

Early Chan and ‘Nonduality’: The Cultural Impact of Chan Antinomianism

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Early Chan is now relatively well known — whether in its traditional version, as it was transmitted in the so-called Histories of the Transmission of the Lamp (Ch. *chuandeng lu*, J. *dentōroku* 伝灯録), or in its revised version, as reconstructed on the basis of Dunhuang documents. Both versions, while radically different, offer a hagiographic image of early Chan. Historians have tried to sort out hagiographic embellishments from historical facts, and in so doing they have sometimes adopted a kind of historicism, well represented in the works of Hu Shi 胡適, Ui Hakuju 宇井伯寿, Sekiguchi Shindai 関口真大, and my own mentor, Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山.¹ There is another kind of hagiography, which perhaps represents the popular reception of Chan, and which has not been studied so far. It can be found in marginal Chan texts or in sources outside the Chan tradition proper. It is based essentially on trends already expressed in texts like the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧伝 of Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667).²

The history of early Chan has been, as it were, “hijacked” by the controversy over the sudden/gradual (*dun/jian* 頓·漸) that gave the main roles to Huineng 慧能 (d. 713) and Heze Shenhui 荷澤神会 (684-758) and used the Northern school of Chan 北宗禪 as a foil against which the “true” teaching of Chan, represented by the Southern school 南宗, ultimately prevailed. The discovery of the Dunhuang 敦煌 manuscripts

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allowed scholars to correct that traditional image, inherited from late Tang and Song texts such as the *Baolin zhuan* 宝林傳 (801), the *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 (852), and the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳登錄 (1004).³ Yet one tends to forget that early Chan texts themselves, such as the *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記 by Jingjue 淨覺 (683-ca. 750) and the *Chuan fabao ji* 傳法宝紀 by Du Fei 杜朮 (d. u.), already aimed at imposing an earlier orthodoxy based on the notion of a patriarchal lineage proving legitimacy.⁴ In order to establish that orthodoxy, many important features of early Chan were pushed aside. Thus, the recent historiography of early Chan also has its blind spots, and it has tended to focus primarily on an “ideal” vision of Chan based on a radical “sudden” teaching, on textual filiation, on a new form of meditation, and on patriarchal transmission. Thus, Chan histories often begin with lineage charts that not only distinguish the various branches of Chan, but also clearly separate Chan from other forms of Chinese Buddhism.

In my first two books in English, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy* and *Chan Insights and Oversights*, I attempted to bring back to light some elements that had been pushed aside in order to “purify” the early Chan tradition — various theories and practices that seemed to retain a strong “gradualist” connotation.⁵ In order to do this, I moved away from the earlier historical (or rather, historicist) approach that I had inherited from Hu Shi 胡適 and from my teacher, Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, and which is still reflected in *The Will to Orthodoxy*, a study of Northern Chan based on my French doctoral dissertation.⁶ Instead, I adopted an approach informed by historical anthropology and cultural criticism. While these two books and the subsequent ones (on Buddhist sexuality, gender, and imagination) were well received, the new paths I had tried to explore have apparently not been taken by the later generation of

scholars (which a few exceptions, like Wendi Adamek, John Kieschnick, and Kevin Buckelew).⁷ Scholars have continued to focus on biographical, philosophical, textual, and institutional issues, producing many excellent studies. However, I feel that the main questions, what we could call the “truth claim” and the extraordinary appeal Chan exerted on Chinese society, continue to elude us. And in order to understand the latter, perhaps we need to turn outside the Chan tradition itself, and look for sources of information in documents that reflect how the Chan claims were received in popular culture.

What explains the appeal of early Chan? From the philosophical standpoint, early Chan is merely a synthesis of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. This point is obvious, for instance, in the *Lengqie shizi ji*, whose very title refers to a Yogācāra scripture, the *Lankāvatara Sūtra*, while much of its content is indebted to Nāgārjuna’s notion of the nonduality of the Two Truths, ultimate and conventional. Yet, with its advocacy of the “sudden” or ultimate standpoint, Chan pushes these tendencies to their extreme point. In that respect, Northern Chan and Southern Chan are no different, and we now know that Northern Chan adepts such as Zhida 智達 (alias Houmochen Yan 侯莫陳琰) were as “subitist” as Southern Chan adepts such as Shenhui 荷澤神會 and Guifeng Zongmi 宗密 (d. 841).⁸ Likewise, Shenxiu’s “skillful means” (*fangbian* 方便) are said to be “unborn” (*wusheng* 無生, that is, “sudden”), and Shenhui’s criticism on that point (as on many other points) was wrong.⁹

Yet there is another aspect of Chan that explains its appeal, and that aspect had been well seen by Shenhui (as well as by Northern Chan masters): namely, the Chan claim for an uninterrupted patriarchal transmission, from the Buddha Śākyamuni down to the present

patriarchs. This mystical conception of the patriarchal lineage was allegedly based on “mind to mind transmission” (a kind of supranormal power, *shentong* 神通 (Sanskrit: *abhijñā*) and on the transmission of the patriarchal robe (a kind of talismanic treasure). It is this claim that led (among other things) to the schism between Southern and Northern Chan, which was above all a controversy over the seat of Sixth Patriarch (obtained posthumously by Huineng) and of Seventh Patriarch (claimed by Shenxiu’s heirs and by Shenhui). In that vision of things, the list of Seven Patriarchs was supposed to form a symbolic totality, a Chinese series superseding the Indian list of Twenty-Eight Patriarchs. Yet that model was eventually superseded by the Indian model, and all that remained of it was Huineng’s culminating position as Sixth Patriarch and as a Chinese Buddha whose teaching was recorded in a Chinese “sūtra,” the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經).¹⁰ My contention is that this outcome would not have been possible if Huineng had not left, as “proof” of his eminent status, not only the patriarchal robe transmitted from the Buddha down generations, but also a “flesh-body” (*roushen* 肉身), allegedly preserved down to the present at Nanhua si 南華寺 in Guangzhou Province.¹¹

Another reason for Chan’s appeal is its claim to offer a type of meditation that was simpler, more direct, and more efficacious than the manifold techniques of traditional Indian Buddhism. This type of meditation, defined as the “one-practice samādhi” (*yixing sanmei* 一行三昧), was soon redefined by its mental content (or lack thereof) as “no-thought” (*wunian* 無念) or “no-mind” (*wuxin* 無心).¹² It was, on the plane of practice, the equivalent of the “sudden teaching.” However, as we will see, that “no-thought” — which in some respect prefigures the current “Mindfulness movement” — soon led to a kind of laxity and antinomianism.

But the main reason for Chan appeal, in the end, was its antinomianism, that is, the belief that the notions of Emptiness (Sanskrit: *śūnyatā*), nonduality, and sudden awakening dispensed Chan practitioners to follow the old rules (and in particular the Vinaya rule). In other words, by interpreting radically the traditional tenets of Mahāyāna Buddhism, as exposed most notably in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and in the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* (*Weimo jing* 維摩經), and in the commentaries of the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools, and emphasizing what I have called the “rhetoric of immediacy,” the most radical forms of Chan (beginning with the *Platform Sūtra*) came to reject the old-fashioned “conventional truth” in the name of the “ultimate truth” of Emptiness and non-duality, that is, traditional Indian Buddhism and its conventional morality. Of course, some practitioners were aware of the risks of such antinomianism, and attempted to counterbalance them by an emphasis on Vinaya — albeit a new form of Vinaya based on the Bodhisattva Precepts, or in Chan parlance, the “mind precepts.” This is in particular the case with Northern Chan masters such as Shenxiu and his disciples, as has been well studied by Prof. Ibuki Atsushi.¹³ Yet Prof. Ibuki and myself have also shown that, on the theoretical level at least, Northern Chan was just as “sudden” as Southern Chan. Two cases in point are those of the Northern Chan monks Zhida 智達 (d. 712) and Moheyan 摩訶衍 (d. u.). The latter is known for his spirited defense of sudden Chan during the debate that opposed the representatives of Indian and Chinese Buddhism in the Tibetan monastery of Samye between 792 and 794.¹⁴

In spite of their theoretical advocacy of “sudden awakening,” however, both Northern and Southern Chan preserved a tension and complementarity between the two truths, conventional and ultimate —

and only the most radical representatives of Southern Chan—from the somewhat idealized Huineng to adepts of the Bao Tang school 呆唐宗 of Chan master Wuzhu 無住 (714-774) in Sichuan— claimed to adhere only to the ultimate truth and to reject any form of mediation (ritual, textual study, and even seated meditation).¹⁵

This antinomian trend is not specific to early Chan, and it can already be found in texts such as the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. In Northern Chan, we find a monks like Mingzan 明瓚 (d. u.), also known as “Lazy Zan” (Lan Zan 懶瓚).¹⁶ Upon being invited to court by the emperor, Zan did not even bother to blow his running nose or stop eating his roasted sweet potato to greet the imperial messenger. This trend led to Puhua 普化 (d. u.), Linji’s favorite interlocutor, and well beyond, for instance with Ji Gong 濟公 (1133-1209 ; a.k.a. Ji Dian 濟顛, “Crazy Ji.”).¹⁷ In Korea, it can be found in monks like Wōnhyo 元曉 (617-686), and in Japan, its main representative is probably Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394-1481), who highly praised the “folly” of Mingzan and Puhua.¹⁸ In many cases, this antinomian trend emerged from (or merged with) another trend, that of the thaumaturge, to which I now turn, before returning to the question of Chan antinomianism.

A Tradition that Works Wonders

Like the eminent monks of other traditions, early Chan masters often possessed supranormal powers (*shentong*).¹⁹ One of these powers was the capacity to overcome death. Thus, Huineng’s is said to have left a relic more important — or at least more visible— than the patriarchal robe: his very body, which became a “flesh body” (*roushen*), that is, a mummy. Huineng’s highly conspicuous mummy may have been at times

a source of envy, fear, or hatred (at least until the Cultural Revolution); at any rate it left no one indifferent, and this fact explains in large part the importance of Huineng's monastery, Nanhua si, as a pilgrimage center.²⁰ In the popular tradition, Huineng was renowned as a dowser, a belief that implied his power to tame dragons.²¹

Northern monks were also believed to be able to tame tigers and to subdue demons. This is why Shenxiu's disciple Zang was nicknamed "Demon-subduer" (Xiangmo Zang 降魔藏). His fame was such that he remained a model in Chan long after the decline of Northern Chan, and his dialogue with Shenxiu about "taming demons" is still quoted in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*.²² Shenxiu himself, like his disciple Puji 普寂 (651-739), was known among other things for his ability to predict the future.²³ Thus, it is primarily as thaumaturges or wonder-workers that Chan masters first imposed themselves against their rivals. Eventually, they were in turn overshadowed in that domain by Tantric Buddhist masters such as Śubhakarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637-735), Vajrabodhi (Jingangzhi 金剛智, 671-741), and Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705-774). Facing that competition, Chan masters fell back on a kind of nativism that led them to present Chan as a "purely Chinese" form of Buddhism — and, as we have seen, to hail Huineng as a "Chinese Buddha." This was an attempt to put Indian Buddhism back to its (subordinate) place, at the time precisely when the latter was receiving imperial favors and seemed on its way to prevail over Chan. At the same time, certain Chan adepts — both from the Northern and Southern schools — were attracted to the new Tantric teaching, the most famous case being that of Yixing 一行 (683-727), a disciple of Puji who became a disciple of Vajrabodhi and Śubhakarasiṃha, and eventually compiled a magisterial commentary on the latter's translation of the *Mahāvairocana*

Sūtra.²⁴

The Chan attitude toward “supranormal powers” seems to reflect that ambivalence. Supranormal powers were popular, but they were often perceived as linked with esoteric Buddhist practice. In response to that perception, some Chan masters attempted to claim a superior type of powers that relied, not on the efficacy of esoteric rituals, but on the realization of nonduality and emptiness. Such powers supposedly allowed them to defeat other thaumaturges — whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist. Chan practice thus came to be perceived as the manifestation of superior *shentong* — even though the sudden teaching ultimately led to a rejection of all skillful means, including traditional *shentong* and seated meditation. Actually, this rejection aimed at affirming higher forms of skillful means (Shenxiu’s “unborn *upāya*” or *wusheng fangbian*) based on nonduality and emptiness. And in most cases, this claim led to a kind of antinomianism.

In one anecdote that was still circulating during the Song, Shenxiu defeats an Indian monk who boasted of reading minds.²⁵ The same theme is taken up in the biography of Zhishen 智誥 (609-702), the founder of the Bao Tang school. Empress Wu invited several Chan masters to test their powers against those of an Indian monk. The latter asked Zhishen: “What difference is there between ‘here’ and ‘there’? How can the Chan Master pine for his native place?” Zhishen replied, “How do you know about it?” The Indian monk answered, “You only have to try bringing something to mind, there is nothing I do not know.” Zhishen tried again twice to imagine himself in a certain place, and every time the Indian monk read his mind. Zhishen finally entered the state of no-thought, and the Indian monk, unable to fathom his mind and admitted defeat.²⁶

The anthropological perception of Chan masters as thaumaturges or wonder-workers is confirmed by the legend of the seventh century Chan master Pozao Duo 破竈墮 (Duo the “Stove-breaker”). Duo was a disciple of Huian 慧安 (d. 709). His nickname derives from the following episode:

“There was on Songshan 嵩山 a shamaness who could sacrifice to the stove god and perform exorcisms. One day Duo visited her. He spoke at first to her, then he struck the stove, saying: ‘Whence comes the deity? Where are its miraculous spirits?’ And he completely demolished it. Everybody was startled and terrified. Then a layman in a plain blue robe appeared and bowed respectfully to Duo, saying: ‘I have suffered many afflictions here. Now by virtue of your discoursing on the doctrine of non-birth, I have been reborn into Heaven. I cannot repay your kindness.’ Having said this, he departed.”²⁷

That story is rather unique in the traditions related to the stove god, Zaoshen 竈神 or Zaojun 竈君. Duo’s iconoclasm illustrates the kind of antinomianism for which Chan is famous, since the god’s main function was to watch over the strict observance of morality by humans. The story can therefore be read as a reaction against the “moral order” imposed by Chinese society — not unlike the boisterous atmosphere of the popular New Year ritual of “sending off the stove god” (Ch. *songzao* 送竈) performed till modern times.²⁸

The story reveals two other things: that the cult of the stove god was performed by popular religious specialists in shrines outside houses, and that, if the Chan master felt the need to show his superiority over that particular god, it was perhaps because the latter was perceived as a significant rival. We only hear the Chan side of the story, but in

another story staging the Chan master Shenxiu and the god Guan Di 關帝, we seem to hear the popular side, according to which the local god defeats the presumptuous Chan master.²⁹

The image of the thaumaturge Chan monk eventually merged with (or gave way to) that of the trickster. We have already encountered the Northern Chan monk Mingzan. In the later Chan tradition, the most famous case is that of Puhua 普化, Linji Yixuan's eccentric partner. Puhua's thaumaturgic power is also attested by his supernatural death. As Ikkyū puts it in one of his poems, "Linji's followers don't know Zen./ The true transmission was to the Blind Donkey [i.e., Puhua]."³⁰

Sexual Power

Another aspect of the "powers" attributed to Chan masters in popular culture was sexual potency. The Chan tradition itself has of course expurgated that aspect from its official narrative, but there are clues that indicate that its "great men" (*dazhangfu* 大丈夫) loomed large in people's imagination. John Powers has shown in the case of the Buddha that his image as "a bull of a man" superimposed itself on those of the ascetic and the enlightened being.³¹ Chan masters too are often represented as having the stature of a hegemon. Shenxiu is a case in point. The counter-example of Huineng — who is depicted as rather ugly, like the Chinese Arhats (*luohan* 羅漢), could not impose itself: later Chan masters are usually represented as tall and virile characters.³²

In Shenxiu's case, the erotic undertone is suggested by the story of the bath that Empress Wu gave him. Watching him naked among female servants, she is said to have exclaimed: "Truly, only after he enters the water does one see the great man!"³³ Similar stories, filled

with innuendo, must have circulated. The theme is developed in another story, with this time the Chan master Zhishen as the main protagonist. Empress Wu invited him to the imperial palace, together with Shenxiu and Huian. When she asked them whether they still experienced desire, the latter two replied negatively, and only Zhishen made a positive answer. When asked about it, he replied: “To have desire is to be alive, to have no desire is to be dead.” The Empress (herself a person well known for her unquenchable sexual drive) was satisfied by this answer, and gave Zhishen the robe of the Six Patriarch, thereby officially recognizing him as Huineng’s heir.³⁴ The story, of course, is apocryphal and merely aims at proving the superiority of Zhishen and of the school that derived from him, the Bao Tang school.

Antinomianism

The *shentong* of Chan masters, resting on a concrete (rather than simply philosophical) realization of nonduality and emptiness, led them to see things from the viewpoint of ultimate reality (that is, sudden awakening) and to reject all gradual practices (and in particular the strict observance of traditional Buddhist discipline. As the *Dunwu zhenzong lun* 頓悟真宗論 puts it, “to consider that there are precepts is to lose the [true] precepts.”³⁵ This trend, known as antinomianism, lent itself to laxity. It found one of its most extreme expressions in Wuzhu’s conception of no-thought (*wuxin, wunian*), and in texts like the *Treatise on Extinguishing Contemplation* (*Jueguan lun* 絕觀論).³⁶ Idealized transgression, resulting from a theoretical antinomianism, spread to all the cardinal virtues of traditional Buddhism, leading at times to such extreme statements such as Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄’s famous utterance,

“If you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha.” What seems in this case just rhetoric seems in the *Jueguan lun* to amount to a theoretical legitimation of murder (as long as it is based on the realization of non-duality or emptiness).

There is, however, a line that Chan monks (or at least the tradition that reports their exploits) seem to never cross, namely, sexual transgression. And this is spite of the justifications that never lacked. In the *Dazhidulun* 大智度論, for instance, we find the case of the two monks Prasannendriya and Agramati (which perhaps inspired the Korean film *Mandala* by Im Kwon-t'aek 임권택, 1981).³⁷ Whereas in Japan a Zen master like Ikkyū can describe in extremely poetic and graphic terms his lovemaking with a beautiful blind female singer, it is hard to imagine in China Buddhist poets like Hanshan 寒山, Li Bai 李白, or Su Shi 蘇軾 writing erotic poems in the same style: usually all you get are allusions to “rain and cloud.” Even the most antinomian Chan masters like Ji Gong 濟公, while they may emulate Vimalakīrti and visit brothels, occasionally spending the night with a courtesan, supposedly never cross the line: they jealously preserve their chastity.³⁸ How to explain such restraint, which is at first glance strange coming from a reputedly transgressive master? Should we see there the influence of Confucian prudishness, which ruled over many sectors of Chinese society? Yet many stories about early Chan masters seem to allude to that side of their existence — a side that historians, influenced by Confucianism (or Christianity) have decidedly left in the dark. We should learn to read between the lines to retrieve these submerged aspects of the perceived image of Chan, if not of Chan practice itself. In order to do that, we must pull back a little from doctrinal texts, which are of little use in that context. I am aware of walking on a scholarly minefield here,

and I request the indulgence of my readers. I believe that it is only through that heuristic detour that we may obtain a more concrete image of monastic life. This is only one of the many detours that define the anthropological historical approach that I am calling for.

Apart from these glimpses, there is a conspicuous silence about one important aspect of monastic life — and we know through other later examples — for instance in the cases of Tibetan and Japanese Buddhism — that sexuality has never been absent from Buddhist monasteries, even if these monasteries were not the dens of depravity that popular anticlerical tracts like *Monks and Nuns in a Sea of Sins* (Ch. *Sengni niehai* 僧尼孽海) would have us believe.³⁹ This conspicuous silence should be addressed and voices hitherto silent should be recovered by historians to provide a full and objective history of Chan, and to get a clear idea of the consequences of the proclaimed antinomianism of Chan.

Chan masters tried to address (and redress) that antinomianism by emphasizing the importance of morality — through a new understanding of the Bodhisattva Precepts, the so-called “one-mind precepts” (*yixin jie* 一心戒) or “formless precepts” (*wuxiang jie* 無相戒). As Prof. Ibuki Atsushi and I have shown, such precepts were emphasized by Northern Chan, and it is essentially as a teaching on the Bodhisattva Precepts that Northern Chan was transmitted to Japan during the Nara period.⁴⁰

Outside of Chan, some Buddhists like the Pure Land master Huiyi 慧日 (680-748) were adamant in their criticism of Chan antinomianism:

“These Chan masters are, after all, only ordinary men who lack any understanding or comprehension... They also say that everything is illusory and that in emptiness nothing exists. How does this differ from

the false view of emptiness preached by heretics? They also say that one should study 'unborn contemplation' during all one's lifetime, and that in this way one can avoid rebirth. How is this different from the heretic view of annihilation? Finally they say that all these dharmas and Suchness share a single, identical substance — limpid, calm and constant, without birth and without extinction. How is this different from the false view of eternalism advocated by the heretics?"⁴¹

Huiri is attacking here what he sees as extremist deviations, not the practice of Chan in and of itself.

Buer

Finally, I would like to mention briefly a controversial novel by a controversial author Feng Tang 馮唐 (冯唐).⁴² Allow me, in the spirit of Chan transgression, what might look in the eyes of serious Buddhist scholars as a social faux-pas. This novel has been censored in mainland China, and could (until recently) be bought only in Hong Kong. The title of the novel, Buer 不二 (Nonduality) might suggest that it is a philosophical text, but such is not the case. It is the name of the main protagonist, a young monk who happens to be the co-disciple of Shenxiu and Huineng in the community of the Fifth Patriarch Hongren 弘忍. The novel has no literary merit, and it rather belongs to the 'soft porn' genre. Yet its redeeming value in my eyes is to draw our attention on an aspect of Chan monastic life that has been coyly ignored until now. Admittedly, it is in no way an accurate representation, although the author (or his publisher) emphasizes its attention to historical detail.

The novel describes among other things Shenxiu's torrid affair with

an enlightened courtesan, as seen through Buer's eyes. Buer is also the witness of the sexual prowess of his fellow monks — and even of his old master Hongren. We are also given detailed comparative accounts of Shenxiu's and Huineng's affairs. The novel emphasizes Shenxiu's exceptional physical beauty, great knowledge of Buddhist philosophies and languages, his seductive speeches, and above all his sexual appeal to people of both sexes, lay and ordained. It describes Huineng as very different from Shenxiu, yet tells how he too meets and maintains sexual relationships with several village women.

My interest in this novel is not (or not only) in the rather vulgar and titillating description of love scenes — nor in the somewhat sacrilegious descriptions of Chan masters that I, like so many others, have had a tendency to idealize. Rather, I think that one may see in that type of narrative the distant echo or resurgence of a literary genre illustrated by Qing novels such as *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅 —but also, at the lower end of the spectrum, by such anticlerical texts such as *Monks and Nuns in a Sea of Sins*.⁴³ This kind of narratives most already have circulated, in oral if not written form, during the Tang. Feng Tang's novel would thus have the value of a symptom, revealing the fascination of the common people for the hidden lives of the “beautiful people” of that time — lives that sometimes reveal themselves through scandals (as was recently the case in both Chinese and Korean Chan/Sŏn/Seon) in the judiciary chronicles of later times.

Conclusion

However, the censorship that currently strikes that novel reveals in my opinion another symptom. If the point was merely to condemn its

pornographic content, one does not see why the novel would have been singled out at the time when porn is readily available through the world wide web and otherwise. It seems to me rather that Feng Tang's offense is to show a negative, damaging image of Chan at the time when the latter is becoming one of the eminent symbols of Chinese culture. "Soft porn" is perceived as detrimental to Chinese "soft diplomacy." Chan is presented as the uniquely Chinese response to Indian Buddhism (and Japanese Zen), but also as a "pure" and "demythologized" tradition that constitutes an appropriate response to Western and Chinese modernity. In this way, Chan is about to become a Chinese version of the fashionable Mindfulness movement — a Chan stripped of anything that could pass as "superstition" in the eyes of a modern public. To give just one example, during a recent visit to The Monastery of the Fifth Patriarch (Wuzu si 五祖寺) in Hubei Province, I couldn't help noticing that, in the Chinese and English explanations regarding the Hall of the True Body of the Fifth Patriarch (Zhenshen dian 真身殿), no mention whatsoever was made of his "flesh body" — the cult of mummies belonging obviously to the kind of popular superstitions deemed unworthy of authentic Chan practitioners. The same was true of Daoxin 道信's stūpa at the Monastery of the Fourth Patriarch (Sizu si 四祖寺) nearby. We know that Daoshin's flesh-body was once there. The only exception seems to be Huineng's flesh-body at Nanhua si 南華寺— which has been restored (or "reinvented") after its being damaged by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution — but I have not had a chance to visit that monastery yet. It is that kind of ideological simplifications that, in my opinion, Chan historians — and in particular historians of religion — should strive to avoid if the study of Chan is to reach its maturity. We are still waiting for the "full house" of Chan, and for

accurate portraits of Chan masters, “warts and all.”⁴⁴

Notes

- 1 See Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Ko Teki zengakuan* 胡適禅学案, Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1975; Ui Hakuju 宇井伯寿, *Zenshūshi kenkyū* 禅宗史研究, 3 vols., Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1966; Sekiguchi Shindai 関口眞大, *Daruma Daishi no kenkyū* 達磨大師の研究, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1957; and *Daruma no kenkyū* 達磨大師の研究, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967; and Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禅宗史書の研究, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967.
- 2 *Taishō daizōkyō* 大正大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al., Tokyo, 1924-32, vol. 50, 2060. (Hereafter abbreviated as T., followed by volume number, catalog number, page, and column).
- 3 *Baolin zhuan* 宝林伝 By Zhiju 智炬 (d.u.), in Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Sōzō ichin Hōrinden, Dentō gyokueishū* 宋藏遺珍寶林傳傳燈玉英集, Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1975; *Zutangji* 祖堂集 (952) by Jing 靜 and Yun 筠, in Yanagida Seizan, ed. *Sodōshū* 祖堂集, Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1974; and *Jingde chuandeng lu* (1004), by Daoyuan, T. 51, 2076.
- 4 *Lengqie shizi ji*, T. 85, 2837; and *Chuan fabaoji*, T. 85, 2838. See Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no zenshi 1: Ryōga shijiki; Den hōbōki*, Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1971: 327-435. On the *Chuan fabao ji*, see John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch’an Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1986; and id., *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism*. Berkeley: university of California Press, 2003.
- 5 Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991; and Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- 6 Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. On Yanagida Seizan’s contribution to Chan studies, see John McRae, “Yanagida Seizan’s Landmark Works on Chinese Ch’an,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 8 (1993-94):

- 51-103.
- 7 Wendi Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and its Contexts*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007; John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997; and Kevin Buckelew, "Inventing Chinese Buddhas: Identity, Authority, and Liberation in Song-Dynasty Chan Buddhism," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 2018.
 - 8 On this question, see Faure, "Le maître de dhyāna Chih-ta et le 'subitisme' de l'école du Nord," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 2 (1986): 123-131; and Faure 1997: 62-67.
 - 9 See *Dacheng wusheng fangbian men* 大乘無生方便門, T. 85, 2834. On this text, see McRae 1986: 218-230; Faure 1997: 41-45; Ibuki Atsushi, "'Daijō go hōben' no shohon ni tsuite: bunken no henshen ni miru Hokushū shisō no tenkai" 「大乘五方便」の諸本について--文献の変遷に見る北宗思想の展開, *Nanto bukkyō* 南都仏教 65 (2011): 71-102; and id., "'Daijō gohōben' no seiritsu to tenkai" 「大乘五方便」の成立と展開, *Tōyōgaku ronsō* 東洋学論叢 37 (2012): 1-62.
 - 10 See *Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經, T. 48, 2007 and 2008; and Philip B. Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.
 - 11 On this point, see Faure, "Relics and Flesh Bodies: The Creation of Ch'an Pilgrimage Sites," in Chün-fan Yü and Susan Naquin, eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992: 150-189; and Robert H. Sharf, "The idolization of enlightenment: On the mummification of Ch'an masters in medieval China," *History of Religions* 32, 1 (1992): 1-31.
 - 12 On the *yixing sanmei*, see Faure, "The Theory of One-Practice Samādhi (*i-hsing san-meï*) in Ch'an Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986: 99-128.
 - 13 See Ibuki Atsushi, "Hokushū ni okeru zen-ritsu itchi shisō no keisei" 北宗における禪律一致思想の形成, *Tōyōgaku kenkyū* 東洋学研究 47 (2010), 378-

362.

- 14 On this question, see Paul Demiéville, *Le Concile de Lhasa: Une controverse sur le quétisme entre les bouddhistes de l'Inde et de la Chine au VIIIe siècle de l'ère chrétienne*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952. See also Ibuki Atsushi, "Makaen to *Tongo daijō shōriketsu*" 摩訶衍と『頓悟大乘正理決』, *Ajia no bunka to shisō* アジアの文化と思想, 1 (1992):1-75. Despite his alleged defeat in the debate, Moheyan came to be worshiped in Tibet as one of the Eighteen Arhats and he is sometimes represented accompanied by a tiger — another proof of his supranormal powers.
- 15 On Sichuan Chan, see Adamek 2007; and Adamek, *The Teachings of Master Wuzhu: Zen and Religion of No-Religion*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. See also Jia Jinhua, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- through Tenth-Century China*. Albany: State university of new York Press, 2006.
- 16 See *Jingde chuangdeng lu*, T. 51, 2076: 461b; and Ui Hakuju 1966, vol. 2: 516.
- 17 See Meir Shahar, *Crazy Ji: Chinese Religion and Popular Literature*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- 18 On Ikkyū, see Evgeny Steiner, *Zen-Life: Ikkyu and Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars. Publishing, 2014.
- 19 On Chan thaumaturges, see Faure 1991: 96-114.
- 20 On this question, see Faure 1992 and Sharf 1992.
- 21 On this question, see Michel Soymié, "Sources et sourciers en Chine," *Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise*, n.s. 7, 1 (1961): 1-56.
- 22 T. 51, 2076: 232b.
- 23 On this question, see Faure, "Shen-hsiu et l'*Avatamsaka*." *Zinbun: Memoirs of the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies* 19 (1983): 1-15. On Puji, see *Shenseng zhuan* 神僧伝, T. 50, 2064: 990-991.
- 24 See T. 18, 848; and T. 39, 1796.
- 25 See *Taiping guangji* 太平広記 160, Taipei: Guxin shuju 古新書局, 1980: 319b; and Faure 1983.
- 26 See Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no zenshi 2: Rekidai hōbōki*, Tokyo: Chikuma

- shobō, 1976: 129-130. See also Adamek 2011: 95-96. A similar story is found in the case of Huineng's disciple, Nan'yang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (677-775), and in that of the Bao Tang master Zhishen. See *Jingde chuandenglu*, T. 51, 2076: 244a; and Adamek 2011: 95-96. The theme is not specific to Chan, however, since it already appears in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 in relation with Master Liezi 列子
- 27 See also *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50, 2061: 828b.
- 28 The story was also known in medieval Japan but it was interpreted as a rehabilitation of popular religion. See Robert E. Morrell, *Sand and Pebbles (Shasekishū): The Tales of Mujū Ichien, a Voice for Pluralism in Kamakura Buddhism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985: 93-94.
- 29 See Mujaku Dōchū 無著道忠, *Zenrin shōkisen* 禪林象器箋, Tokyo: Seishin shobō, 1963: 158a; and Faure 1993: 167-169.
- 30 See Ikkyū, *Kyōunshū* 狂雲集, in Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Ikkyū, Ryōkan* 一休、良寛, Tokyo: Chūō kōron, 1987. Puhua's sobriquet is a reference to a dialogue in which Linji called him a "blind donkey." See Faure 1991: 119-121.
- 31 See John Powers, *A Bull of a Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex, and the Body in Indian Buddhism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012
- 32 On that question, see Buckelew 2018.
- 33 See *Zutang ji*, ed. Yanagida Seizan, *Sodōshū*, 1974: 348a.
- 34 See Adamek 2011: 96.
- 35 *Dunwu zhenzong lun*, T. 85, 2835: 1279b.
- 36 *Jueguan lun*, in *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū* 鈴木大拙全集, vol. 2, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1980; English translation in Yanagida Seizan and Tokiwa Gishin, *A Dialogue on the Contemplation-Extinguished: Translated from the Chüeh-kuan lun, an Early Chinese Zen Text from Tun-huang*, Kyoto: Institute for Zen Studies, 1973.
- 37 *Dazhidulun*, in Étienne Lamotte, *Le Traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna*, Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1944-1980, vol. 1: 399; see also Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998: 6-7.

- 38 On the limits of transgression, see Faure 1998: 105-111.
- 39 Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998: 105-111.
- 40 See in particular Ibuki 2010; and Faure 1997: 106-125.
- 41 See *Lüe zhujiinglun nianfo famen wangsheng jingtu ji juanshang* 略諸經論念仏法門往生浄土集卷上, T. 85, 2826: 1237-41.
- 42 Feng Tang 馮唐. *Buer* 不二. Rev. ed. Hongkong: Cosmo Books 天地圖書有限公司, 2018.
- 43 See Howard S. Levy, *Two Chinese Sex Classics: The Dwelling of Playful Goddesses; Monks and Nuns in a Sea of Sins*. 2 vols. Taipei: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1975; and Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998: 146-149.
- 44 I use the term “full house” here in the same sense as Stephen Jay Gould in his book, *Full House: The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin*, Phoenix Books, 1999.

