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Readings of the Lotus Sūtra,
Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone, editors

READINGS

OF THE

Platform Sūtra

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29. For Empress Wu and her claims, see Antonino Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1976); and R.W.L. Guisso, *Wu Tse-t'ien and the Politics of Legitimation in T'ang China*, Western Washington University, Program in East Asian Studies, Occasional Papers, 11 (Bellingham: Western Washington University, Program in East Asian Studies, 1978).
30. Details in Jorgensen, "'Imperial' Lineage," esp. 104–14.
31. Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 66–68, 461–62.
32. Chen, "Shengshan Monastery," 139–45; Jorgensen, "'Imperial' Lineage," 93–95.
33. Chen, "Shengshan Monastery," 139–41; Jorgensen, "'Imperial' Lineage," 120–21.
34. See also Shenhui's *Putidamo Nanzong ding shifei lun*, recorded by Dugu Pei, cited in Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 117, 131.
35. Wendi L. Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 321–23.
36. Yampolsky, 70–76; for a translation see Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 677–705; for the mummy and its theft, Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 190–355. For later uses of this account, see John Jorgensen, "Ssanggye-sa and Local Buddhist History: Propaganda and Relics in a Struggle for Survival, 1850s–1930s," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 21, no. 1 (2008): 87–127.
37. Jo-shui Chen, *Liu Tsung-yüan and Intellectual Change in T'ang China, 773-819* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
38. For Zongmi's opposition to this compromise, see Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 236–44. On the different versions of the *Platform Sūtra* at this time, see Morten Schlütter, "Transmission and Enlightenment in Chan Buddhism Seen Through the *Platform Sūtra* (*Liuzu tanjing*)," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 20 (2007): 388; and Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 595–640.
39. John Jorgensen, "The *Platform Sūtra* and the Corpus of Shenhui: Recent Critical Text Editions and Studies," *Revue Bibliographique de Sinologie* (2002): 399–438, esp. 413–16, based on In'gyŏng, *Mongsan Tŏg'i wa Koryŏ hugi Sŏnsasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Pur'il, 2000), 95–171.
40. The popularity of the *Lunyu* is noted by Jonathan Spence in the first of his Reith Lectures for 2008, "Chinese Vistas." Transcript and podcast are available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2008/index.shtml.
41. For discussion and reevaluations of Hongzhou Chan, see Jinhua Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- Through Tenth-Century Chan* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); and Mario Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
42. See Pei-Yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

3

THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF EARLY CHAN

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HENRIK H. SØRENSEN

Traditional Chinese accounts of the history of Chan Buddhism depict it as originating with the historical founder of Buddhism, Śākyamuni, whose truth of enlightenment was passed down through a succession of Indian patriarchs until it reached the famed Bodhidharma (d. ca. 530), the First Patriarch, who traveled to China, where the lineage continued until it reached the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng (638–713). In other words, the history of Chan Buddhism was perceived as the unfolding of a monolithic tradition grounded in, and essentially identical with, the message of liberation taught by the Buddha. This claim was conveyed as part of a twofold strategy, one diachronic and one synchronic.[1] The diachronic track takes the form of a formal lineage history (actually lineage histories), in which the original message of enlightenment is transmitted via an unbroken line of patriarchs (*zushi*) extending back to the Buddha himself. These patriarchs were considered holy persons, but living in the historical continuum and succeeding each other as pearls on a string. The main idea behind this notion was to provide authenticity and orthodoxy to the Chan tradition, and as John Jorgensen demonstrates in his chapter in this volume, it was modeled on the ancestral genealogies known from traditional Chinese society.[2]

The other mode, the synchronic, consists of a repeated affirmation of the universal—and in a sense static—state of enlightenment

what is this in FR913.36.56?

first attained by the Buddha and handed down through the lineage of the Chan patriarchs in the same way the flame of one lamp is used to light the next (*chuandeng*, transmission of the lamp). The idea was that the original enlightenment of the Buddha was (and still is) preserved in identical form in all the successive masters of the tradition. The reaffirmation of enlightenment is effectuated though a series of doctrinal truths concerning the inherent nature of enlightenment in all sentient beings, variously expressed as the buddha mind (*foxin*), the one mind (*yixin*), the original mind (*benxin*), buddha nature (*foxing*), and so on.[3] Although the underlying concept of the absolute truth of inherent buddha nature has remained virtually static in the history of the Chan tradition since its obscure beginnings, the doctrines and terminology with which it was expressed changed greatly over the course of the centuries.

The conception of the patriarchs of early Chan was expressed in a lineage that from the beginning was codified as going from Bodhidharma to Huike (485–555? or after 574) to Sengcan (d. 606) to Daoxin (580–651) to Hongren (601–674).[4] This lineage is first found in a funerary stele inscription for Faru (638–689), who is presented as succeeding Hongren.[5] Right from the start, the main issue was who was the primary heir to Hongren, that is, who was the real Sixth Patriarch. This controversy was battled over in a series of lineage histories or genealogies, the earliest of which date from the beginning of the eighth century. They include the *Annals of the Transmission of the Dharma Treasure* (*Chuan fabao ji*)[6] by Du Fei (early seventh century); the *Records of Men and Methods [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra* (*Lengqie ren fa zhi*),[7] compiled by Xuanze (d. ca. 725); and the *Records of Masters and Disciples [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra* (*Lengqie shizi ji*),[8] compiled by Xuanze's disciple Jingjue (683–ca. 750) around 713–716. Each of these histories promoted a slightly different version of the Chan lineage, especially as it took shape after Hongren. The *Platform Sūtra* itself, with its radical claim that the otherwise almost unknown Huineng was the real Sixth Patriarch, should be understood in the context of these histories. The eventual success of the *Platform Sūtra* and its version of the lineage meant that the other

histories all disappeared, and we know about them now only because they were preserved in the hidden cave library found at Dunhuang in the last century.

The Chan notion of a lineage of patriarchal succession has been a powerful and enduring construct. Lying at the heart of Chan self-identity, it served both spiritual and practical aims. The authority of individual Chan masters and the right to establish a given teaching as orthodoxy were of major importance to the medieval Chan lineages. In fact, the continuous struggles over lineage and orthodoxy that took place throughout the eighth and ninth centuries shaped the Chan tradition in late medieval China and beyond.

The practice of meditation, in particular seated meditation (*zuochan*), seems to have been a defining characteristic of Chan Buddhism from early on.[9] The earliest material on Chan, exemplified in the writings associated with the so-called East Mountain tradition (which Shenhui [684–758] later referred to as Northern Chan), describes meditation as a practice in which the adept calms and focuses his mind, attaining a mental state devoid of thoughts (*linian*).[10] This process is further described as *anxin* (calming the mind), *kanxin* (beholding the mind), *guanjing* (contemplating purity), and *shouxin* (maintaining one-pointedness).[11] Shenhui later criticized these practices, claiming they were gradual in nature and based on a dualistic understanding. As the following chapters of this book make clear, a major line of argument in the *Platform Sūtra* attacks practices such as these. According to the *Platform Sūtra*, although Northern Chan may have understood that enlightenment is an instantaneous and direct awakening to the buddha nature inherent in all people, it wrongly thought this could be attained through a gradual process.

A SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVE ON THE HISTORY OF EARLY CHAN BUDDHISM

Although several theories exist about the formation of the early Chan school, scholars today generally agree that the traditional Chan

perception of an unbroken patriarchal lineage from Śākyamuni to a series of Chinese patriarchs is the product of pious imagination and sectarian assertions. In other words, the early Chan lineage cannot be understood to have any historical reality prior to the ex post facto efforts of its creators.

Proposing a Chan lineage can be seen as a desire on the part of developing Chan communities to assert themselves in their struggle for religious and worldly recognition. These lineages can be compared to similar assertions in other early traditions of Chinese Buddhism, especially the Tiantai and Three Treatise (Sanlun) schools, although these never claimed an unbroken lineage going all the way back to the historical Buddha.[12] The lineage claims of early Chan reflected a search for identity and legitimacy and a need to stand out from other forms of Buddhist sectarianism. The creation of a spiritual ancestry going back to the founder of the religion was a viable way of securing both spiritual authority and distinctive identity. Seen from this perspective, the Chan tradition simply copied a good idea that was working for other Buddhist denominations. Also, it must not be forgotten that both the Tiantai and the Three Treatise schools were at least partly traditions of meditation, and therefore potential competitors with Chan for secular support. This fact can hardly have been overlooked by the founders of the early Chan communities, who may have felt pressured to come up with a sectarian history similar to those of their closest competitors. Therefore, strengthening a history and defining an identity through the formulation of a patriarchal lineage were of primary importance to the institutional process of early Chan.

But of even greater concern to the individual Chan lineages was a need to distinguish themselves from other competing Chan lines, even collateral ones descending from the same spiritual ancestor. Therefore, during the late seventh and early eighth centuries Chan monks from various lineages increasingly defined themselves as belonging to a tradition that was distinct from, better than, and more true than their competitors. The issues at stake were of the highest

import, for with acceptance and public recognition came political, economic, and in some cases even imperial support.[13]

Despite the constructed and artificial nature of the patriarchal lineages, many scholars have come to realize that, together with doctrinal material that has survived, they provide meaningful data on the history of early Chan. Hence by applying a combination of discourse analysis and textual criticism to the records of these lineages, it is possible to distill a relatively large amount of historical data to help us understand the way early Chan Buddhism developed in China.

MEDITATION AND THE FORMATION OF EARLY CHAN

Before turning to the rise of Chan Buddhism as a sectarian phenomenon, let us first review what we know about the practice of meditation in Chinese Buddhism prior to that. The term *chan* is a short form of the word *channa*, which means "meditation" and is a Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit word *dhyāna*. In traditional Mahāyanā Buddhism, *dhyāna* is used as a general term denoting a wide range of Buddhist contemplative practices, including meditative concentration and insight (Skt.: *śamatha-vipaśyanā*), visualization (*guan*), Buddha invocation/recollection (Skt.: *buddhānusmṛti*), and reflective contemplation (*guanxin shi*), in which the practitioner focuses the stream of his thinking on a particular doctrinal theme such as causality, impermanence, impurity, or emptiness. It may also involve the contemplation of a specific object, such as a decomposing corpse. Hence, references to a Buddhist monk engaged in meditation in principle could indicate any of the above types of practices.

During the early period of Chinese Buddhism (first to fourth centuries C.E.), the main sources on Buddhist meditation and contemplation were several canonical sūtras and treatises of Indian origin with instructions on the practice of various forms of meditation (*dhyāna*). Many of these texts belonged to the so-called Hīnayāna traditions

and focused on breath control and mind purification. Later, the great translator Kumārajīva (344–409 or 413) produced a number of meditation treatises that became extremely influential in Chinese Buddhism. Even though these works reflect Indian Buddhist practices, there are indications that Kumārajīva may have modified their contents in accordance with his own understanding of Mahāyāna Buddhist practice. A prominent exponent of meditation during this phase of Chinese Buddhism was Huiyuan (344–416) of Mount Lu, who was greatly inspired by Kumārajīva's translations.[14]

Together this material gives evidence of a slow but persistent development from what we might call Hīnayāna-style meditation (*dhyāna* carried out on the basis of a dualistic, pietistic, exclusivist view of reality), through Hīnayāna-style meditation based on Mahāyāna doctrines, ending with Mahāyāna-style meditation based on Mahāyāna doctrines.[15] This progression reflects a changing understanding in China of Buddhist practice and its goal, both of which were increasingly influenced by key Mahāyāna philosophical concepts such as universal emptiness, mind only, and nondualism. These changes are more concerned with spiritual attitude and ideas of the path (Skt.: *mārga*) than with technical aspects. Meditation continued to be practiced primarily seated cross-legged with the hands resting in the lap.

Generally speaking, Chinese Buddhist meditation during the period in which the early patriarchs of the Chan tradition are supposed to have lived, roughly 450 to 650, does not appear to have been exclusive to a special class of monks but was part of the common program of Buddhist training followed by all monastic communities. Of course there were monks who specialized in one or more of these aspects of Buddhist training, but the vast majority would have engaged in a combination of scriptural study and the practice of some form of meditation as outlined above. This is indicated by the biographies of the monks in the section on *dhyāna* practitioners found in Daoxuan's (596–667) *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan*, hereafter *Continued Biographies*).[16]

BODHIDHARMA AND HIS LINEAGE

At one point during the late Northern Wei dynasty (386–534) a meditation master from India by the name of Bodhidharma arrived in Luoyang. The earliest source to mention him is the *Record of the Saṃghārama [Monasteries] of Luoyang*, which portrays him stereotypically as a foreign pilgrim-monk without providing any real information about his teaching or background.[17] Bodhidharma next appears a century later, in Daoxuan's *Continued Biographies*. Daoxuan's work is an important source for understanding the early history of the Chan tradition because it was written before a self-conscious Chan lineage took shape. From this source a picture emerges of Bodhidharma as a master of *dhyāna* who taught a Mahāyāna-oriented style of meditation. Daoxuan mentions that Bodhidharma taught "calming the mind by doing wall contemplation," a kind of meditation that, at least on the surface, would seem like a rather traditional practice of meditative concentration.[18] We know little directly about Bodhidharma's meditation practice. Only one of the works attributed to him, *The Treatise on the Two Entrances and Four Practices* (*Erru sixing lun*), is considered authentic. Although it does touch upon the issue of meditation, it is largely a doctrinal tract with an eccentric formulation of the idea of nondualism.[19]

Daoxuan appears to have had some reservations about Bodhidharma's teachings. In a section discussing different approaches to meditation, Daoxuan calls Bodhidharma's style "abstruse and complex." He notes that Bodhidharma's teaching was based on the teaching of emptiness propounded in the *prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom) tradition, and suggests that Bodhidharma took these teachings to an overly idealistic extreme when he states that Bodhidharma only wanted to "negate and discard." Daoxuan also claims that Bodhidharma rejected the principles of karmic retribution (sin and merit) and that he chose to abstain from words, and he rebukes Bodhidharma's followers for their failure to uphold the prescriptions of the *vinaya* (the Buddhist monastic rules).[20] In general, then,

it seems that Daoxuan felt that Bodhidharma's approach implied the rejection of the traditional concepts of path and goal, viewing them as dualistic and gradual. Although such an approach is based on the teachings of the perfection of wisdom, nevertheless from the perspective of monastic training it was understood by many to be problematic, even dangerous, as it could result in the rejection of traditional Buddhist practice and monastic discipline. Daoxuan appears to have thought that many of Bodhidharma's successors came close to rejecting tradition this way; he attacks them as superficial and immature, unable to grasp Bodhidharma's teachings.

From Daoxuan we know the names of a number of monks who are said to have trained under Bodhidharma, or at least to have been exposed to his teachings. They include his immediate disciples Huike (who emerged as the Second Patriarch of Chan in China), possibly Sengfu (first half of sixth century), and some of their followers.[21] Daoxuan was writing more than one hundred years after the time of Bodhidharma and his immediate disciples, so it is difficult to judge how accurately he described their teachings. The negative review of their practice of meditation may also have been influenced by sectarian struggles in Daoxuan's own day. In any event, most of the early sources appear to indicate that the adherents of Bodhidharma's tradition of *dhyāna* expounded a radical understanding of the perfection of wisdom that emphasized emptiness and the overcoming of dualism. This, of course, fits well with later Chan notions of sudden enlightenment.[22]

Another clue about Bodhidharma is contained in Daoxuan's linking him with the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Daoxuan claims that Bodhidharma transmitted the scripture to his disciple, Huike, and that Huike passed down the tradition to his students as well.[23] However, other early sources are silent about this connection, so we have no basis for asserting that Bodhidharma preached the text. Later sources, by contrast, claim that the sūtra was fundamental for Bodhidharma and the East Mountain Chan tradition—despite the fact that the sūtra and its ideas about consciousness seem never to have been particularly influential in East Mountain Chan doctrine.[24] The reason for this later claim is not hard to fathom. The *Laṅkāvatāra* was

especially important in Chinese Buddhism during the sixth century, and the Second Patriarch, Huike, was considered an exponent of the scripture. Hence, it is likely that the later Chan tradition connected the text to Bodhidharma to further solidify the lineage.

According to Daoxuan's biographical account, Bodhidharma and his followers constituted only one among several different traditions of *dhyāna* in north China during the sixth century. Another group, which formed under Sengchou (sixth century), was concerned with mental purification in what would seem to be a more gradualist manner. Daoxuan clearly favors this tradition, perhaps because it conformed more closely to orthodox Indian Buddhist practices. It is not improbable that the tension between the followers of Bodhidharma and their seemingly radical style of meditation and Sengchou's more traditional *dhyāna* practice could have been the origin of the later debate over sudden versus gradual enlightenment. In any case, as noted above, we should not lose sight of the fact that most of the information contained in Daoxuan's biography was compiled during the middle of the seventh century, a full century after many of the events it describes.

DAOXIN, HONGREN, AND THE RISE OF THE EAST MOUNTAIN TRADITION

Although the link between Bodhidharma and Huike may well have been historical, this does not hold true for the link between Huike and his obscure disciple Sengcan, whom the later Chan histories uniformly claim as the Third Patriarch. There are no reliable or contemporary sources on which to establish this connection, and it would appear to be a fairly late fabrication. Only with Daoxin,[25] the alleged Fourth Patriarch of Chan, roughly contemporary with the historian Daoxuan, can we begin to give some historical credit to the development of sectarian Chan.

Daoxuan's biography is the earliest surviving source about Daoxin, and it places him as head of a group of monks at East Mountain

in Huangmei. Daoxuan relates that on his deathbed, Daoxin is asked about the future of his teachings. He answers that he has already given a number of transmissions but mentions no names. At other places in the biography, however, Hongren is mentioned twice while other disciples of Daoxin are not.[26] Given that Daoxuan was a contemporary of Daoxin, we are justified in accepting Daoxuan's data at more or less face value. Although we have no clear idea about the content of Daoxin's teachings, he and Hongren were probably related as master and disciple. Interestingly, in the *Annals of the Transmission of the Dharma Treasure*, Daoxin is said to have only grudgingly appointed Hongren as his successor.[27]

In any case, it seems clear that Hongren took over from Daoxin and continued to develop the growing community at Huangmei. The sole surviving text attributed to Hongren is the *Treatise on the Essentials of Mind Cultivation* (*Xiuxin yao lun*), although it is not certain that the current version was authored by him.[28] The text offers a clear philosophy and guide to meditation. It also uses the metaphor of the dusty mirror, which would later appear in Shenxiu's poem in the celebrated verse competition in the *Platform Sūtra*. Although Hongren's numerical designation as fifth in the series of patriarchs was probably created posthumously, nevertheless it is with him that we begin to see the outlines of the first Chan Buddhist community in the institutional sense. We may consider him the real founder of Chan Buddhism in the sense that he formulated a distinct type of meditation practice and doctrine and was probably one of the first *dhyāna* masters who established an entire community around a uniform type of practice.

HONGREN'S DISCIPLES: THE COLLATERAL BRANCHES OF NORTHERN CHAN

According to the *Records of Men and Methods [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra*, Hongren had ten major disciples, all of whom are

said to have transmitted his teaching of Chan.[29] Of these, Shenxiu (606?–706), Faru, Lao'an/Hui'an (588?–708), and Xuanze (d.u.) were evidently the most prominent and influential—or at least, that is how they are portrayed by the authors of the early Chan sectarian histories and other contemporary sources. Huineng, who would become so famous later as the Sixth Patriarch in the so-called Southern Chan tradition, and around whom the *Platform Sūtra* revolves, is also mentioned in the *Records of Men and Methods* among these ten disciples. However, all that is said about him is that he lived in Shaozhou and was a teacher of only local significance. From the perspective of the authors of this work, Huineng—although recognized as a disciple of Hongren—was a marginal figure. (The changing understanding of Huineng during this period is discussed at greater length in John Jorgensen's chapter in this volume.)

As far as the history of the transmission lineage of early Chan goes, it is obvious that as early as the end of the seventh century a process had begun in which various monks, in particular those who claimed to be disciples of Hongren (or perhaps their disciples again), had begun to position themselves as heirs in a Chan lineage. This had already started before Shenxiu passed away but accelerated greatly after his death, resulting in the creation of at least four contending branches of what came to be called Northern Chan.[30] Each seems to have put forward its own candidate as the Sixth Patriarch.

Shenxiu, the most important of the contenders, figures preeminently among the disciples of Hongren. He was a prolific writer who authored a number of Chan works, including the *Treatise on the Contemplation of the Mind* (*Guanxin lun*) and the *Treatise on Complete Brightness* (*Yuanming lun*). The latter features a presentation of meditation in stages. Shenxiu produced many distinguished disciples, and it is neither surprising nor coincidental that he stands out as the greatest among the masters of Northern Chan. He enjoyed almost unprecedented favor from the imperial court, especially from Empress Wu (r. 690–705), and had numerous followers among the elite.[31]

Faru is noteworthy for being associated with the earliest expression of a transmission lineage in Chan Buddhist history, as detailed in his funerary stele inscription.[32] The inscription wants us to believe that Faru was the primary of Hongren's disciples, although it does not necessarily imply that he was the only successor. In any case, it is an important document in the sectarian struggles that took place after the demise of Hongren. Faru or his followers may have been the first to formulate the transmission lineage going from Hongren back to Bodhidharma and ultimately to the Buddha.

Lao'an (also known as Hui'an) also seems to have been promoted as the main heir to Hongren by his disciples.[33] He was successful in the capital and at the court and came to be venerated for his old age. However, contemporary sources on him are meager, and the biographies contained in the Buddhist histories are too late to be of any relevance. He left no writings but remains nevertheless the only one of Hongren's disciples, except Huineng, whom later sectarian historians have not completely ignored or otherwise demoted (as happened to Shenxiu, Faru, and their followers).

Xuanze's lineage, which seeks to establish Xuanze as one of the main disciples of Hongren, is set forth in the *Records of Men and Methods [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra*. However, it is not clear that Xuanze was a very prominent master in his own time, and it seems likely that the compiler of the *Records of Men and Methods*, Jingjue, who was Xuanze's disciple, tried to promote him to further his own standing.[34]

In contrast to the political agendas separating the different lineages of Northern Chan, there appears to have been a significant consensus on the philosophy and methods of meditation the lineages employed. Common to all of them was a rhetoric of the absolute, nondual reality of Buddhist enlightenment, but in actuality they all appear to have followed a rather traditional path of gradual practice. This is evident in the terminology and instructions relating to meditation in the surviving works of these figures. The practices behind such notions as *linian* (removed from thought), *kanjing* (beholding purity) and *shouyi* (maintaining one-pointed concentration), all cardinal aspects of Northern Chan meditation, do not seem to indicate a program centered on sudden enlightenment or nondualistic practice.[35]

Although meditation clearly was the focus of the spiritual endeavors of the collateral lineages of Northern Chan, nevertheless all of them maintained a close doctrinal connection with the scriptural tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This is evident in the large number of mainstream scriptures quoted in the writings of the masters of Northern Chan,[36] who invoked a diverse selection of canonical and apocryphal scriptures to support their views. More importantly, the manner in which these scriptures were used clearly indicates that Northern Chan, and Shenxiu's branch in particular, was no less concerned with doctrinal orthodoxy or scripture than were the followers of, for example, the Tiantai school. Clearly, the notion of a "transmission outside the scriptural teaching" that characterizes the later Chan tradition had not yet formed at this stage of its history.

SHENXIU'S DISCIPLES AND SHENHUI'S ATTACKS ON NORTHERN CHAN

The first Chan histories discussed at the beginning of this chapter grew out of the power struggle that developed as the leading disciples of Hongren began establishing their respective centers of teaching. It was customary for a master to have several recognized heirs, as seems to have been the case with Hongren. But as the groups around his disciples and his disciples' disciples began to compete for patronage, the question of who was the real Sixth Patriarch of Chan took on paramount importance. The answer could not only secure an enduring place in the history of Chan Buddhism for a Chan master and his disciples and give them considerable political influence, but could also determine the nature of orthodox Chan practice.

After the passing of Shenxiu during the early years of the eighth century, the scene was mainly left to the second-generation followers of the collateral branches of Northern Chan. In particular, Lao'an's and Shenxiu's disciples, including Jingzang (675–746), belonging to the former's lineage,[37] and Puji (651–739) and Yifu (661–736), of the latter's lineage, became greatly influential in the area of the twin capitals (Chang'an and Luoyang) of the Tang empire.[38] As far as the sources allow us to conclude, in terms of meditation methods and doctrinal views, the branches were by and large similar in their interpretation of the Buddhist path. It was in this phase in the history of the Chan tradition that sectarian writings and compilation of lineage histories and doctrinal tracts began in earnest, as seen in the *Annals of the Transmission of the Dharma Treasure* and the *Records of Masters and Disciples [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra.*

During the early 730s a monk appeared in the central plains with a radical new interpretation of Chan history and practice. This was Shenhui (684–758), a charismatic Chan monk, clever organizer, and astute thinker whose mission in life was to establish the virtually unknown Huineng, an allegedly uncouth "barbarian" from remote Shaozhou in Guangdong (Lingnan), as the true Sixth Patriarch.[39] Shenhui repeatedly attacked the established view of patriarchal succession as claimed by the collateral branches of Northern Chan established by Shenxiu's successors, rejecting Shenxiu as the Sixth Patriarch in the transmission.

But Shenhui not only attacked the Northern Chan transmission lineage. In the process of bolstering Huineng as the authentic Sixth Patriarch, he attempted to thoroughly demolish the doctrines and practices of Northern Chan. Even the practice of meditation itself, the core of Chan Buddhism, was rejected as mental agitation, in line with his uncompromising, nondual approach to enlightenment.[40]

Shenhui's own training is somewhat obscure, but it would appear that he had absorbed or borrowed a significant amount of his Chan Buddhism from followers of the Niutou (Oxhead) School, another branch of Chan that had arisen in south China, which (spuriously)

claimed a lineage descending from Daoxin. The Niutou School taught a type of Chan based on a radical, highly practical interpretation of the philosophy of the perfection of wisdom mixed with elements of Daoist philosophy (based on the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*).[41] It is an open question whether the Niutou School of Chan inspired Shenhui to formulate the doctrines of nonaction (*wuwei*) and sudden enlightenment (*dunwu*), but clearly these devices enabled him to successfully reject Northern Chan's methods of meditation as being gradual and dualistic in nature. As John Jorgensen discusses in his chapter, Shenhui almost certainly did not study with Huineng—or even ever meet him—and it seems unlikely that Shenhui's ideas had any basis in teachings formulated by Huineng. The fact remains that we simply do not know anything for certain about what Huineng taught.

The success of Shenhui's campaign hinged on a combination of political and religious events, all of which worked to his advantage. First, the rise to prominence of the Northern School had been a result of direct imperial favor bestowed upon Shenxiu by Empress Wu. Even after her demise, the continued success of the Northern Chan lineages was secured through their close relationship with the powerful families of the aristocracy. By 730, when Shenhui mounted the first in a series of attacks against Northern Chan, the time was still not ripe, partly because the power base of Shenxiu's successors was still largely intact, and also because Shenhui was operating in the provinces far from the capital area. Hence, Shenhui's efforts at first seem to have failed. However, in 745 he was appointed to a monastery in the region of the capital cities, where he again started agitating against Northern Chan. This time he was far more successful and drew huge crowds to his sermons, perhaps also administering precepts to both laypeople and monastics. But he had to suffer another setback before being able to prevail: in 753, after an audience with the emperor, he was sent into exile for disturbing the peace.

By the time of the An Lushan rebellion of the mid-750s, which devastated large parts of central China, a general shift in the political structure as well as in the religious climate had taken place.[42] In

this new situation many of the old aristocratic families had lost their power, consequently weakening the position of Northern Chan. The An Lushan rebellion created a financial crisis for the Tang dynasty. The government sought, among other measures, to raise money from the sale of Buddhist ordination certificates. This device worked as a kind of government bond offering, bringing money to the state in exchange for tax exemptions granted to those with monastic status. In 756, Shenhui was called back from exile and given the task of selling these certificates because of his oratory skills. He was so successful in filling the state coffers that he received official recognition and support from the Tang emperor.[43] Moreover, all of Shenxiu's influential disciples had passed away, leaving a vacuum for Shenhui to fill. Lastly, Shenhui's penetrating, abstruse teachings of sudden enlightenment appear to have had broad appeal.

THE ROLE OF THE *PLATFORM SŪTRA* IN THE SUCCESS OF SOUTHERN CHAN

It has long been thought that the *Platform Sūtra* was created by Shenhui or someone among his followers as part of an attack on Shenxiu's Northern Chan. However, although it is possible that people in Shenhui's camp first composed the text, the earliest version we now have (the Dunhuang version) cannot be their direct product. Although the *Platform Sūtra* and the extant writings of Shenhui have important things in common, including basic ideas and overall approach to the path, there are also enough contradictions and differences in terminology, citations, and lists of Indian patriarchs to suggest that the sūtra as it now stands was not created by Shenhui's school. Interestingly, and perhaps most significantly, the *Platform Sūtra* mentions Shenhui in a way that is not always flattering, at times placing him in a rather critical light. This points to the involvement of a competing Chan lineage—another group that claimed descent from Huineng but also accepted Shenhui's importance. This does not rule out that

Shenhui or his disciples could have compiled an ur-version of the *Platform Sūtra* that was later modified and added to by other Chan practitioners. However, in the light of the data available today, I do not believe such a scenario is very likely. (For a different evaluation, see the chapter in this book by John Jorgensen.)

Although it was by and large Shenhui's attacks on the Northern School that brought about the shift in Chan that paved the way for the *Platform Sūtra*, neither he nor his successors were to reap the ultimate benefit of their efforts. Within two generations after Shenhui's death, his lineage had all but vanished and the "transmission of the patriarch's lamp" had instead gone to two provincial groups of Chan practitioners. One was in south China under the leadership of one Mazu Daoyi (709–788) and his Hongzhou School,[44] and the other was located in Sichuan and known as the Baotang School. As Wendi Adamek's chapter in this book demonstrates, both of these Chan traditions taught sudden enlightenment and maintained distinct views on the orthodox patriarchal succession. In a manner of speaking, the *Platform Sūtra*'s listing of the Chan patriarchal succession provided the final and definitive version of the orthodox history of Chan up to Huineng, and both of these new Chan groups can be seen as upholders of this norm. Although Shenhui does appear as a minor figure—after all, it was not possible to completely erase his role as de facto creator of Huineng—Shenxiu and the Northern School of Chan were completely ignored.

With the formal establishment of Huineng as the Sixth Patriarch of Chan, the protracted period of sectarian strife in Chan, which had lasted a good part of the eighth century, was finally over. A new age was dawning in which Southern Chan, particularly those lineages represented by Mazu's Hongzhou School and other collateral branches claiming descent from Huineng, was dominant, setting the course for the future development of Chan Buddhism in China. During the ninth and tenth centuries, Huineng's Chan was understood to have branched out into five schools: the Weiyang, Linji, Caodong, Yunmen, and Fayan. All of them hailed Bodhidharma as the founder

of the tradition in China and Huineng as the Sixth Patriarch and final master in the orthodox line of succession. By this time all other lineages of Chan had died out.

APPENDIX: THE PATRIARCHAL TRANSMISSION ACCORDING TO EARLY CHAN LITERATURE

A. "Tang Zhongyue shamen Shi Faru Chanshi xingzhuang" (The Account of the Activities of the Monk, Chan Master Faru from Zhongyue of the Tang Dynasty). Contained on Faru's funerary stele. Lineage: (1) Bodhidharma, (2) Huike, (3) Sengcan, (4) Daoxin, (5) Hongren, (6) Faru. As the oldest written record setting out the Northern Chan transmission from Bodhidharma, this inscription is the de facto progenitor of all later transmission lineages in Chan history. It is intended to promote Faru as the foremost among Hongren's disciples.

B. *Chuan fabao ji* (*Annals of the Transmission of the Dharma Treasure*). Lineage: (1) Bodhidharma, (2) Huike, (3) Sengcan, (4) Daoxin, (5) Hongren, (6a) Faru, (6b) Shenxiu. This lineage was meant to favor both Faru and Shenxiu as the leading disciples of Hongren. In a rather strange move, the text claims that the patriarchy went in a lateral move to Shenxiu after Faru's death. It seems the main thrust is to prove that Shenxiu received the transmission, but because of Faru's inscription ("Tang Zhongyue shamen Shi Faru Chanshi xingzhuang," noted above), the text also had to include him.

C. *Lengqie ren fa zhi* (*Records of Men and Methods [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra*). Lineage: [1] Bodhidharma, [2] Huike, [3] Sengcan, [4] Daoxin, (5) Hongren, (6) Xuanze/Shenxiu. This lineage history is only known from a partial quotation in the *Lengqie shizi ji* (see below), and we cannot be certain about the earlier parts of the lineage (the first four patriarchs, with numbers in brackets) it presented. Here we find the earliest mention of Huineng (as a local teacher in the south) in a list of ten disciples of Hongren. Hongren is also cited as stating that Shenxiu and Xuanze were his most important disciples.

D. *Lengqie shizi ji* (*Records of Masters and Disciples [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra*). Lineage: (1) Guṇabhadra, (2) Bodhidharma, (3) Huike, (4) Sengcan, (5) Daoxin, (6) Hongren, (7) Shenxiu/Xuanze/Lao'an, (8) four disciples of Shenxiu. This lineage history was meant to favor Shenxiu's Northern Chan transmission as well as that of his direct disciples, but still also includes Xuanze and Lao'an as recipients of Hongren's transmission. Until the advent of Shenhui and the *Platform Sūtra*, this was the commonly accepted lineage of succession.

E. *Platform Sūtra*. Lineage: (1) Bodhidharma, (2) Huike, (3) Sengcan, (4) Daoxin, (5) Hongren, (6) Huineng. Meant to demonstrate the orthodoxy and spiritual supremacy of Huineng's Southern Chan, this genealogy completely ignores all the transmission lineages of Northern Chan. Although it does favor Shenhui, the Dunhuang version of the text also attributes authenticity to the Fahai lineage, a local tradition at Caoqi, since Fahai is said to have received the *Platform Sūtra* from Huineng.

NOTES

1. A similar model of interpretation can be found in Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism*, Hermeneutics: Studies in the History of Religions (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 42–50.
2. See also 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-Tang Dynasty," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 35 (1987): 89–133; and *Inventing Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch: Hagiography and Biography in Early Ch'an*, Sinica Leidensia, 68 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 274–321.
3. These concepts do appear in Indian Buddhist sources, but they are not very prominent. In fact, the strong ontological reading commonly associated with their use in the Chinese Chan material suggests that they underwent considerable modification and philosophical development in China.

4. The dates of early Chan figures are all tentative, and some of the figures may indeed be entirely fictive.
5. "Tang Zhongyue shamen Shi Faru Chanshi xingzhuang" (Account of the Activities of the Monk, Chan Master Faru from Zhongyue of the Tang Dynasty). For the rubbing of the actual stele and an edited version, see Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967), 487–96, pl. 1. For further details, see the appendix to this chapter, "The Patriarchal Transmission According to Early Chan Literature."
6. A complete translation can be found in John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 3 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), 226–69; see also Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 536–42.
7. No longer extant. It only exists in the form of quotations found in the *Records of Masters and Disciples [in the Transmission] of the Laṅkāvatāra*.
8. See the somewhat problematic translation in J. C. Cleary, *Zen Dawn: Early Zen Texts from Tun Huang* (Boston: Shambhala, 1986), 17–78.
9. See McRae, *The Northern School*, 41, which notes that Hongren "taught meditation and nothing else."
10. For a thorough discussion of this term, see Robert B. Zeuschner, "The Concept of Li-nien ('Being Free from Thinking') in the Northern Line of Ch'an Buddhism," in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 5 (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), 131–48. McRae reads *linian* as "transcending thought"; see *The Northern School*, 223. In the light of what the texts themselves reveal, such an interpretation is less likely.
11. See McRae, *The Northern School*, 136–38.
12. For the Three Treatise School's creation of its lineage, see Leon Hurvitz, "The First Systematizations of Buddhist Thought in China," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 2 (1975): 361–88. For the Tiantai school, see the classic study by Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, *Die Identität der buddhistischen Schulen und die Kompilation buddhistischer Universalgeschichten in China*, Münchener Ostasiatische Studien, 26 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), 64–74. For a discussion of later developments in Tiantai, see Koichi Shinohara, "From Local History to Universal History: The Construction of the Sung T'ien-t'ai Lineage," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr., Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 13 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 524–76.
13. A reading of the history of early Chan from the perspective of power can be found in Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 145–59. For a radical reinterpretation of Chan history along these lines, see Alan Cole, *Fathering Your Father: The Zen of Fabrication in Tang Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
14. For a survey of Huiyuan's meditation practices, see Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 108–10.

15. See Neal Donner, "The Mahayanization of Chinese Dhyāna," *The Eastern Buddhist* 10, no. 2 (1977): 49–64. Although dated, this study is nevertheless important for its discussion of the evolution of Chinese *dhyāna* practices in the pre-Tang period.
16. See the chapter entitled "Practice of Meditation" (*chanxi*) in *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, Daoxuan (596–667), *T* no. 2060, 50:550a–606c. On the genre of Buddhist biography, see John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 10 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).
17. *Luoyang qielan ji*, Yang Xuanzhi (ca. 493–547), *T* no. 2092, 51:1000b, 1004a; Yi-t'ung Wang, trans., *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 20, 57.
18. *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50:551b–c. There is much speculation over the issue of "wall contemplation" (*biguan*). Daoxuan's wording indicates that it simply means facing a wall while doing meditation in order to achieve tranquility of mind. Daoxuan also clearly states that it is a Mahāyāna practice (see *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50:596c). For other interpretations, see McRae, *The Northern School*, 112–14.
19. For a discussion of the development of Bodhidharma's biography, see John McRae, *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 22–28. See also McRae, *The Northern School*, 101–17; and Jeffrey L. Broughton, *The Bodhidharma Anthology: The Earliest Records of Zen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
20. *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50:596c; see also Chen Jinhua, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship: Tanqian in Sui Buddhism and Politics*, Italian School of East Asian Studies, Essays, 3 (Kyoto: ISEAS, 2002), 156, 172.
21. *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50:480c–81a. See also McRae, *The Northern School*, 278–80, notes 30–35.
22. Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*, 156, 174–78, 206–209. In Chan, the original Buddhist idea that all phenomena are the products of the thinking mind was modified to indicate a correlation, indeed an identification, between the mind's inherently enlightened nature, the buddha mind (*foxin*), and the nature of phenomena (*shi* or *fa*). A very useful overview of this issue can be found in Liu Ming-Wood, *Madhyamaka Thought in China*, Sinica Leidensia, 30 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).
23. See *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50:552b, 666a–c. For an insight into the nature of the early translation of this important sūtra, see the recent translation: Gishin Tokiwa, *Laṅkāvatāra ratna sūtram: A Sanskrit Restoration, a Study of the Four-fascicle English and Japanese Translations with introduction, and the Collated Guṇabhadra Chinese Version with Japanese Reading* (Osaka: Gishin Tokiwa, 2003).
24. On the place of the *Laṅkāvatāra* in Northern Chan, see McRae, *The Northern School*, 27–29; and Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 145–59. The later flourishing of this legend probably explains why Guṇabhadra (ca. fifth c.), who made the first translation of this important sūtra, is made Bodhidharma's teacher in the *Lengqie shizi ji*, *T* no. 2837, 85:1283c.

25. On Sengcan, see McRae, *The Northern School*, 33–35, 118–21. On Daoxin, see McRae, *The Northern School*, 31–35; and David W. Chappell, "The Teachings of the Fourth Ch'an Patriarch Tao-hsin (580–651)," in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 5 (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), 89–129. Note that Chappell accepts the attributions in the later Northern Chan material as authentic.
26. *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50:606b.
27. McRae, *The Northern School*, 263.
28. On Hongren, see McRae, *Seeing Through Zen*, 33–35; and McRae, *The Northern School*, 35–43, 121–47.
29. Quoted in *Lengqie shizi ji*, T 85:1289c.
30. I use the term "Northern Chan" in this section to denote the early Chan lineages other than the one leading to Huineng, following Shenhui's usage.
31. Shenxiu's activities are described in detail in McRae, *Seeing Through Zen*, 55–73. The *Treatise on the Contemplation of the Mind* was once attributed to Bodhidharma; see McRae, *The Northern School*, 119. For a translation and discussion of *The Treatise on Complete Brightness*, see McRae, *The Northern School*, 149–71, 209–18.
32. For Faru's funerary inscription, see Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967), 487–96.
33. See the epitaph for his disciple Jingzang in *(Qinding) Quan Tang wen*, cited in McRae, *The Northern School*, 59.
34. Cole suggests that Xuanze is entirely fictional; see Cole, *Fathering Your Father*, 171–75.
35. There has been considerable discussion of the validity of the criticism leveled against Northern Chan (that it followed gradualism and taught a dualistic form of meditation) by Shenhui and the later followers of Southern Chan (and of course also the *Platform Sūtra*). McRae and others, following Yanagida's understanding of the problem, have argued that the approaches favored by Northern Chan were both "sudden" and "nondual"; see McRae, *The Northern School*, 196–232. However, while the doctrines of Northern Chan monks may have appeared more sudden than the manner in which the later Chan tradition has portrayed them, a closer look at the description of actual practices in Northern Chan works indicates otherwise. Hence, both Shenhui's critique as well as that of the *Platform Sūtra* and the later Chan tradition, as seen in the works of the important exegete (Guifeng) Zongmi (778–840), would appear justified in terms of the logic of sudden enlightenment and its hermeneutics. For a classic discussion of the different schools of Chan and their doctrinal positions, see Yün-hua Jan, "Tsung-mi: His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism," *T'oung Pao* 58 (1972): 1–54.
36. Popular sūtras from which quotes can be found in the Northern Chan writings include, among others, the *Laṅkāvatāra* (translation by Tokiwa, noted above); the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, see Charles Luk, trans., *The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra (Wei Mo Chieh So Shuo Ching)* (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1972); the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra*, see Garma C.C. Chang, trans., *Treasury of Mahayana Sūtras: Selections from the Maharatnakuta Sūtra* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983); the *Avataṁsaka Sūtra*, see Thomas Cleary, trans., *The Flower Ornament Scripture* (Boston: Shambhala, 1993); the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*, see R. E. Emmerick, trans., *The Sūtra of Golden Light: Being a Translation of the Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, 27 (London: Luzac, 1970); the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, see Kosho Yamamoto, trans., *The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana-sūtra*, 3 vols., Karin Buddhological Series, 5 (Ube: Karin bunko, 1973); the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, see Luis O. Gómez, trans., *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996); the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika*, see Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra*, Translations from the Asian Classics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). Scriptures of the *prajñāpāramitā* class include the important *Vajracchedikā*, see Charles Luk [Lu K'uan Yü], trans., *The Heart Sutra and the Diamond Sutra* (Hong Kong: World Fellowship of Buddhists, 1960); the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, partly translated in Edward Conze, trans., *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); and the *Saptaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, see Edward Conze, trans., *The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts* (London: Luzac, 1973), 79–107. In addition to the Indian scriptures we have a number of Chinese compositions, including apocryphal works, such as the *Jingang sanmei jing* (*Vajrasamādhi*), see Robert E. Buswell Jr., *The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea: The Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra, A Buddhist Apocryphon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 185–251.
37. Cf. McRae, *The Northern School*, 58–59.
38. McRae, *The Northern School*, 64–67.
39. For a discussion of Shenhui and his creation of Southern Chan, see McRae, *Seeing Through Zen*.
40. Cf. John McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment in Early Ch'an Buddhism," in *Sudden and Gradual Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 5 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 227–78.
41. This is among other places evident in the *Jueguan lun* (*Treatise on the Cessation of Contemplation*). See Gishin Tokiwa, trans., *A Dialogue on the Contemplation-Extinguished, Translated from the Chüeh-kuan Lun, An Early Chinese Zen Text from Tun Huang* (Kyoto: The Institute for Zen Studies, 1973). See also the discussion in John McRae, "The Ox-head School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism: From Early Ch'an to the Golden Age," in *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-yen*, ed. Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 1 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1983), 211–17.
42. For a discussion of this rebellion and its impact see Denis C. Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 3, *Sui and T'ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 333–560.
43. See McRae, *Seeing Through Zen*, 101–18; and the classic article by Hu Shih, "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China, Its History and Method," *Philosophy East and West* 3, no. 1 (1953): 3–24.
44. For recent studies on Mazu's Chan, see Mario Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford Univer-

sity Press, 2007); and Jinhua Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth-Through Tenth-Century China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006). A detailed treatment of the Baotang School and a translation of its key text can be found in Wendi L. Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

4

THE *PLATFORM SŪTRA* AS THE SUDDEN TEACHING

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PETER N. GREGORY

The full title of the *Platform Sūtra* proclaims it as the sudden teaching. This chapter will try to unpack what that means by focusing on a close reading of the first two segments of the text: the story of the poetry contest for the mantle of the Sixth Patriarch related in the opening autobiographical portion (Yampolsky, secs. 2–11) and the core section of Huineng's sermon that follows (secs. 12–19). I will argue that the sudden teaching is both a teaching and a method. Its doctrinal content is the teaching of nondualism. As a method, it entails the rejection of all expedient means (*fangbian;* Skt.: *upāya*).

The *Platform Sūtra* must be understood as a skillfully crafted literary creation that proves that Huineng was the real Sixth Patriarch and attributes to him a teaching that in many ways must have been seen as new and radical by its intended audience. The dramatic story of the exchange of verses on the south corridor wall is surely the most famous episode in the *Platform Sūtra*. It is the pivotal event on which the transmission story turns, explaining how and why the patriarchate was passed on to Huineng and not Shenxiu, thereby sealing the triumph of the Southern line over the Northern line as the orthodox Chan tradition. Since the verses exemplify the sudden and gradual approaches to meditation practice, represented by Huineng