坐下。

Initially Mazu moved from Fojiling, in Jianyang, to Linchuan. Then he went to Gonggong Mountain, in Nankang. During the Dali era he became affiliated with Kaiyuan temple. At that time, the civil governor, Lu Sigong, learned about (Mazu’s) reputation; (the governor) came to respect and admire him, and he personally received (Mazu’s) essential teachings. From then on, (numerous) disciples, hailing from all four directions, assembled like clouds under (Mazu’s) seat.

### Comments

- Fojiling, along with the rest of the Jiangyang area, is located in the northern part of present-day Fujian, in the vicinity of the modern city of Jianyang (present population around 350,000). During the mid-Tang period it was part of the Jiangnan East province. There is still a monastery there, called Sheng ji si 聖迹寺 (Monastery of the Sage’s Footprints), which is said to have been built during the late Tang era. It seems that Mazu is the earliest noted monk associated with this area.

### *Sermon on the Identity of Mind and Buddha*

一日謂眾曰、汝等諸人、各信自心是佛、此心即是佛心。達磨大師、從南天竺國來。躬至中華、傳上乘一心之法、令汝等開悟。...

One day Mazu said to the congregation: “Each and every one of you should believe that your own mind is Buddha, that this very mind is identical with the Buddha mind. The great master Bodhidharma came from south India. When he arrived in China, he transmitted the One Mind teaching of the supreme vehicle, in order to cause all of you to experience awakening. . . .”

## Comments

- The rest of this sermon, including the closing verse, is pretty much the same—with a few insignificant discrepancies—as the sermon included in Mazu's biographical entry in *Zu tang ji*, translated in Text 3 (under the same heading). Much of it also appears in a longer sermon included in *Zong jing lu* (see Text 4), but parts of that version are not the same.
- Here I have omitted the rest of the sermon, which occupies a central position in Mazu's biographical entry, in order to avoid repetition and redundancy.

### *Dialogue about Mind and Buddha*

僧問、和尚為什麼說、即心即佛。師云、為止小兒啼。僧云、啼止時如何。師云、非心非佛。僧云、除此二種人來、如何指示。師云、向伊道不是物。僧云、忽遇其中人來時如何。師云、且教伊體會大道。

A monk asked (Mazu), "Reverend, why do you say that mind is Buddha?"

Mazu said, "To stop the crying of small children."

The monk asked, "What are you going to say when they have stopped crying?"

Mazu said, "It is neither mind nor Buddha."

The monk asked, "If there is someone who does not belong to either of these two categories of persons, how are you going to instruct him?"

Mazu said, "I will tell him that it is not a thing."

The monk asked, "How about when you suddenly meet someone who is in the middle of it?"

Mazu said, "I will teach him to personally realize the great Way."

## Comments

- This dialogue is frequently quoted or alluded to in later Chan/Zen sources.<sup>28</sup>
- "Mind is Buddha" is a famous and oft-cited adage that is traditionally associated with Mazu and his teachings.<sup>29</sup> The basic idea about the essential identity between the mind of an ordinary person and the Buddha mind, however, can be traced back to various canonical sources, including the

28. For instance, see ZJL 25, T 48.560a19-b18; CDL 7, T 51.252b4-6.

29. For more on the "mind is Buddha" adage, including its doctrinal meaning and textual sources, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 168–172.

*Huayan Scripture*.<sup>30</sup> The same idea already appeared in the previous sermon (see also the same sermon in Text 3).

- After the initial assertion of essential identity, the rest of the dialogue problematized the simple equation of mind and Buddha, which is relocated to the category of elementary teaching, suitable for novice practitioners. In the end, the essential truth cannot be predicated in terms of any conceptual categories or expressed via the medium of words. Accordingly, it is “not a thing” with a distinct ontological or epistemological status, nor can it be the direct object of perception or discursive knowledge. On the other hand, while the truth—or the Way, in traditional Chinese parlance—might be ineffable and ungraspable, it can still be experienced or realized directly via intuitive insight, as suggested by Mazu in the last sentence.<sup>31</sup>

### *Dialogue about Bodhidharma's Coming from the West*

僧問、如何是西來意。師云、即今是什麼意。

A monk asked (Mazu): “What is the meaning of (Bodhidharma’s) coming from the West?”

Mazu said, “What is the meaning right now?”

### Comments

- The often-repeated and highly formulaic question about the putative meaning—or significance—of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West, namely, from India to China, is a well-known element of classical Chan/Zen lore. It also features prominently in contemporary Zen discourse. The question points to the essential insight or message, centered on the timeless truth of awakening, which was allegedly transmitted by Bodhidharma. It is presumed to capture a key facet of religious life and experience that is unique to the Chan tradition, but also forms the essence of Buddhism. The same question is featured in many other encounter dialogues (including the one presented later).

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30. For instance, see T 10.102a23-24; translated in Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, vol. 1, 452.

31. For a detailed analysis of the whole dialogue between Mazu and the anonymous monk, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 177–182.

- Mazu's answer seems to be pointing to the timelessness and ubiquity of reality, which has the same essential quality, irrespective of time and place. According to that interpretative scheme, Bodhidharma simply pointed to that ineffable reality, which is fully present at the moment when the monk asks the question.

### *Dialogue with Pang Yun*

龐居士問、如水無筋骨、能勝萬斛舟。此理如何。師云、遮裏無水亦無舟、說什麼筋骨。

Layman Pang asked (Mazu): "It is like water, which has no muscles and bones, and (yet) it can support a boat of ten thousand *hu*. What do you make out of it?"

Mazu said, "Here there is no water, and there is no boat either; what kind of muscles and bones are you talking about?"

### Comments

- Pang Yun 龐蘊 (d. 808?) is Mazu's best-known lay disciple. Within Chan/Zen circles he is celebrated for his Chan poetry, as well as for his role as an exemplary Chan layman.
- The same story also appears in *Zong jing lu* (see Text 4), although there Mazu's interlocutor is depicted as an anonymous student.
- *Hu* is an ancient measuring unit, sometimes referred to as a Chinese bushel (see also the relevant comment in Text 4).

### *Exchanges with Baizhang*

一日師上堂。良久、百丈收却面前席。師便下堂。百丈問、如何是佛法旨趣。師云、正是汝放身命處。師問百丈、汝以何法示人。百丈豎起拂子。師云、只遮(這)箇為當別有。百丈拋下拂子。

One day Mazu ascended the (Dharma) hall (to preach). After (Mazu remained silent for) a good while, Baizhang collected the sitting mat in front of him. Mazu then left the hall.

(At another occasion,) Baizhang asked (Mazu), "What is the essential purport of the Buddha's teaching?"

Mazu said, "It is precisely the point at which you let go of your body and life."

Mazu (then) asked Baizhang, “Later on, what kind of method are you going to use when you instruct other people?” Baizhang (took) the whisk and held it upright. Mazu said, “Is that all, or you also have something else (to show me)?”<sup>32</sup> Baizhang then put down the whisk.

### Comments

- This whole section can be read as three separate exchanges that have been joined together.
- Baizhang, who was already mentioned a number of times, is arguably the best-known disciple of Mazu and one of most prominent Chan masters of all time.
- The first part of this section is almost the same as the short exchange that appears in *Zu tang ji*, titled “Silent Sermon” (see Text 3).
- The last part of the section also appears in *Zu tang ji*; see the section titled “Exchange with Baizhang.”
- Alternative versions of these exchanges appear—sometimes together and other times separately—in a number of other Chan texts, including *Gu zunsu yulu*, *Wu zong yuan* 五宗原 (Source of the Five Schools) and *Wu deng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (Compendium of the Five Lamp [Chronicles]).<sup>33</sup> They are also commented upon, or alluded to, in many later Chan texts.
- As pointed out in the comments on the *Zu tang ji* version, in the first exchange Baizhang’s act of collecting his sitting mat indicates an end of the “silent sermon.” It also implies a subversion of conventional monastic procedures or a partial switch of roles with Mazu.

### *Dialogue about Being in Accord with the Way*

僧問、如何得合道。師云、我早不合道。

A monk asked (Mazu): “How should one achieve (a mental state that is in) accord with the Way?”

Mazu said, “For a long time I have not been in accord with the Way.”

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32. In the second-to-last sentence of the Chinese text, I read *zhè* 這 (this) instead of *zhē* 遮 (to cover up; to conceal), following some of the alternative versions of the text.

33. For examples of other versions centered on the last part of the exchange, which features the raising and lowering of the whisk, see GZY 1, X 118.161a9-10; GZY 27, X 118.504a5-6; *Wu zong yuan* 1, X 114.214b4-7; *Wu deng huiyuan* 3, X 138.86a9-10.

## Comments

- This is the earliest version of this exchange. It also appears in *Mazu yulu* and several other later sources.<sup>34</sup>
- The state of being in “accord with the way” implies a high stage of spiritual development. The same expression also appears in non-Buddhist sources, including ancient texts that predate the introduction of Buddhism into China.

### *Another Dialogue about Bodhidharma's Coming from the West*

僧問、如何是西來意。師便打。乃云、我若不打汝、諸方笑我也。

A monk asked (Mazu): “What is the meaning of (Bodhidharma's) coming from the West?”

Mazu then hit him. Thereafter he said, “If I did not hit you, (people) everywhere will laugh at me.”

## Comments

- In a number of later sources, including *Mazu yulu*, this and the previous exchange appear together, in a manner that suggests they form a single dialogue with the anonymous interlocutor.
- As noted in part I of this volume (chapters 2 and 6), the hitting of disciples was one of the peculiar “pedagogical” techniques that was supposedly pioneered by Mazu and was subsequently adopted by other Chan masters.

### *Dialogue with a Young Monk*

有小師行脚迴。於師前畫箇圓相、就上禮拜了立。師云、汝莫欲作佛否。云、某甲不解捏(捏)目。師云、吾不如汝。小師不對。

There was a young monk who came back from a pilgrimage. He drew a circle in front of Mazu and then stood inside (the circle) after making a bow.

Mazu said, “You want to become a Buddha, don't you?”

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34. MY, X 119.815b12. See also X 118.161a10-11; X 138.86a11.

The monk said, “I do not know how to rub my eyes.”

Mazu said, “I am not like you.”

The young monk had no response.

### Comments

- In the *Mazu yulu* version of this story, the name of the young monk is given as Danyuan 耽源.<sup>35</sup> Otherwise, the two versions are pretty much the same.
- The expression “(to create illusory images by) rubbing the eyes”—or, in its longer form, “to create (illusory) flowers by rubbing the eyes” (捏目生花)—was popular in Chan circles and appears in a number of texts (including six more mentions in *Jingde chuan deng lu*). It can be traced back to a passage in the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*.<sup>36</sup> It is meant to illustrate the illusory creations conjured up by the deluded mind.

### *Vignette Featuring Deng Yinfeng and Shitou*

鄧隱峯辭師。師云、什麼處去。對云、石頭去。師云、石頭路滑。對云、竿木隨身、逢場作戲。便去。纔到石頭、即繞禪床一匝、振錫一聲。問、是何宗旨。石頭云、蒼天蒼天。隱峯無語。却迴舉似於師。師云、汝更去。見他道蒼天、汝便噓噓。隱峯又去石頭。一依前、問、是何宗旨。石頭乃噓噓。隱峯又無語。歸來。師云、向汝道、石頭路滑。

Deng Yinfeng was taking a leave from Mazu’s (monastery). Mazu asked him, “Where are you going?”

Yinfeng replied, “I am going to (see) Shitou.”

Mazu told him, “Shitou’s path is slippery.”

Yinfeng replied, “I will take a wooden stick with me and will play along, as the actual circumstances (at Shitou’s monastery) present themselves.” Then he went away.

As soon as he arrived at Shitou’s (monastery), he walked around (Shitou’s) meditation seat one time, (after which) he made a sound by shaking his stick. (Then) he asked (Shitou), “What is the essential purport of this?”

35. X 119.815b14-16; see also GZY 1, X 118.161a12-14.

36. *Da foding shoulengyan jing* 8, T 19.141b23-24.

Shitou said, "Heaven! Heaven!" Yinfeng was rendered speechless.

Then Yinfeng returned (to Mazu's monastery) and recounted to Mazu what had happened. Mazu told him, "You should go back (to see Shitou again). After he says, 'Heaven! Heaven!' you should make a hushing sigh twice."

Yinfeng went back to Shitou's (monastery) one more time. He did as before, and then he asked (the same question), "What is the essential purport of this?"

Shitou made a hushing sigh twice. Once again, Yinfeng was rendered speechless. He then returned (to Mazu's monastery).

(After he was told about what had happened), Mazu said, "I told you that Shitou's path is slippery."

### Comments

- This story also appears in *Mazu yulu*, as well as in a number of later Chan texts. The two versions are quite similar. It is one of several stories that feature disciples going back and forth between Mazu and Shitou.
- Deng Yinfeng, also referred to as Yingfeng, was a prominent disciple of Mazu. He has biographical entries in *Song gao seng zhuan* and *Jingde chuan deng lu*.<sup>37</sup>
- Shitou literary means stone. Accordingly, Mazu's initial warning to Yinfeng involves a play of words. Literally, it reads "the stone path is slippery."

### *Dialogue with an Anonymous Monk*

有僧於師前作四畫。上一長、下三短。問云、不得道一長三短。離此四字外、請和尚答。師乃畫地一畫、云、不得道長短、答汝了也。(忠國師聞、別云、何不問老僧。)

There was a monk who drew four lines in front of Mazu. The top one was long, while the bottom three were short.

The monk asked (Mazu), "You cannot say that one (line) is long and three (lines) are short. Without using these four words, please, reverend sir, answer me."

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37. See SGS 21, T 50.847a2-27; CDL 8, T 51.259b5-c11.

Mazu then drew a single line and said, “Without talking about long and short—I answered you.”

(When National Teacher Huizhong heard about it, he proposed an alternative statement: “Why didn’t you ask me?”)

### Comments

- The same story also appears in *Zu tang ji* (see the section titled “Drawing lines on the ground” in Text 3), as well as in *Mazu yulu* and *Tiansheng guang deng lu*.<sup>38</sup> Despite some discrepancies, the three versions are quite similar.
- Here the text identifies the anonymous interlocutor as a monk, while the *Zu tang ji* version simply has “a person.”
- In the fourth sentence of the Chinese text, we find the monk asking Mazu not to use the “four words.” In contrast, in the *Zu tang ji* version we have the “four propositions,” while in the *Mazu yulu* version we have the “four propositions and hundred negations.”
- National Teacher Huizhong (abbreviated to Zhong in the Chinese text) refers to Nanyang Huizhong, who already appeared in Text 3.

### *Exchange with a Monastic Lecturer*

有一講僧來問云、未審禪宗傳持何法。師却問云、坐主傳持何法。彼云、忝講得經論二十餘本。師云、莫是師子兒否。云、不敢。師作噓噓聲。彼云、此是法。師云、是什麼法。云、師子出窟法。師乃默然。彼云、此亦是法。師云、是什麼法。云、師子在窟法。師云、不出不入、是什麼法。無對、(百丈代云、見麼)。遂辭出門、師召云、坐主。彼即迴首、師云、是什麼。亦無對。師云、遮(這)鈍根阿師。

There was a monastic lecturer who, when he come (to see Mazu), asked, “I have not yet been able to ascertain what kind of teaching is propagated and upheld by the Chan School?”

Mazu responded by asking him, “What kind of teaching are you, lecturer, propagating and upholding?”

The lecturer replied, “I have lectured on over twenty scriptures and treatises.”

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38. MY, X 119.815b17–816a1; TGL 8, X 135.653b6-9.

Mazu said, "Aren't you a lion's cub?"

The lecturer said, "Thank you." Mazu made a hissing sound.

The lecturer said, "That is a teaching."

Mazu asked, "What kind of teaching is it?"

The lecturer said, "It is the teaching of a lion leaving a cave." Mazu then remained silent.

The lecturer said, "That is also a teaching."

Mazu asked, "What kind of teaching is it?"

The lecturer said, "It is the teaching of a lion being inside a cave."

Mazu said, "When there is neither leaving nor entering, what kind of teaching is that?"

The lecturer had no answer. (Baizhang proposed an alternate response: "Do you see?").

As he was leaving and was on the verge of exiting the door, Mazu called him, "Lecturer!"

As the lecturer was turning his head, Mazu asked him, "What is it?" Again, the lecturer had no answer.

Mazu said, "Ah, what a dull-witted monk."

### Comments

- This story also appears in *Zu tang ji* (see the section titled "Lion in a Cave" in Text 3). There are several minor differences, but the two versions are mostly the same.
- The short line with Baizhang's alternative response, which I have placed in parentheses, is an interlinear commentary inserted into the main body of the text.

### *Dialogue with a Local Official*

洪州廉使問云、弟子喫酒肉即是、不喫即是。師云、若喫是中丞祿。不喫是中丞福。

The surveillance commissioner of Hongzhou asked (Mazu), "Is it proper for me, a (Buddhist) disciple, to consume alcohol and meat, or should I abstain from them?"

Mazu said, "If you consume (alcohol and meat)—that is your good fortune. If you do not consume them—that is your blessing."

## Comments

- This short exchange between Mazu and an anonymous official also appears in *Mazu yulu*.
- Buddhist monks in China were prohibited from eating meat and consuming alcohol. The proscription of alcohol is also one of the five precepts, which form the basic code of ethics for lay Buddhists. Technically, lay disciples were not expected to be strict vegetarians. Nonetheless, since the killing of animals and the consumption of their flesh were perceived to be unwholesome acts that contravened the Mahāyāna ideal of universal compassion, many lay Buddhists adhered to—or at least aspired to—a vegetarian diet.

*Disciples and Passing Away*

師入室弟子、一百三十九人。各為一方宗主、轉化無窮。師於貞元四年正月中、登建昌石門山。於林中經行、見洞壑平坦處。謂侍者曰、吾之朽質、當於來月歸茲地矣。言訖而迴。至二月四日、果有微疾。沐浴訖、跏趺入滅。元和中、追諡大寂禪師。塔曰大莊嚴。今海昏縣、影堂存焉。

Mazu had one hundred and thirty-nine close disciples. Each one of them became a prominent Chan teacher in his region, edifying (their followers) without an end. During the first (lunar) month of the fourth year of the Zhenyuan era, he climbed Shimen mountain in Jianchang. While walking through the grove, he saw a flat area in a valley. He told his attendant, “Next month my decaying body should be returned to this place.” Having said that, he went back (to Hongzhou). On the fourth day of the second (lunar) month, he had mild symptoms of an illness. After taking a bath, he sat cross-legged and passed away. During the Yuanhe era he received the posthumous title “Chan Teacher of Great Quiescence.” His (memorial) pagoda was named “Great Adornment.” Presently it is still preserved in the ancestral image hall, (located) in Haihun county.

## Comments

- There are various versions about the number of Mazu’s close disciples, but the general consensus is that he had more than any other Chan master from the Tang era. *Jingde chuan deng lu* provides the names of almost all of them

and allocates biographical entries to many of them. The total number of disciples for whom we have their names is a bit higher, around 145 or 148, according to estimates.<sup>39</sup>

- There is slight discrepancy regarding the exact date of Mazu's passing away. The date given here, when converted to the modern calendar, is March 21, 788. In contrast, according to Quan Deyu's inscription and the stone inscription from Baofeng monastery, the date is March 17.
- The basic information about Mazu's premonition, passing away, and the posthumous honors he received basically follows his biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*. Some clauses, as well as whole sentences, are taken pretty much verbatim from Zanning's text.
- The last two sentences are taken from Mazu's biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*, but they are not well put together. What was preserved in the ancestral image hall was the epitaph composed by Quan Deyu for Mazu's memorial pagoda, not the pagoda itself.

### *Interlinear Commentary: Posthumous Honors and Pagoda Restoration*

高僧傳云、大覺禪師、按權德輿作塔銘言。馬祖終於開元寺。荼毘於石門、而建塔也。至會昌沙汰後、大中四年七月、宣宗勅、江西觀察使裴休、重建塔并寺。賜額寶峯。

The (Song-era) *Biographies of Eminent Monks* states (that Mazu's posthumous title was) "Chan Teacher of Great Awakening" and references that Quan Deyu wrote the inscription for his (memorial) pagoda. Mazu passed away at Kaiyuan monastery (in Hongzhou). He was cremated at Shimen (mountain), where his (memorial) pagoda was erected. After the end of the Huichang (era) persecution (of Buddhism), during the seventh month of the fourth year of the Dazhong era, in response to an imperial decree issued by (Emperor) Xuanzong, Pei Xiu, (who at the time was) the surveillance commissioner of Jiangxi, restored the pagoda and the monastery. (On that occasion the emperor) bestowed a horizontal tablet (to the monastery, with the inscription) "Precious Peak."

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39. See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," 335–344, 526–530; Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 234–235; Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- through Tenth-Century China*, 21, 31–45. After discussing some minor problems with Yanagida's list of the disciples of Mazu, which has 153 names, Jia introduces an alternative list, which contains the names of a total of 145 disciples.

## Comments

- This section is another interlinear commentary that is inserted into the original text.
- The anonymous author of these comments is misquoting *Song gao seng zhuan*. There Mazu's posthumous title is given as "Chan Teacher of Great Quiescence," as stated earlier. The posthumous title listed here, "Chan Teacher of Great Awakening," was given to Mazu's disciple Xitang at the beginning of the Changqing 長慶 era (821–824). Since that information comes from Xitang's short biographical entry in *Song gao seng zhuan*,<sup>40</sup> which is appended to Mazu's entry, this is probably an example of a sloppy mistake. There are also other monks who received the same posthumous title as Xitang, including Jingshan Faqin (who appears in Text 3).<sup>41</sup>
- The monastery at Shimen and Mazu's memorial pagoda, which was within the monastery's precincts, were apparently damaged during the Huichang-era (841–846) persecution of Buddhism, which was initiated by Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840–846). The persecution was very severe, and during its course many monasteries were damaged or destroyed.
- The Dazhong era lasted for about fourteen years, from the first month of 847 until the tenth month of 860. The year mentioned in the text is 850.
- After assuming the Tang throne in 846 at the age of thirty-nine, Emperor Xuanzong ended the persecution of Buddhism. In the course of the thirteen years he ruled as an emperor, he became known as a generous patron of Buddhism.
- Pei Xiu, the prominent official and lay Buddhist, already appeared in Text 3.
- At that time the monastery was renamed Precious Peak (Baofeng). This is the monastery name that is most often used in various Chan texts. It has already appeared several times (see Texts 2 and 3).

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40. SGS 10, T 50.766c18; see also CDL 7, T 51.252b18.

41. See CDL 4, T 51.230a29-b1. For yet another example of a Chan monk with the same posthumous title, see CDL 16, T 51.329c4.

## Text 7

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# *Sermon in Jingde chuan deng lu*

### *Introduction*

AS WAS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, the main focus in *Jingde chuan deng lu* is on recording the words and deeds of successive generations of Chan masters, with individual entries arranged into a fixed generational scheme and roughly following a linear order. The text mostly follows a basic pattern of biographies (hagiographies) of exemplary persons, all of them integrated into a complex genealogical framework. In terms of its fundamental structure and implicit ideological underpinning, the overall narrative is anchored by the central notion of a Chan lineage that transmits the essence of Buddhist enlightenment. Nonetheless, some parts of the sprawling manuscript incorporate other kinds of materials, which can be deemed to fulfill supplementary or ancillary functions.

In some instances, these kinds of additional materials include essays or treatises—sometimes partial, other times complete—or other types of records that do not follow the familiar format of hagiographic narratives. These kinds of materials might be integrated into the main body of the text, usually inserted between specific biographical entries or placed at the end of a fascicle. Pertinent examples of such miscellaneous materials include Chengguan's essay on the essentials of mind, mentioned in the introduction to Text 6; “Chanmen guishi” 禪門規式 (Regulations for the Chan School), the well-known text about monastic rules that credits Baizhang with the development of a distinct system of Chan monasticism, which immediately follows Baizhang's biographical entry at the end of fascicle 6;<sup>1</sup> and a version of *Wanling lu* 宛陵錄, Huangbo's widely read lectures on the essentials of mind transmission, compiled by Pei Xiu, which appears at the end of fascicle 9.<sup>2</sup>

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1. CDL 6, T 51.250c28–251b3. See also the discussion in chapter 5.

2. CDL 9, T 51.270b5–273a8.

The main repositories of miscellaneous materials that do not neatly fit into the normative hagiographic model, however, are the last three fascicles of the text. In a sense, these three fascicles, which comprise around 10% of the whole text, serve as appendices to the main body of the text. Their contents can be summarized as follows:

- Fascicle 28 contains the extensive records (*guang lu* 廣錄) of twelve well-known Chan masters, mostly from the Tang era, with a limited coverage of the Five Dynasties. More information about it is given later.
- Fascicle 29 contains various poetic works composed by Chan monks and laymen, featuring a total of fifteen authors and organized into seventeen sections. The earliest poetry is by Baozhi 寶誌 (418–514), a prominent monk from the Liang era, who technically is not a member of the Chan School (which, historically speaking, did not yet exist during his lifetime). There are also poems by well-known Chan teachers such as Guizong Zhichang 歸宗知常 (dates unknown, a disciple of Mazu), Xiangyan Zhixian 香巖智閑 (dates unknown), Dongshan, and Fayen. In addition, there are eight poems by Bo Juyi (Bai Juyi) 白居易 (772–846), the famous poet who studied Chan under the guidance of some of Mazu's disciples.<sup>3</sup>
- Fascicle 30 contains twenty-three shorter literary works, composed in several genres, including inscriptions, records, exhortations, and songs. This section includes a number of popular Chan works, written in poetry and prose, composed by (or attributed to) noted Chan teachers such as Sengcan 僧璨 (d. 606?), the reputed third patriarch of Chan in China, Farong, Bodhidharma, Shenhui, Yongjia Zhenjue 永嘉真覺 (665–713, aka Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄覺), Shitou, and Danxia.

Regarding the contents of fascicle 28, it seems probable that the twelve texts in it circulated separately as independent works before their inclusion in *Jingde chuan deng lu*.<sup>4</sup> I would hypothesize that they are representative of the kinds of Chan records that were disseminated within Chan communities during the Tang and Five Dynasties eras. In most cases, they primarily consist of transcripts of sermons, although there are also records of conversations

3. For Bo Juyi's involvement with Chan, see Mario Poceski, "Lay Models of Engagement with Chan Teachings and Practices among the Literati in Mid-Tang China," 77–87.

4. For the original text, see CDL 28, T 51.437c17–449a5; for Mazu's sermon only, see T 51.440a3–b19. For a German translation of the whole fascicle, see Christian Wittern, *Das Yulu des Chan-Buddhismus*, 161–345 (203–215 for Mazu's sermon). Wittern's volume also contains a general discussion of the fascicle, the texts included in it, and some of the key doctrinal themes presented in them (87–159).

between the principal Chan masters and their disciples. On the whole, these materials are illustrative of the main sources of information about the teachings of Mazu and other prominent Chan masters as they existed before the emergence of the encounter dialogue format as the most prominent element of Chan literature and popular lore.

The twelve monks whose records are reproduced in this fascicle for the most part represent the top echelon of Chan masters and feature some of the leading figure in Chan history. By and large, the list is dominated by figures associated with Mazu's Hongzhou School, which presumably reflects a common perception that it was the main tradition of classical Chan. But there are also records of earlier and later Chan masters who are not directly associated with the Hongzhou School. On the whole, the coverage of major Chan figures is quite broad and eclectic. Most likely the decision about what to include in this fascicle was, at least to some degree, also influenced by the availability of relevant sources of this kind at the time and place of compilation.

Here is a complete list of the twelve Chan masters, listed in the order they appear in the text, which pretty much follows the chronology of their lives.

1. Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (d. 775)
2. Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (684–758)
3. Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788)
4. Yaoshan Weiyan 藥山惟儼 (745–828)
5. Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 (fl. eighth c.)
6. Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 (760–821)
7. Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (748–834)
8. Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (778–897)
9. Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866)
10. Xuansha Shibei 玄沙師備 (835–908)
11. Luohan Guichen 羅漢桂琛 (867–928)
12. Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958)

Mazu's sermon included in fascicle 28 does not appear in any of the earlier texts translated here. It is included, however, in later texts, most notably *Mazu yulu* and *Tiansheng guang deng lu*, whose compilers presumably made use of the text presented here (or the independent text on which it is based).<sup>5</sup> The three

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5. MY, X 119.812a6–813a7; TGL 8, X 135.653b14–654b14. The MY version is translated in Cheng-Chien, *Sun Face Buddha*, 65–68. Many parts of the sermon are also cited in Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, mostly scattered throughout chapter 5. I have used my earlier translations as the basis for the present translation, although effectively this can be viewed as a new translation.

versions are very similar. As is the case with the other texts in part II of this volume, I have divided the sermon into sections and provided subheadings for them. While the text is presented as a transcript of a single sermon, I suspect that we are dealing with edited materials.

Presumably the sermon contains various parts that were put together into a single text in a manner that is representative of the general content and tenor of Mazu's teachings. The sermon is full of scriptural quotations and allusions, as well as technical Buddhist vocabulary. It covers a number of key themes and issues. Some of the central topics discussed in the text are identified by the section headings I have added. Since the text discusses or alludes to several Huayan leitmotifs and concepts, I have divided it into ten sections (ten being an auspicious number in the Huayan tradition), although of course such an arrangement also reflects the actual contents of the sermon.

### *Ordinary Mind*

江西大寂道一禪師、示眾云、道不用修、但莫污染。何為污染。但有生死心、造作趣向、皆是污染。若欲直會其道、平常心是道。謂平常心、無造作、無是非、無取捨、無斷常、無凡無聖。經云、非凡夫行、非賢聖行、是菩薩行。只如今、行住坐臥、應機接物、盡是道。

When instructing the assembly, Chan teacher Daoyi, (also known as) Daji, who was from Jiangxi, said: "The Way needs no (special methods of spiritual) cultivation—all you need to do is put an end to (engendering all sorts of) defilements. What are defilements? If you have a mind (mired in the circle) of birth and death, and are engaged in deliberate acts and have (self-centered) ambitions, then everything (you do) is defilement. If you want to directly know the Way, then ordinary mind is the Way. Ordinary mind denotes (a state of mind in which there are) no (deliberate) actions, no (ideas about) right and wrong, no grasping and discarding, no (notions of) annihilation and permanence, no ordinary and sacred. The scripture says, 'Unlike the practice of ordinary people, and unlike the practice of sages—that is the practice of bodhisattvas.' At this very moment, as you engage in walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, and as you respond to (various) situations and deal with (other) people—everything (you do and encounter) is the Way.

## Comments

- As noted previously, Daji was Mazu's posthumous name, and Daoyi was his ordination name.
- The Way, which can also be read as the Path, or simply the Dao 道, is an ancient Chinese term that covers a wide semantic field and carries a multitude of connotations. Here, as is the case with many other Chan records, including several of the texts translated earlier, the term contains some of its ancient Chinese meanings or undertones, as well as aspects of their metaphysical connotations. But the term also integrates some of its basic Buddhist meanings, including the central notion of *mārga*—the Buddhist path of practice and realization, which in a Mahāyāna context purportedly leads to the eventual attainment of Buddhahood.
- The key notion of “ordinary mind” anchors what is arguably the best-known teaching associated with Mazu. Elsewhere I have discussed it in greater detail, so here it will suffice to say that it connotes both a liberated state of mind in which the realized sage spontaneously accords with reality, and a form of practice in which prosaic everyday activities serve as opportunities for the development of a holistic, detached, and nondual form of awareness.<sup>6</sup> The same term (J: *heijō kokoro* or *heijō shin*) is also a part of the modern Japanese vocabulary. It conveys a sense of presence of mind or a calm state of mind. Furthermore, when we look at its contemporary resonance, especially within the context of American Zen, there is the Ordinary Mind Zen School, a network of Zen centers established by Charlotte Joko Beck (1917–2011) and her disciples.
- The series of negations incorporated in the middle of this passage are fairly typical of both canonical and exegetical Buddhist literature. It represents an apophatic mode of discourse—primarily associated with the Madhyamaka tradition—that had wide currency in medieval Chinese Buddhism. Similar rhetorical strategy was also deployed in some traditions of Tang Daoism, such as the Double Mystery School (Chongxuan zong 重玄宗), which was influenced by Buddhist philosophical concepts and theoretical frameworks.
- The canonical quotation about the bodhisattvas' practice comes from the “Mañjuśrī Asks about the Illness” chapter of the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*.<sup>7</sup> As we already saw, this scripture was popular in Chan circles and is often cited in the records of Mazu and his disciples.

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6. Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 182–186.

7. WMJ 2, T 14.545b29.

## *Realm of Reality*

道即是法界。乃至河沙妙用、不出法界。若不然者、云何言心地法門、云何言無盡燈。一切法、皆是心法。一切名、皆是心名。萬法皆從心生、心為萬法之根本。經云、識心達本、故號沙門。名等義等、一切諸法皆等、純一無雜。

The Way is no other than the realm of reality. Even though there might be sublime functions (as numerous) as the sands of the river (Ganges), none of them ever leaves the realm of reality. If (one were to assert that) not being the case, then why is there talk about the teaching of the essential mind; (moreover,) why is there talk about the inexhaustible lamp? All things are things of the mind. All names are names of the mind. The myriad things are all produced by the mind, and the mind is the origin of all things. The scripture says, ‘He is called a monk because he knows the mind and penetrates the source.’ (This principle) equally applies to all names and meanings, as well as to all things—(they are all) pure and unadulterated.

### Comments

- “Sublime function” is a technical term that appears in a number of Chan texts. It refers to the unimpeded activity of an awakened person, who can respond to the peculiar predicaments or unique spiritual abilities of various persons. The same term also appears in Tang poetry, including the poems of Li Bo 李白 (701–762, often pronounced as Li Bai), with slightly different connotations. In a more general sense, it can be understood to imply a special (or magical) effect or a wonderful activity.
- “Realm of reality” (S: *dharmadhātu*) is an important Mahāyāna concept. It is especially associated with the *Huayan Scripture* and the Huayan School, which is the sense that is implied here. Nonetheless, the same term also appears in other contexts, including Yogācāra discussions of perception. In Huayan Buddhism, it stands for the all-encompassing and unimpeded realm of reality, as experienced by the Buddha, which is coextensive with the cosmos. According to some interpretations, it can also be understood as the origin of all phenomena.
- The statement “All things are things of the mind” can perhaps be read in the sense of all things (phenomena) being constructed or (mis)apprehended by the mind. Such reading is also suggested by the next sentence.
- The notion that all phenomenal reality is, in some way, produced by the mind, is an example of the presence of Yogācāra ideas in the records of Mazu

and other monks associated with the Hongzhou School. As was already indicated, the juxtaposition or mixing of a variety of doctrinal frameworks and philosophical concepts, derived from different traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism—namely, Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha—is fairly typical of the doctrinal outlooks of Tang Chan.

- The image of an inexhaustible lamp, which implies that the flame from a single lamp can be passed on to numerous other lamps, appears in both canonical texts and Chan records. For instance, in the *Vimalakīrti Scripture* there is a passage that tells how one lamp can be used to light innumerable other lamps, so that all darkness disappears completely. In the same manner, a single bodhisattva can inspire innumerable people to set their mind on perfect enlightenment, which can cause the darkness of ignorance to go away.<sup>8</sup>
- The Chinese term for monk used here is *shamen* 沙門, which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term *śramaṇa*. It is a general term for monastic renunciates.
- The scriptural quotation comes from the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* (*Sishier zhang jing* 四十二章經), believed to be an apocryphal text composed in China. It is not a direct quotation, as the text abbreviates the relevant scriptural passage. In full, the pertinent sentence in the scripture reads as follows: “Leaving his relatives for the sake of (pursuing the Buddhist) path, (he comes to) know the mind and penetrate the source, (as well as to) understand the unconditioned truth, and is thus (worthy of being) called a monk” (辭親出家為道、識心達本、解無為法、名曰沙門).<sup>9</sup> The same passage, or variants thereof, is cited in numerous Chinese texts, especially texts that deal with the Vinaya, including various works that belong to the Chan rules of purity genre.

### *Principle and Phenomena*

若於教門中得、隨時自在。建立法界、盡是法界。若立真如、盡是真如。若立理、一切法盡是理。若立事、一切法盡是事。舉一千從、理事無別。盡是妙用、更無別理。

8. WMJ 1, T 14.543b18-26. For additional examples where the same term appears in the forty-fascicle version of HYJ, see T 10.703c18-19; T 10.747a2; and T 10.777c13-14.

9. T 39.517c4-5.

If you attain (a realization grounded in) the teaching, then you will always be free. When the realm of reality is established, then everything becomes the realm of reality. When suchness is established, then everything becomes suchness. When the principle is established, then all things become principle. When phenomena are established, then all things become phenomena. When the one (principle) is raised, then the many (phenomena) follow, principle and phenomenon not being different from each other. Everything is sublime function, and there is no other principle.

### Comments

- Principle and phenomena are two cardinal concepts in the philosophical system of Huayan Buddhism, and the intricate relationship between the two is at the center of some of the best-known Huayan discussions of causality. The two terms already appeared in Mazu's biographical entry in *Zu tang ji* (see the sermon about mind and Buddha in Text 3).
- Suchness (C: *zhenru* 真如; S: *tathatā*, also *bhūta-tathatā*; sometime also rendered as thusness) denotes the underlying truth or essential reality of existence, or things as they truly are, without the distortions introduced by conceptual thought. It is said to be perceived by awakened persons. It is one of a number of terms, often used synonymously or interchangeably, that point to the basic nature of reality.

### *Mind as the Source*

皆由心之迴轉。譬如月影有若干、真月無若干。諸源水有若干、水性無若干。森羅萬象有若干、虛空無若干。說道理有若干、無礙慧無若干。種種成立、皆由一心也。

Everything arises from the mind. For instance, the moon has many reflections, but in reality there are not many moons. There are many springs of water, but in terms of its (essential) nature there are not many (different) kinds of water. There are myriad beings and things in the cosmos, but there are not many kinds of empty space. (People have) verbally articulated many (kinds of) arguments, but “there are not many kinds of unobstructed wisdom.” There is a profuse variety (of things) that are established, but (in the end) they all originate from the One Mind.

## Comments

- The quotation about the unobstructed wisdom comes from the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*.<sup>10</sup> It refers to the Buddha's unique wisdom, which is unobstructed or unhindered and has no limit. It is also said to be unique.
- The notion of One Mind already appeared in previous texts (see my comments in the sermon on mind and Buddha in Text 3). Here the term is used to highlight the fact that all things originate from a single source, which on a basic level can be viewed being mental or immaterial.

### *All-Pervasiveness of Truth*

建立亦得、掃蕩亦得、盡是妙用。妙用盡是自家。非離真、而有立處。立處即真。盡是自家體。若不然者、更是何人。一切法、皆是佛法。諸法即解脫。解脫者、即真如。諸法不出於真如。行住坐臥、悉是不思議用、不待時節。經云、在在處處、則為有佛。

Whether there is establishing (anything), or whether there is wiping out, all of it is sublime function. The sublime function is all oneself. "It is not true that there is a place to stand where one departs from reality. The actual place one stands upon is identical with reality." All of it is one's essential being. If (someone were to assert) that not being the case, then what kind of person is that? "All things instantiate the Buddhist truth" (Buddha-dharma). All things are identical with liberation. As to liberation, it is identical with suchness. All things (never) depart from suchness. (Whatever one might be doing), whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, all of it is inconceivable function, without having to wait for a suitable occasion to arise. The scripture states that whatever place there might be, there is a Buddha there.

## Comments

- The first quotation (third and fourth sentences), which points to the all-pervasiveness of reality, comes from *Zhao lun* 肇論.<sup>11</sup> There it appears immediately after a scriptural quotation and serves as a commentary (of sorts) on it, or rather an expansion of its meaning.

10. T 14.554a. See also *Baozang lun* 1, T 45.149a, where we find the same expression.

11. T 45.153a4.

- The next quotation, which asserts that all things (or phenomena) instantiate, or point to, the truth realized and enunciated by the Buddha, appears in a number of scriptures. Examples include several scriptures from the perfection of wisdom (S: *prajñāpāramitā*) corpus,<sup>12</sup> as well as the *Huayan Scripture*.<sup>13</sup> The same scriptural passage is also cited in numerous texts composed in China, including some of the most influential works of Zhiyi.<sup>14</sup>
- When it comes to translating the canonical passage referred to in the last comment, given the multiple layers of meaning associated with the Chinese term *fā* 法 (which is also used to translate the Sanskrit term Dharma), there are other interpretative possibilities. For instance, in different contexts this sentence can also be rendered as “All teachings are the Buddha’s teachings. . .” (or perhaps “all truths. . .”).
- The scriptural quotation alluded to in the last sentence is based on a passage from the Chinese translation of the *Mahāsaṃnipāta sūtra* (*Da fangdeng da ji jing* 大方等大集經).<sup>15</sup> In the scripture, the first half of the quote is identical, while the wording of the second half is somewhat different (it reads: “There is a Buddha, World-honored one”). Accordingly, I have not placed the intended quote in quotation marks, but the meaning is roughly the same. There is also another very similar sentence later in the same scripture.<sup>16</sup>

### *Buddha’s Wisdom*

佛是能仁、有智慧、善機情。能破一切眾生疑網。出離有無等縛。凡聖情盡、人法俱空。轉無等輪、超於數量。所作無礙、事理雙通。

The Buddha is humane, has wisdom, and is adept at (knowing) the unique character and circumstance (of each individual). He is able to break through the webs of doubts of all beings. He has transcended the binds of existence, nonexistence, and the like. Having put an end to all mundane and holy feelings, (he comprehends) the emptiness of

12. For instance, see *Da bore boluomiduo jing* 574, T 7.966a17; *Jingang bore boluomi jing* 1, T 8.751b2.

13. HYJ 53, T 10.282c29–283a1; HYJ 54, T 10.285a16–17.

14. *Miao fa lianhua jing wenju* 8, T 34.109a25; *Mohe zhi guan* 2, T 46.11b23–24.

15. *Da fangdeng da ji jing* 39, T 13.264b10.

16. *Da fangdeng da ji jing* 58, T 13.390c21–22.

person and things. He turns the incomparable wheel (of the Dharma), going beyond all measurements. His activity is unobstructed, and he penetrates both principle and phenomena.

### Comments

- Nengren 能仁, which appears in the first sentence of the Chinese text, is a Chinese translation for Śākyamuni. It is supposed to convey a sense of benevolence and capacity to care about others.
- The depiction of the Buddha's supreme wisdom and unique abilities presented here is fairly conventional. It is pretty much in tune with canonical representations, as well as with mainstream doctrinal formulations current in Tang Buddhism.

### *Ultimate Liberation*

如天起雲、忽有還無、不留礙迹。猶如畫水成文。不生不滅、是大寂滅。在纏名如來藏。出纏名大法身。法身無窮、體無增減。能大能小、能方能圓。應物現形、如水中月。滔滔運用、不立根栽。不盡有為、不住無為。有為是無為家用、無為是有為家依。不住於依、故云、如空無所依。

(It is) like a cloud that appears in the sky—suddenly it is there and then it disappears, without any obstructions or traces. It is also like writing on water. Being neither created nor extinguished, that is the great Nirvāṇa. Within (the realm of) afflictions, it is referred to as the receptacle of Buddhahood. When all afflictions are left behind, it is referred to as the great Dharma body. The Dharma body is limitless, and its essence neither increases nor decreases. (Nevertheless,) it can (appear as being) big or small, square or round. It manifests (various) forms in response to all creatures, like reflections of the moon in water. It (constitutes) a continuing flow of activity, (but) without planting (any) roots. (One should) “neither obliterate the (realm of) the conditioned, nor dwell in the unconditioned (realm).” The conditioned is like a fundamental function of the unconditioned, while the unconditioned is what the conditioned fundamentally depends upon. Because (one should) not settle in depending (on anything), it has been said (that it is) “like space, which does not have anything as its support.”

## Comments

- The first sentence might be a loose paraphrase of parts of a passage that appears in *Ji zhi guo jing* 寂志果經, a somewhat obscure scripture included in the Āgama section of the Chinese Buddhist canon.<sup>17</sup>
- In addition to being an important doctrinal and soteriological concept in Chinese Buddhism, the “receptacle of Buddhahood” (S: *tathāgatagarbha*) is an essential element of the teachings of various schools of Chan. In the basic sense, it postulates that the essential or innermost nature of each person is not different from the true nature of the Buddha. The term appears a number of times in the records of Mazu and his disciples. It is closely related to the concept of Buddha nature, discussed later.
- The “Dharma body” (S: *dharmakāya*) is the most important and essential body of the Buddha, according to the aforementioned three-body theory. It constitutes the essence of Buddhahood and is identical in all Buddhas.
- The first quotation, about the conditioned and the unconditioned, comes from the *Vimalakīrti Scripture* (“Bodhisattvas’ Practice” chapter).<sup>18</sup> Identical or similar passages also appear in several other canonical texts,<sup>19</sup> and the same statement is cited in numerous exegetical works and other Chan texts.
- The phrase “like space, which does not have anything as its support” appears in the *Huayan Scripture* (“Manifestation of the *Tathāgata*” chapter).<sup>20</sup> There it forms a line in a long verse. It is meant to illustrate the knowledge of the Buddha, which does not have anything as its support, which is to say it is uninhibited and not dependent on anything.

*Mind’s Two Aspects*

心生滅義、心真如義。心真如者、譬如明鏡照像。鏡喻於心、像喻諸法。若心取法、即涉外因緣、即是生滅義。不取諸法、即是真如義。

(When discussing the mind in terms of its two aspects, there is) the meaning of the mind being subject to birth and death, and the meaning

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17. See *Ji zhi guo jing*, T 1.275b7-11.

18. WMJ 3, T 14.554b6; see also the rest of the passage that follows, almost until the end of the chapter.

19. See *Dasheng li qu liu boluomiduo jing* 9, T 8.909c18.

20. HYJ 51, T 10.273a9; translated in Cheng-Chien (Mario Poceski), *Manifestation of the Tathāgata: Buddhahood According to the Avatamsaka Sūtra*, 107. There are several other canonical texts where we find the same phrase. For instance, see T 13.640c19; T 11.360b7; T 8.558c1-2.

of the mind being in accord with suchness. As to the mind that accords with suchness, it can be likened to a clear mirror that reflects images (without any distortion). The mirror signifies the mind, while the images signify (external) things. If the mind attaches to things, then it gets involved in external causes and conditions, which is the meaning of birth and death. If (the mind) is not attached to things, that is the meaning of suchness.

### Comments

- The analysis of the mind in terms of its two essential aspects comes from the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, a work of uncertain provenance that had immense impact on the doctrinal outlooks and theoretical frameworks of Tang Buddhism. At the beginning of the treatise, the One Mind, which (in a way) constitutes the essential mind of all beings, is analyzed in terms of two aspects, or points of view: absolute and phenomenal (to use the terminology deployed by Yoshito S. Hakeda in his translation of the text).<sup>21</sup> The mind in its absolute aspect is equated with the realm of reality, and the mind in its relative or phenomenal aspect is explained in more detail in the text in terms of the receptacle of Buddhahood and the storehouse consciousness (*S: ālāyavijñāna*).
- The metaphor of a clear mirror that reflects images was popular in early Chan circles, although it can be traced back to canonical sources, especially various Yogacāra texts.<sup>22</sup> In a basic sense, it means that just as a clear mirror, not being covered with any dirt or dust, can clearly reflect all things in front of it without any alteration or distortion, so the pure mind of the Buddhist sage, unsullied by defilements and afflictions, can perceive reality as it truly is, without any preconception, misrepresentation, or subjective bias.

### *Buddha Nature*

聲聞聞見佛性、菩薩眼見佛性。了達無二、名平等性。性無有異、用則不同。在迷為識、在悟為智。順理為悟、順事為迷。迷即迷自家本心、悟即悟自家本性。一悟永悟、不復更迷。如日出時、不合於冥。智慧日出、不與煩惱暗俱。

21. Yoshito S. Hakeda, *The Awakening of Faith: Attributed to Śvaghosha*.

22. For the use of the mirror metaphor in early Chan, see McRae, *The Northern School*, 144–146.

The hearers (only) hear about the Buddha nature, while “the bodhisattvas perceive the Buddha nature with their own eyes.” When there is a realization of nonduality, that (can be) called equal nature. Although the nature is without any differentiation, its function is not the same. When (a person is) ignorant, it is identified as consciousness; when (a person is) awakened, it is identified as wisdom. Being in accord with the principle indicates awakening, while (blindly) following phenomena indicates ignorance. (The state of) ignorance implies being ignorant of one’s original mind. (The state of) awakening implies being awakened to one’s original nature. Once (a person is) awakened, (he remains) awakened forever, as there is no return (to the state of) ignorance. It is like when the sun comes out, then there is no more darkness. (By the same token,) when the sun of wisdom comes out, it cannot co-occur with the darkness of (all) defilements.

### Comments

- On a basic level, the term *hearer* (S: *śrāvaka*) is used to denote a disciple of the Buddha who has gained an understanding of the truth—and thus realized liberation—upon hearing the Buddha preach the sublime doctrine. In Mahāyāna contexts, including this passage, the term often carries a pejorative connotation, implying adherence to the inferior teaching of the Small Vehicle.
- The quote about the bodhisattvas perceiving the Buddha nature comes from the Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (*Da ban niepan jing* 大般涅槃經).<sup>23</sup>
- The concept of Buddha nature (S: *Buddha-dhātu*; C: *foxing* 佛性), while traceable back to Indian Buddhism, became a cardinal tenet of Mahāyāna with the full development of mature forms of Chinese Buddhism. Its centrality, although not unchallenged or debated, is among the defining features of East Asian Buddhism. The same idea is also present in Tibetan Buddhism. At a basic level, it postulates the presence of an inherent capacity—sometimes described as an inborn seed—to realize Buddhahood, which resides in the mind of each person. Or, according to another line of interpretation, it postulates the presence of the wisdom and other qualities associated with Buddhahood within the innermost being of each person, which supposedly constitutes his or her true nature. According to the second interpretative

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23. *Da ban niepan jing* 27, T 12.528a5-6; see also the second translation of the same scripture, where exactly the same sentence also appears: T 12.772c6-7.

scheme, all persons are already enlightened, even if they are not aware of it, and Buddhist practice is based on—and ultimately leads toward the realization of—this essential truth.

- According to some interpretations, the advanced bodhisattvas are said to be able to perceive the Buddha nature with their eye of wisdom. This is one the three bodhisattva eyes, the other two being the physical eye and the heavenly eye.
- The “universal nature,” a term that appears numerous times in many canonical texts, is said to be synonymous with suchness. It is so named because it denotes the fact that suchness equally permeates all things.

### *Realization of Reality*

了心及境界、妄想即不生。妄想既不生、即是無生法忍。本有今有、不假修道坐禪。不修不坐、即是如來清淨禪。如今若見此理真正、不造諸業、隨分過生。一衣一鉢、坐起相隨。戒行增熏、積於淨業。但能如是、何慮不通。久立諸人、珍重。

When (a person) comes to apprehend (the true nature of) the mind and the external objects, then there is no more arising of deluded thinking. When deluded thinking is not created anymore, that is precisely the acceptance (of reality based on cognition) of the uncreated nature of things. It originally exists, and it exists in the present moment, not being something that is dependent on spiritual cultivation or sitting meditation. When there is no more (attachment to) practice and sitting, that is precisely the untainted meditation of the Tathāgata (Buddha). At this moment, if you grasp this principle, as it truly is, and you stop creating all kinds of (unwholesome) karma, then you can pass your life (at ease) in accord with your circumstances. (As a monk, all you need is) a single robe and a single alms bowl; whether sitting or getting up, you are (always) interdependently implicated with it. You should strictly observe the monastic precepts and (should endeavor to) accumulate wholesome karma. If you are able to act like that, then how can there be any concern about not being able to understand (the truth). All of you have already been standing for too long—take care of yourself.

### Comments

- The “acceptance (of reality based on cognition) of the uncreated nature of things” (S: *anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti*) is another technical Buddhist term.

Going back to the original Sanskrit term, in this specific context it might be best to translate *kṣānti* as understanding, although in other contexts it can also be rendered as patience or forbearance. Here I am following the basic meaning conveyed by the Chinese term, with additional clarification provided in parentheses. In general, this technical term denotes a rarefied insight, realized by very advanced bodhisattvas, that involves deep realization of the fact that all things (or phenomena) are uncreated and thus beyond arising and ceasing.

- As is often the case, the subject in several of these sentences is absent in the original Chinese text. That opens up the ground for a variety of interpretations. The “it” in the third and sixth sentences, for instance, can be interpreted, in a very general sense, to stand for reality. That is also indicated by the subheading I have given to this section.
- The conception of the law of karma—an essential idea present in virtually all forms of Buddhism—as presented in this passage, is pretty much in accord with canonical formulations.
- The exhortation to observe the monastic precepts, while at odds with popular images of the Chan master as a radical iconoclast, is very much in tune with attitudes toward monastic mores and ideals prevalent in Tang China that, as I have argued elsewhere, were widely accepted by monks associated with the Hongzhou school.<sup>24</sup>
- The robe and the alms bowl are key symbols of monastic life. They are often used to point to its renunciatory ideal and evoke a sense of ascetic simplicity.
- On a basic level, this section highlights the close connection between Chan and elite monastic Buddhism. At the same time, it also exemplifies the peculiar Chan idiom in which monks such as Mazu expressed key ideas that had wide currency in Chinese Buddhism, especially within monastic milieus with contemplative orientations.

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24. See Poceski, “*Guishan jingce* and the Ethical Foundations of Chan Practice.”



## *Appendix: Additional Sources about Mazu*

IN ADDITION TO the materials translated in part II, Mazu also appears in the records of his numerous disciples, either in their independent records of sayings—the records of Baizhang and Nanquan, for instance—or in their biographical entries incorporated into the various transmission of the lamp histories, starting with *Zu tang ji*, as well as in their entries in *Song gao seng zhuan*.<sup>1</sup> Most of these materials consist of stories composed in the encounter dialogue format, although there are also occasional quotations or discussions of key ideas or sayings attributed to Mazu, such as “mind is Buddha” and “ordinary mind is the Way.”<sup>2</sup> As these materials are not primarily concerned with Mazu, I have not included them in this book.

The same reasoning applies to the stele inscription composed by the famous poet Li Shangyin 李商隱 (812–858): *Tang zizhou huiyi jingshe nanchanyuan sizheng-tang beiming* 唐梓州慧義精舍南禪院四證堂碑銘.<sup>3</sup> This interesting text, written for a stele erected at a monastery in Zizhou 梓州 (Sichuan), deals with Wuxiang 無相 (684–762), Wuzhu, Mazu, and Xitang. The first three monks are linked together by their common connection with Sichuan, and they are among the most prominent Chan teachers associated with Mazu’s native province. Xitang is presumably added to the group as the most senior representative of Mazu’s monastic disciples.<sup>4</sup>

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1. For example, see the biographical entries in ZJL of the following disciples of Mazu (page numbers refer to vol. 2, Zhonghua shuju ed.): Shigong Huizang 石鞏慧藏 (630–631), Xitang (657), Wuxie (669–670), Damei (674), Ruhui (679), and Wuye (690–691).

2. For example, see the discussion of some of the disciples’ arguments and elaborations on Mazu’s famous adage “mind is Buddha,” as well as of several other related statements attributed to Mazu, in Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 173–182.

3. QTW 780.3608b–09c.

4. I hope to be able to present a study and translation of Li Shangyin’s inscription in a future publication.

There are also various materials dealing with Mazu in a number of later Chan texts, such as *Tiansheng guang deng lu* and *Gu zunsu yulu*, but for the most part they are based on materials found in earlier texts, especially those included in this volume. There is also Mazu's record of sayings, discussed in more detail in chapter 6. In addition, some of the encounter dialogue stories in which Mazu is the main protagonist are included, alongside extensive exegetical material, in the influential *gong'an* collections, which were compiled from the Song era onward. Texts composed in this genre, which exerted notable influence on the later traditions of Chan/Zen throughout East Asia, are perhaps best represented by *Bi yan lu* 碧巖錄 (Blue Cliff Records) and *Wumen guan* 無門關 (Wumen's Passage).<sup>5</sup> Important as they might be for understanding the literature, teachings, and practices of Song Chan, as pointed out in part I of this study, these texts have little to do with Mazu and the rest of Tang Chan, and generally speaking they are products of a very different tradition.

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5. In BYL, dialogues that feature Mazu form the core of cases 3, 53, and 75.

## Glossary

### A

An Lushan 安祿山 (d. 757)

Anhui 安徽

### B

*Baizhang guang lu* 百丈廣錄

Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (749–814)

Baizhang Niepan 百丈涅槃 (d. 828?)

*Baizhang qinggui* 百丈清規

*Baizhang yulu* 百丈語錄

*Baizhangshan heshang yaojue* 百丈山和尚要決

Bao Fang 鮑邠 (723–790)

Bao Ji 包佶 (dates unknown)

Baofeng Monastery 寶峰寺

*Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳

baoshen 報身

Baotang School 保唐宗

Baxi 巴西

beiming 碑銘

*Beishan lu* 北山錄

ben ji 本紀

*Bi yan lu* 碧巖錄

Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846), aka Bai Juyi

### C

Caodong School 曹洞宗

Caoshan Benji 曹山本寂 (840–901)

Caoxi 曹溪  
 Chan 禪  
 Chang'an 長安  
 changdao shi 唱導師  
 Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗曠 (dates unknown)  
 Changqing (era) 長慶 (821-824)  
 Changsha 長沙  
 Changsong Ma 長松馬 (dates unknown)  
 Chanmen guishi 禪門規式  
 chanshi 禪師  
 Chanyuan qinggui 禪苑清規  
 Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu 禪源諸詮集都序  
 chanzong 禪宗  
 Chen Xu 陳詡 (dates unknown)  
 Cheng weishi lun 成唯識論  
 Cheng Yi 程頤 (1032–1107)  
 Chengdu 成都  
 Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839)  
 Chinul 智訥 (1158–1210)  
 Chongxuan School 重玄宗  
 Chuan xin fa yao 傳心法要  
 chuan deng lu 傳燈錄  
 Chuanfa temple 傳法院  
 Chuji 處寂 (684–734)

## D

Da ban niepan jing 大般涅槃經  
 Da zhuangyan pagoda 大莊嚴塔  
 Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163)  
 Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779)  
 Daji (chanshi) 大寂 (禪師)  
 Dali (era) 大曆 (766–779)  
 Damei Fachang 大梅法常 (752–839)  
 Danxia Tianran 丹霞天然 (739–824)  
 Danyang 丹陽  
 Dao 道  
 dao shan jian shu 刀山劍樹  
 Daoan 道安 (312–385)  
 daochang 道場  
 Daoshi 道世 (596–683)  
 Daowu Yuanzhi 道吾圓智 (769–835)

Daoxin 道信 (580–651)  
 Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667)  
 Daoyuan 道原 (dates unknown)  
 Dazhong (era) 大中 (847–860)  
 Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 (fl. eighth c.)  
 Deng Yinfeng 鄧隱峰 (dates unknown)  
 Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805)  
 Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良介 (807–869)  
 Dongsi Ruhui 東寺如會 (744–823)  
 dun wu 頓悟  
*Dun wu ru dao yaomen lun* 頓悟入道要門論  
 Dunhuang 敦煌  
 Dushun 杜順 (557–640)

## E

Ehu Dayi 鵝湖大義 (746–818)  
 Enchin 圓珍 (814–891)  
 Ennin 圓仁 (799–852)  
*Erru sixing lun* 二入四行論

## F

*Fa hua jing* 法華經  
 fajie 法界  
*Fajie guanmen* 法界觀門  
*Fa ju jing* 法句經  
 fangbian 方便  
 fashen 法身  
 fashi 法師  
 Fayan School 法眼宗  
 Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958)  
 Fazang 法藏 (643–712)  
 Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 (760–821)  
 foxing 佛性  
 fozu 佛祖  
 Fujian 福建  
 Fuzhou 撫州

## G

gantong 感通  
*Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳

Gaomin Monastery 高旻寺  
 Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618–626)  
 gong'an 公案  
 Gonggong mountain 龔公山  
*Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄  
 guan 觀  
 guang lu 廣錄  
 Guangdong 廣東  
 Guanyin 觀音  
 Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780–841)  
*Guishan jingce* 為山警策  
 Guishan Lingyou 為山靈祐 (771–853)  
 Guiyang School 為仰宗  
 Guizong Zhichang 歸宗知常 (dates unknown)  
 guwen 古文

## H

Haeinsa 海印寺  
 Hangzhou 杭州  
 Hanshan 寒山  
 Hanzhou 漢州  
 Hengyue 衡嶽  
 Heze School 荷澤宗  
 Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (684–758)  
*Hong ming ji* 弘明集  
 Hongren 弘忍 (601–674)  
 Hongzhou 洪州  
 Hongzhou School 洪州宗  
 Hongzhou Shuilao 洪州水老 (dates unknown)  
 Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962)  
 Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (d. 850?)  
 Huangdi 黃帝  
 Huanglong Huinan 黃龍慧南 (1002–1069)  
 huashen 化身  
 Huayan School 華嚴宗  
*Huayan Scripture* 華嚴經  
 Huichang (era) 會昌 (841–846)  
 Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554)  
 Huike 慧可 (487–593)  
 Huineng 慧能 (638–713)  
 Huisi 慧思 (515–577)  
 Hyakujō ko shingi 百丈古清規

## J

Jianchang 建昌  
 jiangshi 講師  
 Jiangsu 江蘇  
 Jiangxi 江西  
 Jiangzhou 江州  
 Jianyang 建陽  
 Jianzhong (era) 建中 (780–783)  
 jiaowai biechuan 教外別傳  
 Jing'an county 靖安縣  
*Jingde chuan deng lu* 景德傳燈錄  
 Jingjue 淨覺 (683–750?)  
 Jingshan Faqin 徑山法欽 (714–792)  
 Jingxiu 淨修 (884–972?)  
*Jiu tang shu* 舊唐書

## K

Kaiyuan (era) 開元 (713–741)  
 Kaiyuan Monastery 開元寺  
 Kanazawa bunko 金沢文庫  
 kanhua 看話  
 kien mondō 機緣問答

## L

Laozi 老子  
*Lengqie jing* 楞伽經  
*Lengqie shi zi ji* 楞伽師資記  
 Letan Monastery 泐潭寺  
 li 理  
 Li Ao 李翱 (772–841)  
 Li Bo 李白 (701–762), aka Li Bai  
*Li ji* 禮記  
 Li Jian 李兼 (dates unknown)  
 Li Shangyin 李商隱 (812–858)  
 Li Wei 李維 (961–1031)  
 Liang (dynasty) 梁 (502–557)  
*Lidai fa bao ji* 歷代法寶記  
 lie zhuan 列傳  
 Linchuan 臨川  
 Linji School 臨濟宗  
 Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866)

*Linji yulu* 臨濟語錄  
 liu xue 六學  
*Liu zu tan jing* 六祖壇經  
 Longmen 龍門  
 Lu Sigong 路嗣恭 (711–781)  
 Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139–1193)  
 Lujiang 廬江  
 lun 論  
*Lunyu* 論語  
 Luohan Guichen 羅漢桂琛 (867–928)  
 Luoyang 洛陽  
 Lushan 廬山  
 lüshi 律師

## M

Magu Baoche 麻谷寶徹 (dates unknown)  
 Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788)  
*Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄  
*Mengzi* 孟子  
*Miao fa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經  
 Muzong 穆宗 (r. 820–824)

## N

Nanchang 南昌  
 Nankang 南康  
 Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (748–834)  
 Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (d. 775)  
 Nanyue (mountain) 南嶽  
 Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744)  
 neidan 內丹  
 Niutou Farong 牛頭法融 (594–657)  
 Niutou Huizhong 牛頭慧忠 (683–769)  
 Niutou mountain 牛頭山  
 Niutou School 牛頭宗

## P

Pang, Layman 龐居士 (d. 808?)  
 Pang Yun 龐蘊 (d. 808?)  
 Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860)  
*Pei xiu sheyi wen* 裴休拾遺文

Pei Xu 裴諝 (719–793)  
 Puji 普寂 (651–739)  
 Putidamo 菩提達摩 (Bodhidharma)  
 Puxian 普賢

## Q

Qian 虔  
 Qianzhou 虔州  
 qinggui 清規  
 Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (d. 740)  
 Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759–818)  
 Quanzhou 泉州  
 Quzhou 衢州

## R

rulaizang 如來藏

## S

Sanlun 三論  
 Sengcan 僧璨 (d. 606?)  
 Sengzhao 僧肇 (374?–414)  
 shamen 沙門  
 Shandao 善導 (613–681)  
 shang tang 上堂  
*Shanhai jing* 山海經  
*She dasheng lun* 攝大乘論  
 Shenqing 神清 (d. 806–820)  
 Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706)  
 shenyi 神異  
 shi 事  
*Shi ji* 史記  
 shi zhong yun 示眾云  
 Shigong Huizang 石鞏慧藏 (dates unknown)  
 Shigong mountain 石鞏山  
 Shimen mountain 石門山  
 Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790)  
*Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經  
 Shouxian 壽縣  
 Shu 蜀  
 Shunzong 順宗 (r. 805)

si 寺  
 Sichuan 四川  
*Sijia yulu* 四家語錄  
 Silla (dynasty) 新羅 (668–935)  
 Sima Qian 司馬遷  
 Song (dynasty) 宋 (960–1279)  
*Song gao seng zhuan* 宋高僧傳  
 Songshan 嵩山  
 Sui (dynasty) 隋 (581–618)  
 Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762)

## T

Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649)  
 Tang (dynasty) 唐 (618–907)  
*Tanyu* 壇語  
 Tianhuang Daowu 天皇道悟 (748–807)  
*Tiansheng guang deng lu* 天聖廣燈錄  
 Tiantai mountain 天台山  
 Tiantai School 天台宗  
 Tiantong Monastery 天童寺

## W

Wang Wei 王維 (701–761)  
*Wanling lu* 宛陵錄  
 weishi 唯識  
*Wen yuan ying hua* 文苑英華  
 wenda 問答  
 Wendi 文帝 (r. 581–604)  
 wu 無  
*Wu deng hui yuan* 五燈會元  
*Wu zong yuan* 五宗原  
 wuai 無礙  
*Wumen guan* 無門關  
 Wumen Huikai 無門慧開 (1183–1260)  
 wunian 無念  
 Wuxiang 無相 (684–762)  
 Wuxie Lingmo 五洩靈默 (747–818)  
 wuxin 無心  
 Wuzhu 無住 (714–774)  
 Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840–846)

## X

- Xiangyan Zhixian 香嚴智閑 (d. 898)  
 Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 805–820)  
 xichan 習禪  
 Xili mountain 西裏山  
*Xin tang shu* 新唐書  
 xing qi 性起  
 xingfu 興福  
 xinglu 行錄  
 Xingshan Monastery 興善寺  
 Xingshan Weikuan 興善惟寬 (755–817)  
 Xitang Zhizang 西堂智藏 (735–817)  
*Xiuxin yaolun* 修心要論  
*Xu baolin zhuan* 續寶林傳  
*Xu gao seng zhuan* 續高僧傳  
 Xuansha Shibe 玄沙師備 (835–908)  
 Xuansu 玄素 (668–752)  
 Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664)  
 Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756)  
 Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859)  
 Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯 (980–1052)  
 Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存 (822–908)  
 Xuyun 虛雲 (1840?–1959)

## Y

- Yan Hui 顏回  
 Yang Jie 楊傑 (dates unknown)  
 Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020)  
 Yangshan Huiji 仰山慧寂 (807–883)  
 Yanguan 鹽官 (752–841)  
 Yanluo wang 閻羅王  
 Yaoshan Weiyuan 藥山惟儼 (745–828)  
 yong 用  
 Yongjia Zhenjue 永嘉真覺 (665–713), aka Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄覺  
 Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975)  
 Youmin Monastery 佑民寺  
 Yuan (dynasty) 元 (1280–1368)  
 Yuanhe (era) 元和 (806–820)  
*Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 圓覺經大疏鈔  
 Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–1135)

*Yuanwu xinyao* 圓悟心要  
 yuben 語本  
*Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝  
 yulu 語錄  
 Yunju 雲居 (830–902)  
 Yunju Mountain 雲居山  
*Yunmen guanglu* 雲門廣錄  
 Yunmen School 雲門宗  
 Yunmen Wenyan 雲門文偃 (864–949)  
 Yuzhou 渝州

## Z

Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001)  
 Zhangjing Huaihui 章敬懷暉 (756–815)  
 Zhaoti Huilang 招提慧朗 (738–820)  
 Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (778–897)  
 zhenxin 真心  
 zhenxing 真性  
 Zhenyuan (era) 貞元 (785–805)  
 Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 997–1022)  
 zhiguai 志怪  
 Zhishen 智詵 (609–702)  
 Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597)  
 Zhongnan mountains 終南山  
 Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200)  
 Zhuangzi 莊子  
*Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訓  
 Zizhong 資中  
 zong 宗  
*Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄  
*Zongmen shi gui lun* 宗門十規論  
 zu 祖  
*Zu tang ji* 祖堂集  
 zuochan 坐禪  
*Zuochan ming* 坐禪銘  
 zushi 祖師

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