

one sees this emptiness functioning as the forms of the world. This functioning is experienced as an interpenetrating, fascinating, and wonderful matrix of dependent arising. This insight, in turn, leads to a rejection of world renunciation and a compassion for all living beings who fail to see this hidden harmony and are caught in afflictive mental formations. Thereby, one dwells spiritually neither in *samsāra* nor Nirvana but courses freely as a bodhisattva in the matrix of the cosmos seeking the benefit of others. Huayan vision of this matrix of mutual identification and penetration, where all things are interwoven in perfect balance and harmony, was very appealing to the Chinese world, which had always appreciated both harmony and nature.

From China, Huayan spread to other parts of East Asia. The Korean monk Ūisang (625–702) studied Huayan Buddhism along with Fazang under the guidance of Huayan's Second Patriarch, Zhiyan (602–668). Ūisang, a close friend of Fazang, later brought Huayan Buddhism to Korea. In the eighth century, Huayan was brought to Japan by Korean and Chinese monks, and the Japanese emperor built the Eastern Great Monastery (*Tōdai-ji*) as a sanctuary for the preaching of the Huayan doctrine. *Tōdai-ji*, with its gigantic bronze statue of Vairocana Buddha, still stands near Nara. Huayan thought is studied today in Buddhist centers of learning throughout East Asia.

The Meditation School

The original Chinese word for meditation is *channa*, a rendering of the Sanskrit word for meditation, *dhyāna*. Later, *channa* was shortened to *Chan*. During the sixth century, meditation was just one of many religious activities practiced by the various sects of Chinese Buddhism. In fact, most practitioners of Buddhism would attend lectures, study *sūtras*, participate in devotional rituals, and practice various pious works—often leaving little time for meditation. For those Buddhists who wanted more intense training in the practice of meditation, numerous monastic centers were dedicated to such practice. These monasteries were often located in mountainous areas in central and southwestern China and were led by meditation (Chan) masters. These masters taught powerful meditative practices in ways that were accessible to anyone. Chan techniques were said to be so powerful that they could bring a person to Awakening in the age of the Degenerate Dharma, when this feat was thought to be so difficult.

The manuscripts discovered at Dunhuang have given modern scholars a better understanding of the history of the Chan School that emerged from these early meditation lineages and traditions. These manuscripts indicate that many of the legends concerning the founding of Chan Buddhism are most likely myths. Historically, we know that one of the first Chan masters to gain a wide following in China was Hongren (601–674), master of the East Mountain School. According to the legends about this school, Hongren was the Fifth Patriarch of Chan, the First Patriarch being Bodhidharma. As time went on, this legendary line of transmission was accepted as the founding lineage of the Chan School of Buddhism.

Bodhidharma was a monk from India who arrived in south China about 470 and who was famous for his meditative prowess. According to legend, it is said that the emperor asked Bodhidharma how much merit his building of Buddhist temples, donating to the Saṅgha, and worship offerings had brought him. Bodhidharma is said to have answered that all these acts of piety had brought the emperor no merit at all. The point of this story is that according to Chan, only the direct experience of one's Buddha-nature is truly meritorious. Thus, the whole purpose of Chan is to enable a person to discover his or her Buddha-nature through the practice of meditation. Eventually, the legend goes, Bodhidharma settled in a mountain retreat in north China near Luoyang, where he gathered disciples, guided them in silent meditation, and taught them the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. It was in this place that Bodhidharma is said to have spent nine years in meditation in front of a wall. This "wall-gazing" meditation demonstrated the power of one-pointed concentration for achieving the goal of Chan.

Legend associates Bodhidharma with the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* as a way of explaining the Chan experience of Awakening. As we have seen, the *Laṅkāvatāra* states that the foundation of the mind is the storehouse-consciousness that contains the *Tathāgata-garbha*, the Buddha-nature. When one attains a meditative state in which there are no thoughts, there can be a sudden "reversion of the foundation of consciousness" whereby the wisdom light of the pure Buddha-nature reveals itself. Chan teaches that to reach this sudden turning over of consciousness that reveals Buddha-nature, one must negate all ordinary distinctions and conceptualizations through meditative stillness of mind. Chan meditation is said to be able to still the mind's functioning in a one-pointed concentration that reaches the ground of consciousness. It is there that the pure wisdom nature of the mind's essence is revealed in a direct and sudden intuition of Awakening.

This goal of Chan practice was stated clearly in a stanza composed around the eleventh century and attributed to Bodhidharma:

A special tradition outside the scriptures;
 With no dependence upon words and letters.
 A direct pointing into the mind;
 Seeing there one's own nature, and attaining Buddhahood.

The first two lines of this stanza imply that Chan does not emphasize the study of *sūtras* or attempt to harmonize the Buddhist scriptures as did Tiantai. Nor does Chan use words to compose high mystical tracts as did Huayan. Rather, as the last two lines imply, Chan guides, or "points," disciples nature and attain, thereby, Buddhahood.

In the fully developed legend, the Chan lineage was traced back from Bodhidharma to the historical Buddha himself. In this extended line of transmission, Bodhidharma was said to be the Twenty-Eighth Patriarch in India, and the First Patriarch in China. The legend also states that once when asked

about the ultimate truth, Gautama Buddha held up a flower. Among his disciples, only Mahākāśyapa understood this gesture and received “from mind to mind” the “seal of the Buddha-mind.” Mahākāśyapa is said to have personally passed this seal of sudden Awakening on in what became an Indian lineage that centuries later was brought to China by Bodhidharma. Legend also states that Bodhidharma brought the martial arts from India to China, where they were taught at a monastery said to have been founded by him, namely, the Shaolin Monastery (see Figure 7.4).

Moving now from legend to history, we come again to Hongren, the Chan master designated in legend to have been the Fifth Patriarch. Hongren was invited by Empress Wu to teach the Dharma at the imperial palace. This gave his East Mountain School some national prominence. It was the disciples of Hongren who claimed that he was the Fifth Patriarch in a lineage dating back to Bodhidharma. These disciples also claimed that one of Hongren’s students, Shenxiu (c. 606–706), was the Sixth Patriarch. While the East Mountain School enjoyed some popularity in the capital, in 732 a monk named Shenhui (684–758) attacked the teachings of Shenxiu. Shenhui had been a student of Shenxiu, but when Shenxiu was called to the imperial court, Shenhui went to the south of China to study with another disciple of Hongren named Huineng (638–713).

In his attack on Shenxiu’s school, Shenhui claimed that Shenxiu taught gradual Awakening rather than sudden Awakening. In fact Shenxiu taught that a gradual clearing of afflictions and defilements from the “pure mirror mind” was helpful in the attainment of sudden Awakening. Shenhui also claimed

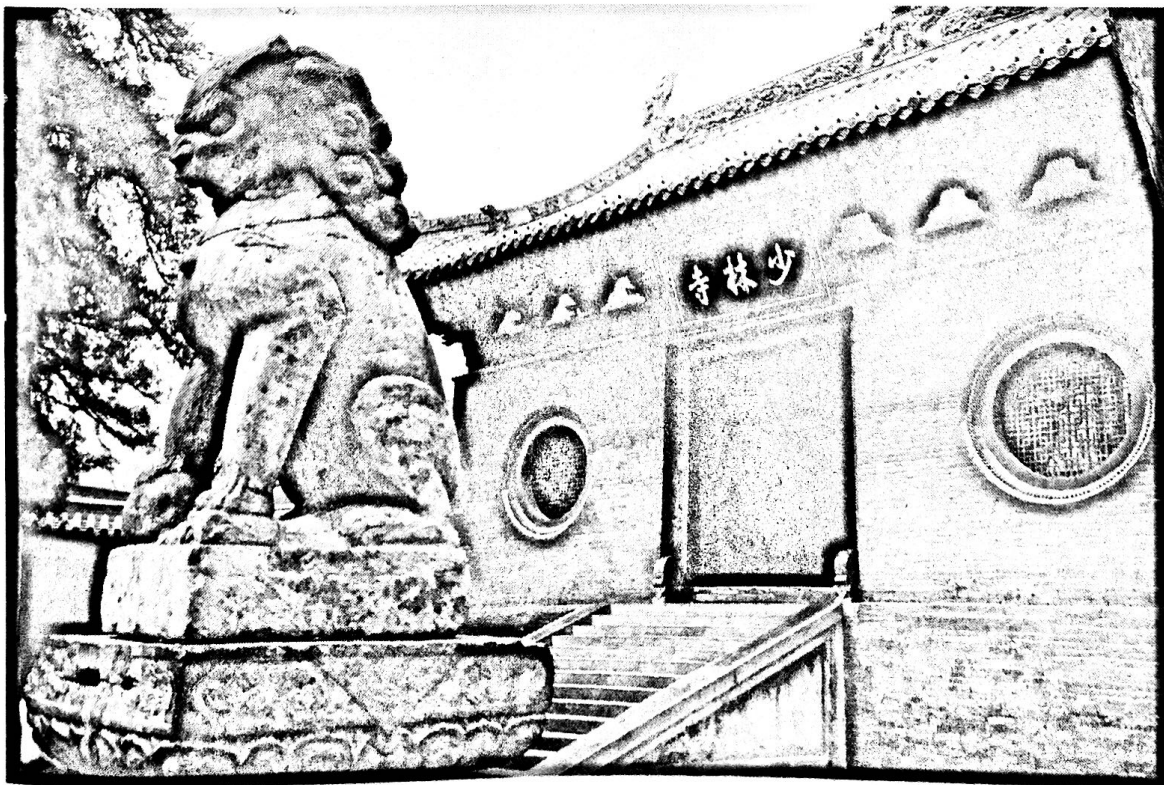


FIGURE 7.4. Shaolin Temple (5th century) on Mt. Song in Henan Province, China, known for its association with the Chinese martial arts.

that Shenxiu's school was the "Northern School" of Chan and that Huineng had founded the "Southern School" of Chan which taught sudden Awakening. Shenhui went so far as to claim that Huineng was the true Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism and that Huineng had Bodhidharma's robe, the symbol of Chan transmission. The result of Shenhui attack on the East Mountain School led to a period of sectarianism among the Chan schools. About a century later, the emperor called a council to settle the controversy, and Huineng was proclaimed the true Sixth Patriarch. The so-called Northern School of Chan continued only until the tenth century, while the Southern School gave life to a number of important Chan schools, two of which continue today.

Before introducing these schools, let us look at some verses from a Chinese text, the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*. This text purports to convey the teachings of Huineng and provides a famous legend about how Huineng became the Sixth Patriarch. Indeed, partly because of this *sūtra*, Huineng is venerated as one of the greatest Chan figures in Chinese history.

While I [Huineng] was a child, my father died and my elderly mother and I, her only child, moved to Nanhai. We suffered extreme poverty, and I sold firewood in the market place. By chance, a man bought some firewood. . . . Having received my money . . . I happened to hear another man reciting the *Diamond Sūtra*. Upon hearing it, my mind became clear and I attained Awakening.

I asked the man, "Where do you come from with this *sūtra*?" He answered, "I pay reverence to the Fifth Patriarch, Hongren, at the East Mountain." . . . Hearing what he said, I realized that I was meant to hear him. I took leave of my mother [making arrangements for her] and went to East Mountain.

Hongren asked me, "Where are you from, and why did you come to this mountain to pay reverence to me? What do you want from me?" I answered, "I am from [southern China]. . . . I have come a long distance to pay reverence to you. I ask for nothing but the Buddha's Dharma." The master reproved me saying, "If you are from [Southern China], then you are a barbarian. How can you become a Buddha?" I answered, "While people may be distinguished as northerners and southerners, there is neither north nor south in the Buddha-nature. The bodies of a barbarian and a monk are different; but what difference is there in Buddha-nature?" . . . Then a lay attendant ordered me to the rice-pounding area to pound rice. This I did for more than eight months.

One day the Fifth Patriarch suddenly called his disciples to come to him. When they were assembled, he said, "Let me say this to you. Life and death are serious matters. You disciples are engaged all day in making offerings . . . and you make no effort to achieve freedom from this bitter sea of life and death. If you are still deluded about your true nature, how can these blessings save you? All of you return to your rooms . . . write a verse and present it to me. After I see the verses, I will give the robe [of the Patriarch] and the Dharma to the person who understands the true meaning [of the Dharma], and will appoint him to be the Sixth Patriarch."

At midnight, the head monk, Shenxiu, holding a candle wrote a verse on the wall of the south corridor, without anyone knowing about it. The verse said:

The body is the *Bodhi* Tree,
The mind is like a bright mirror standing.

Take care to wipe it diligently,
Keep it free from all dust.

The Fifth Patriarch said [to Shenxiu], “The verse you wrote shows that you still have not reached true understanding. You have merely arrived at the front gate, but you have not yet entered it. . . . You must enter the gate and see your own nature.”

One day, a young novice passed by the rice-pounding area reciting this verse. I knew as soon as I heard it that the person who had written it did not yet know his own nature. . . . I said to the novice, “I beg you to take me to the south corridor, so I can see this verse. . . .” [There], I made a verse and, since I could not write, I asked someone to write it on the wall of the west corridor, so that I might offer my own original mind. If you do not know the original mind, studying the Dharma is to no avail. If you know the mind and realize its true nature, then you will awaken to the true meaning [of the Dharma]. My verse read:

Bodhi originally has no tree,
The bright mirror is nowhere standing.
Buddha-nature is forever clear and pure,
Where can there be any dust?

The Fifth Patriarch suddenly realized that I had understood the true meaning. . . . At midnight, the Fifth Patriarch called me into the hall, and expounded the *Diamond Sūtra* to me. As soon as I heard this, I was immediately awakened. That night the Dharma was imparted to me without anyone else knowing about it. Thus the Dharma of sudden Awakening and the robe were transmitted to me. The Fifth Patriarch said, “You are now the Sixth Patriarch. This robe is proof of transmission from generation to generation. But the Dharma must be transmitted from mind to mind. You must help people awaken to themselves. . . . But if you stay here, there are people who will harm you. So, you must leave at once.” I set out at midnight with the robe and the Dharma. . . . After taking my leave, I set out for the south. (*Liuzu tanjing*, 2–4, 6–10)

In this story it is said that Awakening can be found within one’s own body by gradually purifying the mirror mind by meditation so that no mental “dust” is present. Huineng, on the other hand, is said to have affirmed that Awakening is not something that arises from a mind that is purified, but suddenly from the Buddha-nature, which is inherently pure beyond the duality of mind and body. The *sūtra* claims that Shenxiu’s experience of meditative purifying of the mind has brought him to the gate of Awakening. But Huineng’s experience of the purity of Buddha-nature is Awakening itself. Elsewhere, the *Platform Sūtra* says more about Buddha-nature being the source of Awakening:

The nature of humankind is originally pure. It is because of false thoughts that true suchness is obscured. If you are free from delusions, the original nature reveals itself. . . . As the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* says, “At once, we gain clarity and recover the original mind.” Good friends, when I was at Priest Hongren’s place, as soon as I heard him [recite the *Diamond Sūtra*], I immediately gained great Awakening as I realized that true suchness was my original nature. (*Liuzu tanjing*, 18, 30–31)

By saying that Buddha-nature must reveal itself, the *sūtra* is not rejecting meditation. It is simply stating that Awakening is possible in any situation since it is not a product of mental purification. Rather, Awakening comes from our original Buddha-nature that can reveal itself anytime and anywhere. Here, Huineng is said to have experienced Awakening to Buddha-nature when he heard the recitation of the *Diamond Sūtra*. This story also indicates that Chan recognizes levels of Awakening and that the private interview with a Chan master is a central element to the process of Dharma transmission from "mind-to-mind."

To clarify the relationship between meditation (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) in light of his notion of Buddha-nature, the *sūtra* uses the distinction between essence and function. That is, meditation is not one thing that precedes and causes another thing called wisdom. Rather, because true meditation is the realizing of one's Buddha-nature, meditation is the very essence of wisdom, and wisdom is the functioning of meditation. This means that meditation and wisdom are not two different things, but a unity of the essence and functioning of Buddha-nature:

Never mistakenly say that meditation and wisdom are different; they are a unity, and are not two different things. Meditation is itself the very substance of wisdom; and wisdom is itself the function of meditation. . . . Be careful not to say that meditation produces wisdom. . . . How then are meditation and wisdom alike? They are like a lamp and its light. If there is a lamp, there is light. . . . The lamp is the essence of light; and the light is the function of the lamp. (*Liuzu tanjing*, 13, 15)

The eighth century saw the collapsing of the Tang Dynasty, and the more intellectual forms of Chan in the capital cities began to lose their status. Other schools tracing themselves to Huineng began to rise up in rural areas, where a number of innovative Chan masters developed radical techniques to help their disciples awaken to their Buddha-nature. Among the most original of these Chan masters was Mazu (709–788). Mazu was said to have had a "remarkable appearance": He walked "like a bull" and glared "like a tiger." He was the first Chan master to use shouting and hitting mixed with paradoxical dialogue to trigger Awakening in his disciples. While he did not reject meditation, he helped Chan acquire a more practical approach focused on everyday life. In the context of daily living ("drawing water and chopping wood"), it was believed that one could find Awakening with the help of a master. This approach to Chan would later give rise to popular collections of biographies, sayings, conversations, and questions and answers of famous Chan masters. One of the most famous collections was the *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp* (1004).

In terms of Mazu's own Awakening, it is said that one day when he was sitting in meditation, his master asked him what he was doing. Mazu responded, "I wish to become a Buddha." The master then picked up a tile and began to grind it with a stone. Mazu asked his master what he was doing;

to which the master responded, "I am polishing this tile to make a mirror." Mazu replied, "No amount of polishing will ever make a mirror out of a tile." The master then said, "And no amount of cross-legged sitting will ever make a Buddha out of you." In other words, although meditation is valuable for producing a spiritual environment wherein Awakening can take place, this Awakening is the revealment of the Buddha-nature itself. In short, you cannot make yourself *become* a Buddha because you already *are* a Buddha.

As various techniques developed in Chan, the Southern School split into different subschools called the Five Houses. Of these five, two are of special historical importance and continue to be influential today. First is the Caodong School named for its two founders, Dongshan (807–869) and Caoshan (840–901). Instead of practicing unusual techniques, this school emphasizes silent meditation as the best means of fostering enlightenment. This silence is itself understood to be a living expression of the primal stillness of the Buddha-nature. Therefore, sitting in silent meditation is the living manifestation of one's original Awakening. Living one's Buddha-nature in silent meditation allows this original Awakening to gradually show itself in one's complete life. This approach is based on Huineng's own view that wisdom and meditation are really one reality. It is not that meditation leads to wisdom, but that meditation is itself the essence of wisdom. The Japanese Zen master Dōgen (1200–1253) introduced this form of Chan into Japan, where it is known as Sōtō Zen.

The second of the Five Houses that has had continued popularity is the Linji School, named after its founder Linji (died 867). This school aims at a more sudden attainment of Awakening by using various innovations pioneered by people like Mazu. They stress the use of paradoxical sayings called *gong'an* (Japanese: *kōans*). The term *gong'an* means "public legal case," implying that the sayings used in Linji practice are authoritative "cases" for Chan practice. The *gong'an* stories contain a mysterious question, a paradoxical answer to a question, or an irrational phrase that can be used by the practitioner to set aside rational dualistic thought. By moving beyond conventional reason, and with guidance from a master, the person can become one with the quandary of the *gong'an* itself. Then, in a state of spiritual questing intensified by the *gong'an* practice, the sudden answer to the *gong'an* arises "like the sun from behind a cloud." Since one's very existence is identified with the *gong'an*, in this sudden insight one glimpses one's Buddha-nature as it reveals itself at the depth of one's questing mind. Collections of *gong'ans* became popular in China and the rest of East Asia. A Linji master named Yuanwu Kejin (1063–1135) wrote the famous *Blue Cliff Records* that records one hundred *gong'ans* with his commentary. Later, forty-eight selected *gong'ans* were compiled with commentary by Wumen Huikai (1183–1260) into *The Gateless Gate*, which is held in high regard in Japan.

The Linji sect and its *gong'an* practice had a formative influence on Korean Buddhism. Early on, the Korean monk Pōmnang (fl. 632–646) studied Chan with Doxin (580–651), considered in legend to be the Fourth Patriarch. Pōmnang brought Chan to Korea, where it is known as Sōn Buddhism.

However, it did not really develop in Korea until the Linji sect was later introduced in the ninth century. Since that time, the Linji style has defined all forms of Korean Sŏn Buddhism. The Linji sect was also brought to Japan by Eisai (1141–1215), where it is known as Rinzai Zen.

The Pure Land School

The last of the great Chinese schools of Buddhism is the Jingtu (“Pure Land”) School. Pure Land Buddhism, more than any other Chinese school, formed the devotional experience of Buddhism in China and throughout all East Asia. It is considered along with Chan to be a “practical school” because it sets aside more theoretical issues in order to stress practice. Pure Land Buddhism bases its teachings and practices on the *Land of Bliss Sūtras* composed in India. As we saw in Chapter 4, in those *sūtras* it is said that Dharmākara Bodhisattva traversed the Ten Stages of the bodhisattva’s Great Journey to become Amitābha Buddha (Chinese: Amiktufo; Japanese: Amida Butsu). In doing so, Amitābha fulfilled certain vows and gained the power necessary to create a Buddha realm referred to in China as the Pure Land. Through the realization of his vows, Amitābha also gained the power to enable people to be born in his Pure Land, where they can gain Awakening much more easily than in the human realm. Pure Land Buddhism stresses faith in this power of Amitābha to save humankind from rebirth into the realms of ignorance and suffering by bringing those who call on him to his Pure Land.

Pure Land Buddhism in China traces its roots back to when one of the *Land of Bliss Sūtras* was translated into Chinese in the second century C.E. Many scholars believe that the Pure Land tradition in China most likely developed from many sources of devotional practice. However, the tradition itself points, in what may be a more stylistic account, to three patriarchs as the primary founders of Pure Land Buddhism in China. The first acknowledged patriarch was Tanluan (476–542). Tanluan was once convalescing from an illness and had a vision of a heavenly gate opening to him. Inspired by this dream, he began to seek eternal life through the practice of Daoism. However, one day he met the Indian Buddhist monk, Bodhiruci, who arrived in Luoyang in 508. Bodhiruci introduced Tanluan to teachings about Amitābha Buddha and Pure Land piety. Tanluan converted, pursued Pure Land practice, and eventually wrote a book that unified the teachings of the *Land of Bliss Sūtras* with a sophisticated explanation of how to visualize and invoke Amitābha Buddha.

In his writings, Tanluan introduced some of the themes that would become foundational to Pure Land Buddhism. Tanluan was inspired by the Amitābha’s eighteenth vow, which stated that “all beings” who think of the Amitābha Buddha for even one thought moment with sincerity and faith when they hear his name will be reborn into the Pure Land. Tanluan interpreted “all beings” to mean that not just saintly bodhisattvas, but even common persons, including sinners, can be reborn into the Pure Land through the help of Amitābha Buddha. With this possibility in mind, Tanluan distinguished