

# From the “Cool and Pure” to the “Hot and Bothered” – The ‘Heterodox’ Buddhist Poetics of Hanshan Deqing\*

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## 국문 초록

중국 불교 문학관의 두드러진 특징은 비불교적 시가 종교적 가치를 가질 수 있다는 생각이 발전한 점이다. 특히 근대 제국시대의 승려들 사이에서는 세속적 시의 종교적인 가치를 이해하려는 다양한 관점이 형성되었다. 이 중 명말의 승려 감산덕청이 제기한 관점은 특별하여, 전통적인 관점과 극명한 대조를 이룬다. 중국 불교 총림의 속시(俗詩)에 대한 종교적 가치 개념의 다원성과 정교성을 밝히기 위해, 본고는 감산이 유배된 후의 시선(詩禪)에 대한 논술의 형성과 구조를 분석했고, 이 논술이 후대에 미친 영향을 탐구했으며, 교리적 연원 이외에도 감산의 개인체험이 그의 논술에 준 영향을 함께 탐구했다. 이는 시적으로 ‘청정’을 묘사하는 종교적 가치에 대한 전통적인 생각을 논하는 것으로 시작된다. 이후 감산이 중국 남부의 열대 지역으로 유배된 뒤 지옥처럼 더운 장면을 묘사하는 시의 종교적 가치를 어떻게 긍정하기 시작했고, 이러한 사상적 변화가 어떻게 『능가경』과 상호영향을 주고받았는지 분석했다. 그는 지옥·몽경(夢境)·몽어(夢語)의 3가지 개념으로 유심파 사상에 영향을 받은 새로운 관점을 창조했으니, 유배시와 선의 동일성이다. 마지막으로 감산의 시론이 중국 남부 승려들에게 미친 영향을 설명하고, 시선(詩禪)에 대한 전통적인 방법론을 벗어나 새롭게 탐구할 것을 주장하였다.

## 국문 핵심어

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## I. Introduction

One of the most distinctive Chinese contributions to Buddhist literary theory is the idea that non-Buddhist poems can enlighten people solely on the pretext that they exhibit certain aesthetic qualities. In monastic writings, this view is conventionally traced back to its nascent manifestations in the Buddhist principle (佛理) poems of the Eastern Jin's (317-420) early patriarchs of Chinese monastic poetry, Zhi Daolin (支道林, 314-366) and Huiyuan (慧遠) (334-416), and is often considered to be best embodied in the “dwelling in the mountain” (山居) poems of famous Tang golden era monastic composers such as Jiaoran (皎然), Guanxiu (貫休, 823-912), and Qiji (齊己, 863-937). Both Buddhist principle and dwelling in the mountain poems are best characterised by the theme of reclusion, the depiction of the bucolic beauty of nature, and, in particular, representations of quiet and secluded settings. As the scenes depicted in these poems reflected monastic ideals relating to the types of sites considered conducive to Buddhist cultivation, a popular view emerged that the religious value of these poems related to their capacity to reflect or transmit to the reader the inner calm/spiritual attainments that a reclusive life in such realms was deemed to facilitate. The Ming-era critic Tu Long (屠隆, 1542-1605), referring to the Tang-era “Buddha of poetry” Wang Wei (王維, 699-759), called this religious and poetic quality “purity and repose” (清而適) or “mental purity and coolness” (心地清涼).<sup>1)</sup>

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1) *Hongbao* (鴻苞), quoted in Chen Bohai, *Tangshi lunping leibian* 『唐詩論評類編』 (Reviews on Tang Poetry Arranged by Category), Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993, p.229. Jingqing Yang identifies the “pure and cool” with the Buddhist ideals of “tranquillity” and “enlightenment” – see *The Chan Interpretations of Wang Wei's Poetry: A Critical Review*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2007, p.200.

The above description presents what are some of the most recognizable motifs in discussions concerning the religious value of non-Buddhist genres of Chinese poetry. However, in the late imperial era in particular, other ideas on the religious value of secular poetry arose in the Buddhist monastery that departed from these conventional values. A notable example can be found in the writings of Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清, 1546-1623), an eminent religious leader that played an important role in the revival of Buddhism, and monastic poetry more specifically, in the late Ming. Hanshan is well known for having a strong preference for the pure and cool ambience of secluded mountain retreats.<sup>2)</sup> However, after Hanshan was exiled into the “steamy” and “miasmic” tropics of Lingnan’s (Guangdong province) Leifeng (雷鋒) prefecture, he developed the conviction that “the [hells of] swelling fires and mountains of blades” could – just like the cool and pure settings of the mountain retreat – serve as “*bodhimaṇḍala-s* [i.e., places of spiritual cultivation] for attaining supreme *nirvāṇa*.”<sup>3)</sup> These new intersections between setting and religious attainment inspired Hanshan to form the notion that poetry which depicts such a “hellish and

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2) Sung-peng Hsu’s *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch’ing* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979) gives a lengthy discussion of the meaning of the term “pure and cool” with reference to the career of Hanshan Deqing (pp.66-75). Hsu relates the term to the Buddhist ideal of a wholesome and spiritually fruitful monastic life facilitated by secluded living in a mountain monastery.

3) 火聚、刀山無非究竟寂滅道場地。 “Yu Miaofeng chanshi” 「與妙峰禪師」 (Letter to Chan Master Miaofeng), *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 『憨山老人夢遊集』 (The Dream Travels Collection of the Venerable Hanshan) (henceforth MYJ), fascicle 13, X73, no.1456, p.547. The line immediately preceding this passage states “Whether conditions are favorable or unfavorable, all lead into the cool and pure gate of great emancipation” 若逆若順無非令入清涼大解脫門。

defiled” setting – in stark contrast with a “cool” and “pure” one – could be a more efficacious tool for enlightening Buddhist disciples, and could even be radically identified with Chan.<sup>4)</sup> These ideas arguably exerted some influence in southern China’s Buddhist communities in an era wherein people often criticised the “vegetable and bamboo-shoot ambience” (蔬筍氣) imbued in the writings of some monks who appeared to be aloofly indifferent to the real struggles of human beings.<sup>5)</sup> This was especially the case among monks such as Juelang Daosheng (覺浪道盛, 1593-1659), who, like Hanshan, were victims of political violence associated with the decline of the Ming.

Based on a close reading of Hanshan’s post-exile writings on poetry, this paper discusses the constitution and significance of hitherto neglected discourses that affirm the religious power of poems which, in stark contrast with the more prominent Buddhist motif of voluntary reclusion and an associated aesthetic of the cool and pure, depict the trials of forced exile, and

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4) Hanshan famously advocated that “poetry is genuine Chan” in his “Za shuo” 「雜說」 (Miscellaneous Disquisitions), fascicle 39, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.745. I discuss Hanshan’s other articulations of this idea in the body of this article.

5) See Liao Zhaocheng - *Zhongbian. shichan. mengxi: Mingmo Fojiao wenha lunshu de chengxian yu zhankai* 『中邊詩禪夢戲：明末清初佛教文化論述的呈現與開展』, Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 2008, p.18. On page 53 of this work, Liao notes that an increased emphasis on social ethics in the late Ming monastery made its way into discussions on the relationship between poetry and Chan, while on page 16 he noted that monastic poetics in this era moved away from a preoccupation with the “skill with words” in poetics such as that found in the writings of the eminent Buddhist poeticists Jiaoran and Kūkai (Konghai, 空海, 774-835), to “discussions on the historical environment and the cultural context”. A more detailed discussion on the concept of the “vegetable and bamboo shoot ambience” and its relation to poetry can be found in Zhou Yukai, *Zhongguo chanzong yu shige* 『中國禪宗與詩歌』, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1992, pp.45-53.

“stifling” and “defiled” settings. While this article could be regarded as a new contribution to the study of a celebrated late imperial period Buddhist thinker, my foremost aspiration is that it could contribute to a better appreciation of the diversity and sophistication of Chinese monastic discourses on the religious value of non-Buddhist poems. I argue that Hanshan developed these unorthodox ideas as a result of two complementary factors: a) his appreciation of the ameliorative value of cathartic poetry immediately after he was exiled to the “steamy” tropics of Leifeng, and; b) post-exile revelations on Buddhist idealist doctrines associated with the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and Chinese commentaries on this sutra. After briefly discussing more conventional ideas on the relationship between poetry and Chan in Buddhist communities, I discuss how Hanshan’s bitter experience of exile transformed his ideals about the ideal types of sites that are conducive to Buddhist cultivation. In the main body, I will explore the link between these experiential and intellectual revelations and Hanshan’s ideas about the “dreamscape” and “dream speech” and the “hell-like” – concepts that resonate with the qualities Hanshan associated with his “nightmarish” (“hellish nightmare”) descent into Leifeng, and which were conventionally important pedagogical allegories in Buddhist idealist thought. In relation to this, I will show how Hanshan felt that poetry which vividly captured the hellish nightmare that is exile could bring about an epistemological transformation that could be likened to the experience of one who has just awoken from a disturbing dream: it could prompt one to reflect on the idea that subjective consciousness (i.e., the dreamer) and the objects that have been perceived (i.e., the dreamscape) are of one substance – that they are all

mere-mind/mind-only (*cittamātra*).<sup>6)</sup> Poetry of this type could hence lead to the intuitive verification of the “unadulterated<sup>7)</sup> true mind” (一味真心), which represented for Hanshan the un-bifurcated ideal substratum of all mental and perceptual reality – the *tathāgatagarbha*, or the Buddha nature. This, for Hanshan, was an expression of “true Chan” or “authentic practice” (真參), as it advanced a means to attain an enlightened, “cool mind” while in the midst of a hellish setting – in contradistinction to an inner cool that is not born of real insight, but which is merely reliant upon the coolness and purity of a secluded mountain setting. In the last section of this article I will briefly explore how ideas that resonate with those of Hanshan were advanced by Lingnan monks that lived through chaotic times subsequent to Hanshan - especially clerics who, like Hanshan, were engaged with political affairs or were themselves victims of political persecution. In a brief afterword I will tentatively examine the significance these findings may have for expanding our understanding about the Buddhist ideas about the relationship between Chan and poetry in the late imperial era.

## 1. Methodology

This study is intended to be a contribution to the study of the intellectual history of Chinese Buddhist ideas on how non-Buddhist poetry can be used as an instrument of Buddhist practice - it is not a study on Buddhist poetry, or Buddhist influences on China’s secular poetic traditions. Its primary concern, in relation to this, is to map the way in which a clerical author (Hanshan)

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6) “Mind-only” is sometimes translated as “mere-mind”.

7) *eka-rasa*, literally “one-flavoured”.

constructed a theory affirming the religious value of non-Buddhist poems around Buddhist, or Buddhō-syncretic, doctrines or concepts, in addition to other more personal/idiosyncratic revelations whose roots may have been as much experiential/existential as they were religious/doctrinal. It is particularly interested in how these doctrinal/experiential/existential dimensions combined to inform Hanshan’s unique ideas about how non-Buddhist poetic forms can enlighten people. In so doing the attempt is to be as concrete and specific as the evidence allows in identifying the theoretical and experiential roots of Hanshan’s thought on the religious utility of poetry.

In line with this, my methodology follows the lead of other scholars of Hanshan in that it avoids adopting a strictly conventional Buddhological approach to examining Hanshan’s thought. In particular, it follows the approach that Sung-peng Hsu adopted in his landmark study on Hanshan, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch’ing* (1979) - it regards the study of aspects of Hanshan’s thought, and his response to significant events that unfolding in his life, as being indivisible. Because of this, this study, in parts, strives to bridge social and intellectual history - particularly in paying attention to texts in which Hanshan juxtaposes recollections of events (such as his exile) with doctrinal proclamations. This is particularly important in the study of Hanshan’s thoughts on idealism, which inform an important component on Hanshan’s contemplations on the religious value of non-Buddhist poetry. Hanshan is generally regarded to be a somewhat competent scholar of the Yogācāra school and mind-only thought (*cittamātra*), however, he is also known to have held some unorthodox views on core aspects of Yogācāra / *cittamātra* doctrine that differ notably from conventional

positions presented in well-known Chinese canonical texts.<sup>8)</sup> This study proceeds from the premise that Hanshan's ideas on Buddhist idealism (especially the *Laṅkāvatāra*) are unorthodox not merely because of the late Ming propensity for syncretism, or a lack of scholastic rigour on Hanshan's behalf – they are also a result of Hanshan's attempt to give a theoretical veneer to ideas that were derived experientially/intuitively.

In view to the latter, this article adopts a strict hierarchy of inter-textuality – rather than using prominent/popular canonical texts to interpret the more obscure references to Buddhist doctrine contained in Hanshan's writings on poetry, preference will be given instead to Hanshan's own (somewhat unorthodox) writings, as well as those of his close associates/disciples, wherever possible. Only in the absence of pertinent information will I refer to well established canonical texts.

## II. Background: The “Cool and Pure” Ambience of Monastic Landscape Poetry vs the “Stifling Heat” and “Toxicity” of Hanshan's Frontier Poems

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8) For a brief introduction on Hanshan's scholarship in Consciousness-only/Mind-only thought see Shi Shengyan “Mingmo de weishi xuezhe ji qi sixiang” 「明末的唯識學者及其思想」, *Zhonghua foxue xuebao* 『中華佛學學報』, 1, 1997, pp.10-11. Shengyan notes that Hanshan “approached [mind-only/consciousness only thought] in view of his beliefs in relation to cultivation”.



### 1. Mind–Nature Theory, the ‘Mind as Mirror’, and the Cool and Pure in Traditional Monastic Poetry

Indian Buddhists used poetry to inspire devotion, and to serve as a mnemonic tool, well before the religion spread to China. It was in China, however, that Buddhist devotees, and others familiar with this religion's doctrines, began to develop the idea that non-Buddhist poems could have religious value on account of their expression of certain aesthetic values. A seminal development of this trend can be found in the poems of the Eastern Jin (317-420) monks Huiyuan (慧遠, 334-416) and his contemporary Zhi Daolin (支道林, 314-366), who began to write landscape or nature poems which dwelt of the virtues of reclusion, and which juxtaposed doctrinal proclamations with depictions of serene mountain settings of the type they felt were conducive to Buddhist practice.<sup>9)</sup> It was seen to have reached its apex in the ‘dwelling in the mountain’ (山居) poems of the celebrated Tang era ‘golden age’ poet-monks including Jiaoran (皎然), Guanxiu (貫休, 823-912), and Qiji (齊己, 863-937), and a number of Song monastic poets, such as Qisong (契嵩, 1007-1072), and Daoqian (道潛, 1043-?) (and later, the Yuan poet-monk Shiwu Qinghong (石屋清珙, 1272-1352)) - poems which typically focused on the theme of reclusion and the aesthetics of secluded (in particular mountainous) settings. A general trend in the poems of this type composed by these Tang-Song authors is that their aesthetic qualities (and quality) increasingly converged with those of gentry authors, while the expression of direct doctrinal proclamations

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9) A classic example of poems of this type include Huiyuan's “You Lushan” 「遊廬山」 (Travels in the Lu Mountain) – however many examples of poems that contain such motifs can be found in writings. In a dated study, Richard Mather coined the term “landscape Buddhism” to allude to the religious dimension of the poetics of Huiyuan and his associate Xie Lingyun (謝靈運, 385-433). See Mather “The Landscape Buddhism of the Fifth-century Poet Hsieh Ling-yun”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 18(1), 1958, pp.67-79.

and distinctly Buddhist terms became less prominent. By the Song, reclusion genres such as ‘dwelling in the mountain’ poems were not only a prevalent institution in the monastery - monks also became far less reticent about asserting their religious identity, despite the scarcity of direct references to Buddhist terms/concepts in many of these writings. As noted by Christopher Byrne, in his well-constructed doctoral dissertation “Poetics of Silence: Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091-1157) and the Practice of Poetry in Song Dynasty Chan Yulu”, by the Song dynasty (960-1127), “In Chan *yulu* [i.e., recorded sayings collections], poems on reclusion retain a distinctive status, as specific Buddhist terms and images are not required for the verse to fulfill the conventions of *jisong* [偈頌 i.e., Buddhist religious poems],”<sup>10)</sup> on account that “Chan masters wholly appropriate[d] the reclusive mode as true to the fundamentals of Chan.”<sup>11)</sup> Many of these poems, as noted by Byrne, reflected what he coined the Buddhist poetics of “silence” or “stillness”, and captured the “pure” ambience of the mountain sites which reflected both ideals about sites conducive to cultivation, and the real sites of many renowned temples and meditation retreats. This manner of merging religious living, Chan cultivation and poetry, for Byrne, was marked by this genres “fixing together reclusion, meditative stillness, Buddhist nature and the classical literary tradition.”<sup>12)</sup> It arguably manifest a new triumph of stillness over sentiment which reflected monks’ choice of reclusion/withdrawal from the world qua an absolute and permanent commitment to abandoning worldly passions – of achieving inner “coolness” and “purity”.

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10) Ph.D.diss., McGill University, 2015, p.186.

11) *Ibid*, p.221.

12) *Ibid*, p.141.

Dwelling in the mountain and associated poems – poems that touch on the theme of reclusion, or that depict what could be called ‘cool and pure’ settings – constitute a very prominent institution in monastic poetics.<sup>13)</sup> Several scholars have identified the connection between the lives and religious values of monks and the prominence of this genre, pointing out that the latter depict the types of environments in which many monks resided, and reflected the eremitic ideal of withdrawing from the secular world that are roughly congruent with the Buddhist tenet of seeking to escape the pleasures of mundane (*saṃsāra*-ic) existence.<sup>14)</sup> However, less has been done to explore the doctrinal foundations that may have motivated the shift to ascribing special religious status to nature/reclusion poetry. Some modern scholars have identified how Chan ideas may have influenced the poems on reclusion/landscape of monastic writers from the Tang and the Song/Yuan, and even, more tentatively, monastic writers Eastern Jin<sup>15)</sup> - although it must be noted that far more attention has been paid

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13) English translations which contain a substantial volume of poems which reflect this aesthetic/motif include Red Pine, et al. (trans.) *The Clouds Should Know Me by Now*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1998, Charles Egan (trans.), *Clouds Thick, Wherabouts Unknown: Poems by Zen Monks of China*, Columbia University Press, 2010, and to a lesser extent Byrne, “Poetics of Silence”, 2015. Red Pine’s *The Zen Works of Stonehouse: Poems and Talks of a Fourteenth-Century Chinese Hermit* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2009) is unique as a complete translation of the poetry found in a Chan master’s *yulu* from the Yuan dynasty (i.e., Shiwu Qinggong (石屋清珙)). For untranslated primary sources, see the *Chanmen zhuzushi jisong* 『禪門諸祖師偈頌』(X66, no.1298), the *Jiatai pudenglu* 『嘉泰普燈錄』(X79, no.1559 - see esp. fascicle 29), and Chen Qi’s *Sheng Song gaoseng shixuan* 『聖宋高僧詩選』(in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 『續修四庫全書』, vol. 1621, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, Rpt. 1995).

14) For an example of this argument, see Burton Watson “Buddhist Poet-Priests of the Tang”. *The Eastern Buddhist (NEW SERIES)* 25(2) (Autumn), 1992, pp.30-58.

15) For a discussion on the issues of reclusion and stillness in the monastic poetry of an

to Buddhist influences upon the nature poetry of secular authors. Many of these studies focus on themes such as stillness/silence, non-duality, sitting meditation, or what has been called “*Tathāgata* Coolness and Purity Chan” (如

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eminent Song dynasty monk see Christopher Byrne’s “Poetics of Silence”. Burton Watson’s “Buddhist Poet-Priests” notes that a substantial volume of the poems of Tang monastic poets reflect the themes of equanimity, detachment and mental calm without directly invoking Buddhist doctrine. Referring to a number of earlier Tang monastic poets, he notes “Already in these works the calm, cool air of emotional detachment that becomes so marked in later Chinese and Japanese Ch’an and Zen poetry is beginning to take shape. From the point of view of the Buddhist doctrine of nonduality, of course, such an attitude of aloofness is understandable”(p.36). Richard Mather’s “Landscape Buddhism” discusses *dharmakāya* theory (esp. bodily characteristics of the Buddha - *dvātrimśad varalakṣaṇa*) thought in the poetics of Huiyuan - these arguments are insightful despite having been neglected by many scholars, however the author may have overstated the strength of his evidence, especially in relation to the connection between doctrine and poetic inclinations. Thomas Nielson similarly discusses the use of codified symbols of emptiness and impermanence in his work on the poetry of Jiaoran (皎然) in his work *The Tang Poet-Monk Jiaoran*, Tempe: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1972. For Japanese scholarship on the topic of the presentation of the motifs of serenity and quietude in Chinese monastic poetry, see Kaji Tetsujō’s *Chūgoku Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū* 『中国仏教文学研究』, Kyoto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1979, pp.59-90.

Much of the Chinese scholarship on this theme is impressionistic rather than scholarly – however some works are of value for those investigating this topic. An eminent example is Cheng Yalin’s survey, *Shi yu chan* 『詩與禪』 (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1998), which contains a brief discussion on monastic authors (pp.159-169). Another study that discusses the influence of Chan thought on the poetics of monks, including Jiaoran and Jiadao (賈島, 779-843), and that places a particular emphasis on nature poetry/reclusive forms and its connection with ‘Chan of the *Tathagata*’s purity’ (如來清淨禪) and ‘austerity’ (lit. ‘purity and coldness’, 清寒), is Xiao Chi’s *Zhongguo sixiang yu xuqing chuantong di er juan: Fofa yu shijing* 『中國思想與抒情傳統第二卷：佛法與詩境』, Taipei: Lianjing xueshu, 2011.

來清淨禪).<sup>16)</sup> Unfortunately, however, there is little in the way of monastic discourses composed prior to the late Ming on poetry/poetics that explicitly discuss doctrinal bases for the assertion that nature/reclusion poetry could have religious utility.

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16) A number of studies have focused on these and similar themes – such as reclusion, silence, wordlessness, selflessness etc. Some of these address the poetic values/ideals of both monastic and lay writers. One such work is John Jorgenson’s Ph.D. dissertation, “Sensibility of the Insensible: The Genealogy of a Ch’an Aesthetic and the Passionate Dream of Poetic Creation” (Australian National University, 1989), which discusses how the notion of unity with nature is expressed in poetry. A link between the poetic quality of “calmness and ease” 平淡 and the zen concept of the “flavorless flavor” (or “flavor/taste beyond flavor/taste” - *weiwai zhi wei*, 味外之味) has also been convincingly forwarded by Lin Xianghua in *Chanzong yu Songdai shixue lilun* 『禪宗與宋代詩學理論』 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2002). Xiao Lihua discusses the theme of quiet sitting in the poetry of both mainstream Tang authors, and the aforementioned well-known poet-monk Qiji, in *Tangdai shige yu chanxue* 『唐代詩歌與禪學』 (Taipei: Dongda tushu gufen youxian gongsi, 1997). The influence of the concepts of selflessness and emptiness on the poetry of the ‘Buddha of poetry’ Wang Wei, and the Song poet/Buddhist disciple Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037-1011), have been studied in a number of works, including Marshal Wagner’s *Wang Wei* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981) and Ronald Egan’s *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994). Another important concept in poetics that draws on Buddhist ideals of meditative silence/reclusion is that of the so-called ‘water mirror’ metaphor. This is discussed in Sun Chang Wu’s *Chan si yu shi qing* 『禪思與詩情』 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006 - I address the content of this work shortly). An extensive discussion on this metaphor focusing on the views on poetry of the Song poet Su Shi can be found in Zhiyi Yang’s *Dialectics of Spontaneity: The Aesthetics of Ethics of Su Shi (1037-1011) in Poetry* (Boston: Brill Academic, 2015 - see esp. pp.23-53). An older study focusing on Buddhist ideas on the dharma-body in the nature poetry of the famous Eastern Jin poet Xie Lingyun (謝靈運, 385-433) is Richard Mather’s “Landscape Buddhism” – however modern scholars may find the use of the term “Landscape Buddhism” inappropriate in the context of a discussion on a poet who was heavily influenced by Daoism/Dark Learning.

Yet this is not, however, the case in secular literary theory – particularly among literary theorists who were disciples of Buddhism, or who had some form of interaction with Buddhist clergy/interest in Buddhism. One rubric arguably stands above others in the degree to which it attained considerable currency among those who wished to affirm the spiritual value of nature/landscape forms. This is the so-called mirror or “water-mirror” analogy – an analogy which is held to have doctrinal foundations in Buddhist (in particular *Tathāgata/cittamātra*) mind-nature theory (心性論).<sup>17)</sup>

The specific understanding of Buddhist mind-nature theory invoked by literary theorists proposed that unenlightened people cannot see their innate Buddha nature primarily because it is veiled by the “defiling”, “vexing” effects of phenomenal thought. Put another way, to see innate nature one must first learn how to calm or “cease” (止 *zhi*; which is also the translation for *śamatha* = “concentration meditation”) mental activity – one must “still/bring to rest the active mind” (靜息動心).<sup>18)</sup> In line with this theory, the enlightening power of poetry was associated with the medium’s capacity to convey this inner quality through the depiction of the “stillness” or purity of the outer scene. The founder of the Buddhist-influenced Jiangxi school of poetry (江西詩派), Huang Tingjian (黃庭堅, 1045-1105), saw this principle as being manifest in an artistic process where the scene depicted is not distorted by the observer’s consciousness –

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17) An excellent discussion on the doctrinal foundations of this metaphor can be found in the first chapter of Steven Laycock’s *Mind as Mirror and the Mirroring of Mind: Buddhist Reflections on Western Phenomenology*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

18) This is a common Chinese Buddhist definition for *zhi* qua *śamatha*.

wherein one “observes phenomena with a vacuous mind.”<sup>19)</sup> This ideal state of the phenomenal mind had been earlier analogized by the poet Lü Wen (呂溫, 772-811) through the metaphor of a calm/still and clear body of water<sup>20)</sup> – water which, like a “mirror”, reflects images that are projected onto it. As noted in Sun Changwu’s *Chan si yu shi qing* 『禪思與詩情』 (Chan Ruminations and Poetic Sentiment), this “mind-as-mirror” analogy was a common feature in discussions on nature poetry prior to the late Ming, particularly in the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties.<sup>21)</sup> Sun, citing authors including Wang Changling (王昌齡 698-756), Meng Jiao (孟郊, 751-814), Liu Yuxi (劉禹錫, 772-842), Bao Rong (包融, 8th c.), the Song dynasty Jiangxi school exponents Zeng Ji (曾幾, 1085-1166), Xie Yi (謝逸, 1066-1113) and Xie Ke (謝翱, 1074-1116),<sup>22)</sup> notes in relation to this analogy the following understanding as to how such poetry can have religious benefits: the “quiescent” mind, like a deep body of undisturbed water, can act like a “mirror” so that the coolness and purity of the mountain scene depicted in poetry can reflect upon, or provide a means to gain perception into, the “cool and pure” qualities of the author’s innate nature. As stated by Sun, “since the mind is empty and pure like a bright and clear mirror, it can, via reflection, manifest a clear and still scene”;<sup>23)</sup> and this clean and still scene can in turn “reflect the mind’s clear purity”.<sup>24)</sup>

Nature poetry, thus, enlightens people because it reflects the mirror-like

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19) In Sun’s *Chan si yu shi qing*, 2006, p.207.

20) Luwen, for instance, replaces the “mirror” analogy with reference to the reflective water of a “pond” – see *ibid*, 205.

21) *ibid*.

22) *ibid*, pp.205-208.

23) *ibid*, pp.204-205.

24) *ibid*.

quality of the tranquil mind – a mind bereft of the image-distorting “ripples” of phenomenal thought. This reflective quality, in turn, is dependent on the subject residing in a cool and pure setting bereft of stimulating or evocative objects – objects that could “clash” with the senses and cause “ripples” / stir the “currents” of one’s emotions.<sup>25)</sup> In other words, it could be argued that the mind-as-mirror analogy intimates that the practitioner’s external environment/ setting has, to at least some degree, a determinative impact on his capacity to cultivate and convey his inner coolness and purity. The notion that a practitioner’s state of mind should be in any way dependent on the scenes to which he was exposed presents an obvious conundrum for monks who claim that attaining inner calm is primarily reliant on individual effort. This was a conundrum that was, perhaps surprisingly, rarely discussed directly by Buddhist theorists.<sup>26)</sup>

As mentioned above, little exists in the way of pre-Ming monastic poetic or meta-poetic discourses that directly discuss the doctrinal foundations of poetry. However, the mirror/water-mirror analogy was both a well-known metaphor in Chinese Buddhist canonical literature (in well circulated texts such as the *Awakening of Faith* and the *Sixth Patriarch’s Sutra* etc), and the aesthetic of ‘coolness and purity’ and in particular the image of reflections on water – especially the

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25) For a brief discussion on this in the context of Chan metaphors in poetry, see Egan’s introduction to *Clouds Thick, Whereabouts Unknown*, 2010, pp.39-40.

26) A brief discussion on how this conundrum was addressed in Japanese Buddhist poetics can be found in Joseph Parker’s *Zen Buddhist Landscape Arts of Early Muromachi Japan (1336-1573)*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp.152-153. Hanshan cited a number of passages which address this conundrum - many of these are addressed later in this article.



image of a clear pond perfectly reflecting the brightness of the moon - were commonly invoked in the nature/eremitic-themed poetry of monastic poets. Charles Egan, in his introduction to *Clouds Thick, Whereabouts Unknown: Poems of Zen Monks of China* – a text which presents translations of a substantial number of nature/dwelling in the mountain/eremitic themed poems - singles out the image of a pond reflecting moonlight as an example of a “specialized Buddhist metaphor”<sup>27)</sup> which invoked shared routes of intertextuality and interpretation among those familiar with Buddhist doctrine. Pointing to the example of a poem from the iconic Tang dynasty pseudo-monk-poet Hanshan (寒山, lit. “Cold Mountain”) – whose spiritual-didactic poems focused on the theme of reclusion, and often invoked the image of the mirror/water-mirror – Egan states that the still pond symbolizes “actualized enlightenment”, noting “still water is the enlightened mind, revealed when the wind (of ignorance) dies and the waves (mode of mind) cease (compare also to the ceasing of the rushing torrent of the citta-mātra tradition)”.<sup>28)</sup>

## 2. From the ‘Mirror’ of the Cool and Pure to the Clash of ‘Heat and Toxicity’ – Exile and the Transformation in the Poetics of Hanshan Deqing

The late Ming eminent monk/poet-monk Hanshan Deqing<sup>29)</sup> was another

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27) p.39.

28) *ibid*, pp.39-40.

29) An excellent English-language study of the life and thought of Hanshan is Hsu’s 1979 work *A Buddhist Leader*. A partial account (focusing on the affairs leading up to and surrounding Hanshan’s exile) can be found in Dewei Zhang’s doctoral dissertation, “A Fragile Revival: Chinese Buddhism under the Political Shadow: 1522-1620” (University of British Columbia, 2010, pp.134-149). For interpretations of Hanshan’s autobiography,

monk who often explicitly expressed a longing for the “cool and pure” (清淨) as an ideal environment for pure religious living,<sup>30)</sup> and who often invoked the image of the reflective power of ‘still’ water in his religious/nature poems. However, later in his life, Hanshan suffered setbacks, and came to be confronted with the conundrum that the ambience of an external “setting” can appear to have a deterministic effect on one’s state of mind – or that, in his own words, “it is difficult to manage a cool eye when in a stifling and disorderly place”.<sup>31)</sup> As a result of this Hanshan developed a view that appears hard to reconcile with his earlier ideals about the pure and cool – that “the [hells of] swelling fires and mountains of blades are nothing other than *bodhimaṇḍala*-s

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see Pei-yi Wu’s “The Spiritual Autobiography of Te-Ch’ing” (*The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. de Bary, Wm. Theodore, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, pp.67-92) and Lynn Struve’s “Deqing’s Dreams: Signs in a Reinterpretation of his Autobiography”, *Journal of Chinese Religions* 40, 2012, pp.1-44. Araki Kengo gives an outline of the life of Hanshan in “Kansan Tokusei no shōgai to sono shisō” 「憨山德清の生涯とその思想」 (*The Life and Thought of Hanshan Deqing*) – chapter 6 of his *Yōmeigaku no kaiten to Bukkyō* 『陽明学の開展と仏教』 (Tokyo: Kenmun Shuppansha, 1984) – which features a schema dividing the stages of Hanshan’s life and monastic career (p.151). In Chinese scholarship a critical introduction to the life of Hanshan can be found in Jiang Canteng’s *Wan Ming Fojiao conglin gaige yu foxue zhengbian zhi yanjiu - yi Hanshan Deqing de gaige shengya wei zhongxin* 『晚明佛教叢林改革與佛學爭辯之研究-以憨山德清的改革生涯為中心』 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubun gongsi, 1990), while a study focusing on the early stages of Hanshan’s monastic career can be found in the same author’s “Wan Ming fojiao fuxing yundong Beijing de kaocha - yi Hanshan Deqing zai Jinling Dabao’ensi de molian wei lie” 「晚明佛教復興運動背景的考察--以憨山德清在金陵大報恩寺的磨鍊為例」 (*Dongfang zongjiao yanjiu* 『東方宗教研究』 1 (September), Guoli Taipei yishu daxue, 1987, pp.191-202).

30) For a discussion on this see Hsu, *A Buddhist Leader*, pp.66-75.

31) 熱亂場中，難當冷眼，“Da Yang Yuanru yuanrong” 「答楊元儒元戎」 (Reply to Supreme Commander Yang Yuanru), fascicle 15, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.571.

for attaining supreme nirvāṇa”. This view, moreover, came to have an impact on his views on the types of non-Buddhist poetry that could have religious value for Buddhist disciples, and on the doctrinal bases invoked to substantiate these views.

Hanshan joined the Buddhist order during his childhood, and had barely entered into middle age when Empress Dowager Cisheng (慈聖, 1545-1614), the mother of the Wanli emperor (1563-1620), became his personal benefactor, and built for him the Haiyin temple (海印寺) on Mount Lao (牢山)—a scenic mountain located in the temperate maritime climate in northern China’s Donghai (東海) (in today’s Shandong province). His fond memories of the cool and pure he associated with his privileged life in this environment was recounted on a number of occasions in his *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 『憨山老人夢遊集』 (Venerable Hanshan’s Dream Travels Collection = MYJ) – Hanshan’s most voluminous and celebrated literary compilation. However, several years after receiving this coveted gift, Hanshan’s coolness and purity was suddenly disrupted when, having been swept into the vortex of political intrigue, he was accused of impropriety in the management of donations and the acquisition of temple lands, and was promptly exiled to a frontiers garrison in the steamy tropics of Lingnan’s (Guangdong province) tropical Leizhou (雷州) prefecture (also called Leifeng, 雷鋒). The letters and poems Hanshan composed after his exile often talk of the oppressive, hell-like “heat” and “toxicity” (i.e., its “miasmic” atmosphere) of Leifeng, its contrast with the cool and pure of his former existence, and his desire to rediscover “a cool place from the midst of raging flames”.<sup>32)</sup>

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32) 從烈焰中覓得一片清涼地, “Da Yang Yuanru yuanrong”, fascicle 15, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.571.

In spite of this, Hanshan later opined that this bitter experience of exile was in actuality very beneficial to his spiritual development – for instance, he stated that he “entered the law [that is, *dharma*] of the Buddha through the law of the King”,<sup>33)</sup> and, as mentioned previously, asserted that “the [hells of] swelling fires and mountains of blades are nothing other than *bodhimaṇḍala-s* for attaining supreme *nirvāṇa*”. Perhaps because this view reflected a very different understanding about the types of external settings that can be conducive to Buddhist attainment, Hanshan also felt inspired to re-examine the religious value of the poems in which he recorded his initial impressions of Leifeng; poems which were faithful to a secular Chinese tradition of cathartic poetry associated with exile, yet which may arguably have appeared less fitting in view of Hanshan’s monastic vocation. Subsequent to this, Hanshan developed the idea that the type of poetry that best exemplifies “Chan” is not nature or landscape poetry forms which recounts the ‘purity and coolness’ of the mountain retreat, but rather frontier/exile genre-like poems which bring attention to the “hellish” and “nightmarish” qualities of the desolate, tropical setting into which Hanshan and other loyal officials of the past were exiled.<sup>34)</sup> These seemingly ‘heterodox’ ideas were presented by

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33) “Yu Yueqing shangren” 「與月清上人」(Letter to the Distinguished [Monk] Yueqing), fascicle 14, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.554.

34) For a short discussion on this point, see Wu Huangchang, “Mingmo gaoseng de shiwen yu qi texing zaixian - yi Yunqi Zhuhong (1535-1615), Hanshan Deqing (1546-1623) wei lie” 「明末高僧的詩文與其特性再現-以雲棲祿宏(1535-1615), 憨山德清(1546-1623)爲列」, *Dazhuan xuesheng foxue lunwen ji* 「大專學生佛學論文集」, 2010, p.236. It is perhaps pertinent to mention here that the phenomenon of monastic poems expressing discontent at politics or anger at political victimization can be found in earlier collections - a point which has been highlighted by Watson in his “Buddhist Poet Priests” (1992). The point I wish to make is not that such poems were unique - but that the author knows of no

Hanshan in writings on poetry (prefaces/postscripts) in which he explicitly discussed how his approach to the religious value of ostensibly ‘secular’ poetic forms transformed as a result of his experience of being exiled in Leifeng. In keeping with the generic features of Chinese poetry collection prefaces/postscript, these texts are brief, and bereft of detailed expositions on philosophy/Buddhist theory. However, I assert that a close reading of these texts, informed by a broader understanding of Buddhist doctrine, and especially Hanshan’s own religious writings, can allow us to uncover the doctrinal foundations that underlay Hanshan’s unorthodox claims about the spiritual value of frontier poetry.<sup>35)</sup> One of the texts that presents these revolutionary ideas is Hanshan’s “*Ti Congjun shi hou*” 「題從軍詩後」 (Postscript to *Poems on Serving in the Army*).

### III. “Illuminating” Truth with the “Fires” of Hell – Hanshan’s “*Postscript to Poems on Serving in the Army*”

Hanshan’s “*Ti Congjun shi hou*” records his appraisal of the short poetry collection (*Congjun Shi* 「從軍詩」 (Poems on Serving in the Army = CJS) that he composed

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discourses on poetry composed before Hanshan’s time which sought to invoke sophisticated doctrinal foundation to substantiate the claim that such poems could have religious value for Buddhist disciples.

35) Such an approach was adopted in Lynn Struve’s “Deqing’s Dream’s” (2012), which studies Hanshan’s autobiography – a text which scholars had previously associated with Hanshan’s self-identity as a “Confucian hero”. Criticising this view, Struve found that the narrative structure of the autobiography and its prose were framed in a way that resonates with a prominent Buddhist model of spiritual progress, namely, that of the ten stages of the Bodhisattva path.

when he first arrived in Leifeng and began living in the army garrison there. Although it has been largely overlooked by contemporary scholars,<sup>36)</sup> it offers important insights into Hanshan's post-exile thought on poetry. It reads as follows:

Leiyang [Leizhou] is right at the southernmost point [of the imperial realm]. Su Dongpo's inscription declares that it is "the foremost of the ten thousand mountains" – the place where the rivers and mountains come to an end. Geomancers call it "the End of the Dragon". Because of this, loyal and righteous officials of the past were often exiled here - its physiognomy made it so.

Lingnan's climate is substantially different from that of the central plains – the weather of the four seasons does not accord with the patterns of heaven and earth. It is like the pure *yang* of the *qian* trigram transforming to become the *li* trigram. Li [in the Manifest (*houtian*, 後天) arrangement of the 8 elements occupies the] cardinal direction of fire, [on account of whose light] the ten thousand things can be seen. While stifling density creates sweltering heat, luxuriant splendor (*chang*, 昌) nurtures the brilliant luminosity (*wenming*, 文明) [associated with li]. People only see the stifling density of the scene, not the wonder of [*li*'s] unimpeded comprehension (*tongchang*, 通暢). As a result, they are unable to fully exhaust the intricacies of creation in their prose and poetry

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36) Wu Huangchang's "Mingmo Gaoseng" (2010, pp.232-237) briefly discusses this postscript and the poetic writings in this collection. Wu's analysis, however, does not elaborate on the relationship between these texts and Hanshan's religious thought.

When I first arrived here, I suffered a seasonal illness. Consequently, during this time I wrote a commentary on the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*. I had thought that I had deep insight into the profundities of the Buddha and the Patriarchs; this experience helped me [realize my folly and for the first time authentically attain] this. I have never sought to excel in poetry, but since I [was forced to] join the army and come here, my poetry has spread across the country. The wise all view it as “Chan”; [it is equivalent to the latter] such that it can demonstrate that mind and setting (*jing* 境)<sup>37)</sup> are merged without one cognizing that this is so. Because of this, one knows that the marvel of the poetry of the ancients lies in the fact that the sentiments are true and the settings are authentic.<sup>38)</sup>

Hanshan’s CJS is a collection of 8 poems (consisting of a combined total of 700 characters)<sup>39)</sup> that, almost in their entirety, take as their theme the hellish scenes and emotional wrought that confronted Hanshan during the initial period of his banishment in Leiyang.<sup>40)</sup> These poems were originally composed very

37) This word can also be translated as “scene” “realm” or “object realm”.

38) 雷陽正當南極。東坡題曰「萬山第一」，所謂水窮山盡處也。形家稱為盡龍。故古之忠臣義士，被謫者多在於此，氣使然也。…天南風物迥異中洲；四時之氣亦不與天地準，如「乾」之純陽變而為「離」，「離」火方也；萬物皆相見，鬱為炎熱；鬱為文明。人但見景物之鬱，不見通暢之妙。故於文章詞賦，不能盡其造化之微。余初至時遭歲厲，遂於此中註楞伽經；自謂深窺佛祖之奧，蓋實有資於是也。向不求工於詩，自從軍來此，詩傳之海內；智者皆以禪目之，是足以徵心境混融，有不自知其然者。由是亦知古人之詩，妙在於情真境實耳。 Fascicle 32, MYJ, X73, no. 1456, p. 694. A brief analysis of this passage is contained in Wu’s “Mingmo gaoseng”, 2010, pp.235-237.

39) See *Hanshan laoren nianpu* (Chronicle Biography of the Venerable Hanshan), fascicle 54, MYJ, X73, no. 1456, p. 841. However, in Hanshan’s introduction to CJS, he merely says that it consists of several poems. See CJS, fascicle 54, X73, no. 1456, p. 792.

40) Extant versions can be found in fascicle 47 of Hanshan’s MJY, X73, no. 1456, p. 792. Three poems were recorded in Qian Qianyi’s (錢謙益, 1582-1664) *Liechao Shiji* 『列朝詩

soon after Hanshan's exile (in 1596), and were printed some time subsequent to this by a gentry associate whom Hanshan has identified as Ziyuan (紫垣).<sup>41)</sup> The poems, which are included in Hanshan's MYJ, are accompanied by a short preface composed by Hanshan that discusses how being confronted by the horrors of exile provided the impetus for this work, and that emphasizes that the scenes and sentiments conveyed in these poems are "authentic".<sup>42)</sup> The postscript was evidently written some time later upon the printer's request (it appears in a separate section of the MYJ (fascicle 32)). As we have seen, the postscript repeats the preface's claims regarding the authenticity of Hanshan's CJS, and adds to this the assertion that these poems have religious value – that they should be "viewed as Chan". It is likely, in view of this, that Hanshan's view on the enlightening power of his CJS was something he developed subsequent to his composition of them.

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集』(Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, Rpt. 2009), which were collectively titled "Congjun shisan shou, Bingshen chun er yue ru Wuyang, san yue shi ri di Leiyang suo zuo" 從軍詩三首丙申春二月入五羊三月十日抵雷陽所作」(Three Poems on Serving in the Army: Composed in the Bingshen Year (1596) when entering Wuyang [Lingnan] during the Second Month of Spring, [and] on the Tenth Day of the Third Month when Arriving in Leiyang). These poems are featured in the third fascicle of the last section of Qian Qianyi's anthology (the *Liechao shiji*), titled the "Run ji" 閨集」(*Run Collection*) - which features the works of monks, women and other "non-mainstream" or non-gentry-literati authors.

- 41) It is possible that Ziyuan could refer to the high-ranking late Ming official Li Ruoxing (*jinsi*, 李若星, 1604), whose courtesy name was Ziyuan. However, I have been unable to find concrete evidence supporting this assertion.
- 42) "the phraseology is crude... but the sentiments and setting are lifelike. I believe they are not adorned words". (其辭鄙俚, 殊不成章. 而情境逼真, 諒非綺語) CJS, fascicle 47, X73, no. 1456, p.791.



One possible reason for the belatedness of the claim that these poems have religious value may have been the conflict between the qualities of the settings depicted in these poems (i.e., heat and defilement), and those more commonly regarded by Buddhists to imbue poetry with religious power (i.e., purity and coolness). In relation to this point, it is notable that the contrast between these qualities is explicitly invoked in Hanshan’s CJS, which places special emphasis on the “stifling heat/vexatiousness” of the site of Hanshan’s exile, and its stark contrast with the purity and coolness of the monasteries in which he had previously resided. One line, for instance, states: “I once lived in the realm of refreshing cool [lit. “pure and cool”]; Now I have ascended to the “heaven” of heat and vexation. The warm and cold winds [of the north and deep south respectively] are different; Uneven are the landforms of north and south”.<sup>43)</sup> The heat and impurity of Leifeng are alluded to explicitly throughout the CJS through references the region’s “hot winds”, “miasmic mist” and “toxic fog” etc.<sup>44)</sup> Hanshan’s preface to the CJS similarly emphasises the stifling heat and apparent insalubriousness or ‘impurity’ of Lingnan – for instance, it notes that when he first arrived in Leifeng, “Fighting filled my sight, plagues were rampant and the dead and wounded covered the fields”.<sup>45)</sup>

How did Hanshan justify this? To answer this question, we may begin by looking into what Hanshan’s postscript said about Leifeng’s topography and climate – two areas which, as I have shown in the last paragraph, his CJS

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43) 昔住清涼界，今登熱惱天；燠寒風氣別，南北地形偏，CJS, fascicle 47, X73, no. 1456, p.792.

44) *ibid.*

45) 兵戈滿眼，疫氣橫發，死傷蔽野，*ibid.*, p.791.

explicitly identified as the loci of stark contrasts between tropical Leifeng (“South”) and the central plains (“North”). Hanshan’s postscript begins by discussing Lingnan’s unpropitious topography – it resembles “the end” of the “dragon”, which in Chinese traditions of prognostication symbolises (here it is held to even effect) the end of the exiled subject’s prospects for high office (*yin* power subduing *yang*).<sup>46)</sup> Its role as the site of a form of “purgatory” for officials is further enhanced by the description of its climate – its stifling heat and humidity were likely to cause intense suffering for those accustomed to the cooler climate of the regions closer to the centres of imperial power (i.e., northern China). However, Hanshan’s postscript suggests an alternative approach to interpreting the auspiciousness or otherwise of these same geographical and climactic signs/features. This alternative approach draws upon on the fact that Leifeng’s geographical location and climatic peculiarities bring it into alignment with two Yinyang *yang* dominant (i.e., propitious) trigrams/hexagrams associated with “fire” – *qian* (乾) and *li* (離). Hanshan in this passage appears to invoke these two trigrams/hexagrams to emphasize an analogy – just as fire, which is a source of searing heat (*qian*), can also emit “illuminating” light (*li*), so can the discomfortingly hot climate of Leifeng also be an ideal catalyst (or crucible) for “en-lightening” those exiled there.

This interpretation, while unorthodox, is by no means baseless. Principally, it has its foundation in the connection both *qian* and *li* share, in relation to geography, with “True South” (*zhengnan* 正南 - a term arguably inferred in the opening line), and, in relation to climate, fire and summer. The *qian* trigram/hexagram,

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46) In Chinese divination systems, especially in the *Book of Changes*, the dragon is a symbol of ambition and success in high office.

which features only *yang* lines, represents heaven and its creative power – a pure *yang* power which is embodied, in the phenomenal world, in life giving/sustaining “heat”. It occupies the cardinal direction of True South (facing upwards) according to the Primordial (Heaven) (*xiantian*, 先天) arrangement of the eight base elements (i.e., the pictorial arrangement that maps how the interrelationship between the elements forms and sustains the phenomenal world). *Li*, which also represents fire, understanding and civilization/morality (*wenming* – which appears in this postscript, 文明), occupies the same position in the Manifest or Posterior Heaven (*houtian*, 後天) arrangement. Posterior Heaven, in contradistinction to Primordial Heaven, refers to dynamic processes or patterns of transformation in the phenomenal world and in human psychology. In relation to this, *li* symbolises spiritual progress and enlightenment in Chinese Buddhism (especially in the Caodong Chan (Sōtō) school).<sup>47)</sup> In emphasising the transformation from Primordial *qian* to Posterior *li*, it could be argued that Hanshan drew attention to how the stifling climate and alien terrain he encountered during his exile – the “Primordial” qualities of the region, and the qualities that sought to “authentically” record in his poems – could be “transformed” (Posterior) to spur “en-lightenment” (i.e., to reveal the “intricacies of creation”). Poetry that can “authentically” record these qualities, and that masters the aesthetic technique of “merging” mind and scene, can thus, according to Hanshan, be worthy of being viewed as “Chan”.

What, then, is the religious significance of the “merging” of mind (*xin*) and

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47) For an exposition on this topic, see Chen Rongbo, “Yijing li gua yu Caodong chan” “易經離卦與曹洞禪”, *Huagang foxue xuebao* 『華崗佛學學報』 4, 1980, pp.224-244.

setting (*jing*)” (心境混融),<sup>48)</sup> which is mentioned near the very end of this postscript, and near his proclamation that his poetry should be viewed as “Chan”? Scholars of Chinese literary theory may immediately identify this with a well known principle in Chinese classical literary theory – for instance, there is a marked similarity between this phrase and the similarly worded “sentiment and scene are blended” 情景交融 (*qing jing jiaorong*) advanced later by the late-Ming/early-Qing scholar and loyalist Wang Fuzhi (王夫之, 1619-1692)<sup>49)</sup> – a phrase which denotes both a technique and aesthetic ideal in classical Chinese poetics. They may note also that the notion that sentiment and scene merge together in poetry (or in some types of poetry) was already widespread in discussions on literary theory before and during Hanshan’s day, and was often expressed similarly.<sup>50)</sup> However, monastic and lay Buddhist contemporaries of Hanshan

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48) This word can also be translated as “scene” “realm” or “object realm”. I discuss this in more detail below.

49) Wang’s understanding of the relationship between *viñaptimātra*, poetics, and the theory of “blending scene and sentiments” is the core theme in Xiao Chi “Chuanshan shixue zhong ‘xianliang’ yihan de zai tantao: jian lun chuantong ‘qingjing jiaorong’ lilun yanjiu de yi ge wuqu” 「船山詩學中[現量]意涵的再探討:兼論傳統[情景交融]理論研究的一個誤區」, *Hanxue yanjiu* 『漢學研究』18(1) (Dec.), Guojia tushuguan (Taiwan) 國家圖書館(台灣), 2000, pp.369-396.

50) An early and well known precedent was the Song literatus Zhang Yan’s (張炎, 1248-1320) *Ci yuan* 『詞源』 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, Rpt. 1937), which discusses the technique of “melding sentiment and scene” (情景交煉) (see fascicle 2). Closer to Hanshan’s times, the Archaist school’s Xie Zhen (謝榛, 1495-1575), in his *Siming shihua* 『四溟詩話』 (In *Lidai shihua xu bian* 『歷代詩話續編』 (Vol. 2), comp./ed., Ding Fubao (丁福保), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, Rpt. 1986) stated that “The scene is the matchmaker of a poem, while sentiment is a poem’s embryo. Binding them together, we make a poem” 景乃詩之媒情乃詩之胚;合而為詩 (vol. 3, p.1180). The scholar Zhu Chengjue (朱承爵 1480-1527) similarly said, “The marvel in composing poetry resides entirely in the complete merging of idea and setting – [this is] something that transcends tones and

may have interpreted this phrase differently – they may have noted that the ideal that mind and scene should blend or merge is a soteriological doctrine that features prominently in Chinese commentaries on the *Laṅkāvatāra* – the sutra explicitly mentioned in this postscript.<sup>51)</sup> In other words, one could argue that what Hanshan was alluding to is the following - his CJS poems can be viewed as Chan because they exemplify the literary ideal of the “merging” of mind and sentiments, and this ideal may in some way align with a similarly-defined key attainment in *Laṅkāvatāra* soteriology. Further supporting this assertion is the point that Hanshan’s phrase uses of the word 境 instead of 景 to denote the external setting in contrast to inner sentiments – although the former is often found in poetics, it often has connotations which are associated with Buddhist (and in particular) *citta-mātra* psychology, referring to the ideational reconstruction of the perceived object/setting as opposed to an external scene (it also simply refers to the objects of the six senses (*viṣaya*; or *ālambana*, ‘the object of grasping’ *grāhya*)).<sup>52)</sup> Given the *Laṅkāvatāra* was the sutra associated with the mind-to-mind transmission for most of the Chan patriarchs, and had a revered status in Hanshan’s writings, this could explain Hanshan’s basis for identifying poetry of this ilk with “Chan”. The fact that Hanshan directly mentioned the *Laṅkāvatāra* in this passage, I would assert, gives some

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sounds, and captures the “true flavor” 作詩之妙,全在意境融徹,出音聲之外,乃得真味 - see fascicle 1 of the *Cunyu tang shihua/Sonyo dō shiwa* 『存餘堂詩話』, Ed. Gensui Kondō (近藤元粹), Tokyo: Aoki Sūzandō, Rpt. 2010.

51) I discuss this point in greater detail later in this article.

52) For a lengthy discussion on the use of 境 in poetics see Xiao Chi “Chuanshan shixue” (2000) and *Zhongguo sixiang yu xuqing chuantong di er juan: Fofa yu shijing* 『中國思想與抒情傳統第二卷：佛法與詩境』, Taipei: Lianjing xueshu, 2011. See also Yang’s *The Buddhist Interpretations of Wang Wei*, 2007, pp.172-176.

credence to this interpretation.

Hence, one could argue that Hanshan's CJS postscript advanced two core reasons to support his argument that poems which documented his initial impression of his exile in Lingnan (and perhaps poems of this genre more generally) can enlighten people. The first is the idea that their enlightening power is a product of their success in "authentically" depicting the topographic and climactic qualities that make that region a suitable site (crucible) for religious cultivation. This clearly builds upon traditional Buddhist views on the enlightening power of landscape poetry – it merely proceeds from a different view on what type of landscape/setting has the potential to facilitate enlightenment. The second reason – one that appears to be related to the first – is that "authentic" exile poems exemplify the aesthetic virtue of "merging mind and scene", and this tenet corresponds with an important soteriological doctrine associated with the *Laṅkāvatāra*. The latter resonates with Hanshan's view that elite poetry and Buddhist practice can be radically identified with each – an idea that formed the basis of his claim, made elsewhere that poetry is "true Chan" *shi nai zhenchan*.<sup>53)</sup>

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53) 詩乃真禪 "Za shuo" (雜說 Miscellaneous Disquisitions), fascicle 39, MYJ, X73, no. 1456, p. 745. A brief discussion on Hanshan's articulation of this idea can be found in Liao, *Zhongbian. shichan*, 2008, pp.19-20.

#### IV. Dreamspeech, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and Hanshan’s “Nightmarish Descent into Hell” – Poetry and Enlightenment in Hanshan’s *Dream Travels Poetry Collection* Preface

Above I have argued that the CJS postscript posited two core justifications to support Hanshan’s assertion that these poems had religious value. However, the terse explanations given in Hanshan’s CJS postscript leave important questions unresolved. Firstly, on what grounds did Hanshan assert that the aesthetic tenet of “blending sentiments and scene” could be identified with the Buddhist soteriological doctrine of merging “mind and scene”? Secondly, were the ideas of “merging mind and scene”, and Hanshan’s point about the enlightening power of Leifeng’s heat, linked together in any discernible and meaningful way? To answer both questions we will look at another text on poetry in which Hanshan claimed that his non-Buddhist poetry has religious value – his “*Mengyou shiji zixu*” 夢遊詩集自序 (Author’s Preface to the *Dream Travels Poetry Collection* = MYS). One pertinent section of this preface that begins to answer these questions reads as follows:

This collection is called *Dream Travels*. Why choose this name? It is said “The three realms<sup>54</sup>) are an abode of dreams. Floating, ephemeral life is like a dream. The contrary and the favourable, affliction and pleasure, prosperity and decay, gain and loss – these are all moments from the events in a dream. Words record the settings [or “realms”] (*jing*,

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54) The three realms are the realm of sensuous desire (or the ‘desire realm’) (欲界), the realm of form (色界) and the formless (i.e., absent of material existence) realm (無色界).

境) that are passed through in dreams; poetry, furthermore, has an intimate closeness with [these] settings. To sum up, all of it is dream-speech (*mengyu*, 夢語). It is sometimes said that Buddhism prohibits adorned language (*qiyu*, 綺語). This is already very much the case with the language of prose; poetry is an even more extreme example of adorned language. What is more, poetry is grounded in sentiment (*qing*, 情), while Chan is a method of transcending sentiment. If it is like this, how could one [who reads/composes poetry] not descend into sentiment-based thoughts?

I say that it is *not* like this. The Buddha said that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are like yesterday's dreams, so the Buddha and the Patriarchs are also people within a dream. Of the one thousand seven hundred parts of the Tripitaka, there is nothing that is not words uttered in sleep (*yiyu*, 寢語).<sup>55)</sup>

Hanshan's MYS was composed very late in his life – in 1621, while he was residing at Kumu Convent (*Kumu an*, 枯木菴) at Mount Xuefeng (雪峰山) in Fujian.<sup>56)</sup> It appears, on the surface, to present a very different set of justifications for affirming the religious value of Hanshan's non-Buddhist poetry.<sup>57)</sup> Firstly,

55) 集稱「夢遊」，何取哉？曰：「三界夢宅，浮生如夢，逆順苦樂，榮枯得失，乃夢中事時」，其言也，乃紀夢中遊歷之境，而詩又境之親切者，總之皆「夢語」也。或曰：「佛戒綺語，若文言已甚，況詩又綺語之尤者！且詩本乎情，禪乃出情之法也。若然者，豈不墮於情想耶？」予曰：「不然」，佛說：「生死涅槃，猶如昨夢」。故佛祖亦夢中人。一大藏經，千七百則，無非寢語。MYS, X73, no.1456, p.786.

56) Kumu was a small monastic residence approximately 200 metres from the famous Xuefeng Monastery.

57) This preface is found at the beginning of fascicle 47 of MYJ. Much of the poetry contained in this collection was composed after Hanshan's initial exile in Lingnan,



it notes that although the medium contains “adorned speech” (*qiyu*, 綺語) and “dream speech” (*mengyu*, 夢語) – two forms of speech that are proscribed in Buddhism – Buddhist canonical literature is also guilty of containing these types of speech. In other words, the spiritual value of poetry cannot be denied solely on the basis that it contains these forms of proscribed speech. Yet while the intention here appears to be to highlight an equivalence between Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature, special emphasis is placed on the notion that both types of literature contain “dream speech”. Hanshan not only notes that his poetry is a form of dream speech, in the sense that it records “dream like” experiences; he also intimates that the very concept of dream-likeness / dream speech inspired him to name his collection “Dream Travels”. Yet how does dream-likeness / dream speech, as the core feature of Hanshan’s poems, and as something typically proscribed in Buddhism, form the basis of the claim that Hanshan’s poetry could have religious value? We may further ask what, if anything, does the presence of dream likeness / dream speech have to do with the doctrine of “merging” mind and external scenes?

To answer these questions it is perhaps first helpful to return to the *Laṅkāvatāra* – which is, in fact, mentioned elsewhere in Hanshan’s MYS. Like the doctrine of the merging of mind and scene/setting/object, variants of the term “dream speech” often appear in Chinese commentaries on the *Laṅkāvatāra*. However, while the notion of the merging of mind and the setting is unequivocally described as having a positive religious utility in these commentaries, dream speech has an entirely negative connotation. In the

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however some poems may have been written earlier.

*Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, dream speech (夢言說 *mengyanshuo*; Sanskrit: *svapna-√vac*?) is listed as one of the four kinds of delusional speech (妄想語言 *wangxiang yuyan*; San.: *vikalpa-√vac*?). According to a commentary on this sūtra written by Hanshan's friend Zeng Fengyi (曾鳳儀,<sup>58</sup>) it is a category of speech that has "arisen from the supporting basis of an object (*jing* = "setting") that has no actuality" (依不實境生), like speech that conveys reflections on "realms" (or "settings") passed through" in earlier dreams<sup>59</sup>) (this description - we should note - closely resembles the MYS description of dream speech as that which "records the settings [or "realms"] that are passed through in dreams"). Dream speech in Buddhism is hence "delusional" because, according to Buddhist reasoning, speech whose "basis" ("foundation" in the sense of being the object) is not real can only speak at the level of unreality (i.e., the world as it is perceived by the deluded), and can never convey truth qua a description of the qualities of actual reality as perceived by the enlightened. In other words, dream speech, as a form of deluded speech, threatens to increase our entrapment in the false epistemology of subjective experience.

If Hanshan's understanding of what dream speech means closely matches the definition given in orthodox *Lankāvatāra* commentaries, where dream

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58) Zeng Fengyi (*jinshi* 1583) mentions his close relationship with Hanshan in his introductory discussion on the inspiration for his *Lengqie jing zongtong* 『楞伽經宗通』, X17, no. 330. In his introduction to this text (fascicle 1) he states "Hanshan regards me as a close friend" 余於憨山稱莫逆.

59) See Zeng Fengyi's *Lengqie jing zongtong*, fascicle 3: "It is called the theory of dream-speech because the 6th consciousness remembers a past setting [or object realm] and speech arises from that, just as when one has already awoken after dreaming of a setting that one has previously passed through, and one remembers [what one has dreamt], one's words and speech arise on the basis of a setting that was not actual". 夢言說謂六識憶念過去境界, 而言說生焉. 如夢先所經境界, 既已醒覺, 乃從而追憶. 言說依不實境生故, X17, no. 330, p. 670.

speech is used pejoratively to define speech which increases delusion, why did Hanshan call his collection “Dream Travels”, and at the same time appear to assert that his poetry has religious value? The answer to this apparent conundrum rests in the fact that for Hanshan, dream speech was not only legitimate because it can also be found in Buddhist canonical sources - he also held that it was a potent tool for shattering illusion and bringing about awakening. In relation to the latter, Hanshan held the view that speech which documented perceptual experiences of a “dream-like” setting can be used to uncover such a scene’s “dream-like” qualities. In other words, dream speech can be used to reveal the unreality of what is not (absolutely) real, and in so doing, convey authentic “truth”. This understanding is clearly articulated in another text composed by Hanshan which takes as its theme the maxim “Life is like a floating dream” (人生如浮夢) - the maxim which, we may recall, Hanshan stated had influenced his decision to name his poetry collection “Dream Travels”.<sup>60</sup> We may note the following passage from a letter Hanshan composed in reply to Supreme Commander Yang Yuanru (楊元儒):

Actually there is nothing too mysterious in this. As for the first step, one is not without a prescribed method. When one is dwelling on the world, first take phenomena (*artha*) from within the dream, raise them in front of one’s eyes and carefully observe them in minute detail. One must see them clearly and distinctly, to the point where one

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<sup>60</sup>) Here Hanshan conspicuously drew from, and even ascribed a positive religious value to, “dream-speech” – a term which has a pejorative meaning in Chinese commentarial works on the *Lañkāvatāra Sūtra*, including his own commentary, the *Guan Lengqie Jing* 『觀楞伽經記』 = GLJ X17, no.326.

unwittingly bursts into great laughter. When one arrives at this [point], one suddenly realizes that ordinary speech is like the speech of dreams, and so what was absolutely different [i.e. dream-speech and ordinary speech] will henceforth be treated as the same. One should then, in the moment of a single thought, turn and [do the reverse and] take the setting before one's eyes and place it within a dream and observe it in minute detail. When one looks until [the scene is revealed to be] murky, burdensome and topsy-turvy (*viparīta*) [like the dreamscape], one will suddenly and fiercely awaken. If one recollects one's entire life in such a manner and truly searches for the various realms that one has previously passed through, [one will find that] they are utterly unobtainable (*anupalabha?*). "Unobtainability" is the first gate [through which] the Buddha and patriarchs escaped *samsāra*.<sup>61)</sup>

In other words, one can see the true reality of life, or the reality of its illusory nature or ultimate unreality, when one recognizes that the phenomenal world shares many of the qualities of our dreamscapes. To achieve this, one should first recount the objects (the settings or realms - *jing*) observed in our dreams while they are still fresh in our mind – i.e., one should produce dream speech. When one scrutinizes these in minute detail as though they were events that occurred in the real world, it should become apparent that they are laughably absurd –

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61) 其實就中無甚玄妙，至於最初一步，不無其方。吾人處世，先要將夢中事，試舉向目前，細細觀察，定要的看到，不覺發一大笑處，到此則頓覺尋常說如夢話頭，迥然不同，即將一同處，一念轉將目前境界置向夢中細細觀察，看到昏沉沉重顛倒實，忽然猛覺來，如此則回觀平生，向來歷過一切種種境界，諦實求之，了不可得，了不可得處即是諸佛祖師出生死第一關也。"Da Yang Yuanru yuanrong", fascicle 15, MYJ, X73, no. 1456, p.571.

they are clearly, as forms of dream speech, delusional. Following this revelation, one should apply this same method in reverse to scrutinize our accounts / recollections of sensory objects perceived in the real world - starting with vivid fresh memories (i.e., those which most appear “real”), and proceeding to more distant memories. As a result of this, one will realize that so-called “real world” events / scenes that we have experienced throughout our life are as unreal as our dreamscapes - both are “murky, burdensome and topsy-turvy”.<sup>62)</sup> By means of this process, one can escape being deceived by the false epistemology that binds sentient beings to *saṃsāra*. One will have taken the first step towards true emancipation.

The above account, thus, provides doctrinal grounds - albeit, somewhat unorthodox grounds - in support of the assertion that poetry qua dream speech has religious value. It also establishes that this religious value stems from dream speech’s capacity to reveal the “sameness” between depictions of the real world and dreamscapes. In view of this, it should be noted that in the Buddhist lexicon, the concept of the dream-like intimates something other than mere unreality - it is also often associated with idealism. This is because the knowledge that dreamscapes are not real is based on the knowledge (i.e., attained by those that have “awoken” from their dream) that they are merely mental projections - that they are “mind only”.

Could the understanding that the “settings” of the dream are nothing other

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62) “Topsy-turvy” – *viparīta*, in its Chinese translation *diandao* 顛倒 – is perhaps the most significant of these three qualities in that it often refers to a state in which what is untrue is held to be true, such as the state of holding what is constructed and impermanent to be permanent or unconditioned.

than the “mind” that perceives them have informed Hanshan’s assertion that poetry qua dream speech has the capacity to “merge” mind and scene - or make it apparent that they are undifferentiable? To investigate this further we may shift our attention to another passage that appears in Hanshan’s MYS:

At the age of 50, I suffered, as an unwarranted consequence of my efforts to spread the dharma, the misfortune of being sent to prison by imperial decree. I came close to death on many occasions. However, not long after, I was graced with the emperor’s mercy and was exiled to Lingnan. I regarded this [experience as like] falling into one of the perilous realms in a dream - hence I came to first hold this theory [of Dream Speech soon after my exile]. As a result of this I saw that the excellent poems of the ancients mostly come from those that journeyed to the frontiers or sojourned in a foreign land, on account of [the facility I had to testify to] the genuineness of their sentiments and the authenticity of their settings...

I first arrived at the garrison in the second month of spring of the *bingshen* year (1596). There had been pestilence and famine for three years and exposed bones covered the fields. It was as though I was sitting in a cemetery. I feared I would die and never be heard of. Subsequently, I completed the *Contemplation of the Laṅkāvatāra*. I guarded (lit. wielded a halberd) the outer gate of the residence of the General-in-chief and resided in the garrison. I wanted to put into practice Dahui’s principle of preaching the dharma while in the clothes of a layperson. I constructed a cubic room [like that of Vimalakīrti] in a round tent. I performed dream versions of Buddhist rituals with disciples who came to see me - I treated the marching gong and the war

drums as the bells and stone-chimes [of temples]; I took the garrison’s banners as dhvaja... and took the “demons” (*māra*) as my retinue (*parivāra*). Suddenly it became a great *bodhimaṇḍala*.<sup>63</sup>)

This passage describes Hanshan’s experience of being suddenly imprisoned, narrowly escaping death, and finally being sent into exile, as feeling like “falling into one of the perilous realms in a dream”. It is notable that his depiction of this dreamlike state appears to convey the sense of surrealness that can accompany the experience of an intensely traumatic event. It could be argued, on this basis, that Hanshan was trying to convey that this nightmarishly “surreal” experience prompted him to formulate the idea that *saṃsāra* is “dreamlike”, and that speech that depicted this experience authentically and soon after it occurred – that depicted this “nightmare” – can be likened to dream speech. In other words, Hanshan saw in these poems fresh and authentic depictions of real-world experiences that brought to the fore apparent reality’s surreal, or “nightmarish/dreamlike” qualities – qualities that captured actual reality’s “sameness” with dreamscapes. Such poems, in other words, were forms of dream speech that were “excellent” in their capacity to reveal the “dreamlike” character of apparent reality.

Yet this passage raises another important point. In the second paragraph, Hanshan asserted that this revelation, and the intense suffering he experienced

63) 年五十矣。偶因弘法羅難。詔下獄。瀕九死。既而蒙恩放嶺海。予以是爲夢墮險道也。故其說始存。因見古詩之佳者。多出於征戍羈旅。以其情真而境實也。

丙申春二月。初至戍所。癘飢三年。白骨蔽野。予即如坐屍陀林中。懼其死而無聞也；遂成楞伽筆記。執戟大將軍轅門。居壘壁間。思效大慧冠巾說法。構丈室於穹廡。時與諸來弟子。作夢幻佛事；乃以金鼓爲鐘磬。以旗幟爲幡幢...以諸魔爲眷屬。居然一大道場也。MYS, X73, 1456, p.786.

in Leifeng, drove him to diligently study the *Laṅkāvatāra*. It appears on this account that this bitter and traumatic experience was a crucible for a spiritual awakening – leading to his composition of a commentary on this sutra, his *Guan Lengqie jing ji* 『觀楞伽經記』 (Record of Contemplations on the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* = GLJ). It seems that Hanshan, prompted by the insights he attained as a result of these studies, utilised the understanding that reality is “dreamlike” to empower himself, through his self-realization that he is the “dreamer” of his “dreamlike” reality, to transform his nightmarish “dreamscape”. Through this conscious “dreaming”, Hanshan turned a “hellish” real - one where the “demons” were his retinue - into “a great *bodhimaṇḍala*”.

The above account links Hanshan’s understanding of poetry as dream speech, the doctrine of merging mind and scene (the understanding that the dreamscape is dependent on the dreamer), and the emancipatory power associated with the “hellish” qualities of Hanshan’s exile (the impetus to reject the absolute existence of an undesirable “dreamscape”, so that one could “dream” a new reality). At the centre of this nexus, I assert, is a recourse to the soteriological power of the epistemology of idealism – the understanding that apparent external reality, like a dreamscape, are projections of the mind of the “dreamer”/observer, and that the “dreamer” ultimately has the power to transform his “dreamscape”.

This brings us back to the significance of the *Laṅkāvatāra*. In Hanshan’s opinion, idealism is the core doctrinal tenet of this sutra. In fact, he wrote that it presented the highest expression of the fundamental tenets of the Buddhist “idealist” *citta-mātra* school - the notion that the “three realms are mind only”. Hanshan even intimated that this sutra, and by extension the doctrinal tenet



that the “three realms are mind only”, represents the highest teaching.<sup>64)</sup> In relation to the latter, we have seen previously passages in which Hanshan intimated that he felt that the suffering he experienced during his exile motivated him to study this sutra and attain “real” enlightenment. This is stated more clearly elsewhere. For instance, Hanshan once noted that upon his exile: “I dedicated myself to delving into the mind-seal of the Buddha and patriarchs by reading the *Lankāvatāra*, [upon which] I finally knew that [the knowledge I had attained] beforehand had fallen into the gate of light and shadows, and was not of genuine *jñānadarśanabala*”.<sup>65)</sup>

If we are to read this preface again based on the premise that it had a theoretical foundation in Buddhist idealism, it may be interpreted in the following way. Hanshan’s initial awareness that the world is “dreamlike”, and that this dreamlike quality can be revealed in exile poetry qua dream speech, was first prompted by the “nightmarish” surreality he experienced as a result

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64) Fascicle 46 of the MYJ states: “The Buddha emerged in the world and spoke of the dharma for forty years... From start to finish he only spoke eight words: these were “the three realms are mind-only; the ten-thousand dharmas are consciousness only”. Only after 40 years did he finally thoroughly reveal the meaning of the sentence “the ten thousand dharmas are consciousness-only”. Yet it seems he had not dared to reveal the purport of “mind-only”, for “mind-only” is the ultimate law of the ten thousand things. Up to that point, the great disciples had heard of the dharma gate of “consciousness-only”. After that point, he spoke of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, revealing the dharma gate of “The three realms are mind-only”. (佛出世說法四十九年...始終只說了八箇字；所謂三界唯心，萬法唯識，從初至此已經四十年，才說破「萬法唯識」一句之義。然猶未敢顯示唯心之旨，以唯心乃萬法之極則也。從上以來，諸大弟子已聞唯識法門，故此以後，乃說『楞伽經』，顯示「三界唯心」法門) X73, 1456, p.782.

65) 唯對楞伽究佛祖心印，始知從前皆墮光影門頭，非真知見力，fascicle 13, MYJ, X73, no. 1456, p. 782.

of his traumatic experience of being imprisoned and exile to Leifeng. His understanding of this “dreamlike” nature developed further when, prompted by the suffering brought about by Leifeng’s “hellish” environment (i.e., the “heat” and “impurity” of this setting), Hanshan threw himself into the study of *Laṅkāvatāra* - the most important sutra of the mind-only school. As a result of this, Hanshan was able to transform (“dream”) the “hellish” environment of Leifeng (the “dreamscape”) into a *bodhimaṇḍala*. In other words, and in reference to the point made in the CJS postscript, he found himself able to transform an environment marked by searing “heat” – raging fire as (primordial) *qian* - into a source of illumination or “en-lightenment” - the light emanated from fire qua (posterior) *li*.

## V. Dream (Speech), Hell(ishness) as Pedagogical Analogies of the “Mind Only” Doctrine

### 1. Dream speech, Idealism and the *Laṅkāvatāra*

The above explanation advances the argument that “mind only” doctrine provided the theoretical basis for Hanshan’s assertion that poetry which “authentically” depicts the “dream-like” surrealness of being exiled to a sweltering and defiled setting can help people realise the “merging of mind and scene”, and turn the depiction of a “hellish” environment into an ideal tool for cultivating enlightenment. It is perhaps questionable to assert that this conclusion is entirely warranted from the contents of these writings on poetry alone. However, supporting evidence backing this argument can be found in the very commentary on the *Laṅkāvatāra* which Hanshan mentioned in both

his CJS postscript and his MYS - his *Guan Lengqie jing* (Contemplations on the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* = GLJ). This is particularly the case in relation to two core qualities emphasised in the MYS – the “dream-likeness” and “hellishness” of Lingnan/Leifeng.

Firstly, we may note that “dreams” and the notion of the dream-like nature of reality is an important leitmotif in Hanshan’s GLJ. In fact, the word “dream” appears almost 110 times in this text. More importantly, GLJ contains many passages in which the analogy of the dream is explicitly used to demonstrate external reality is merely a mental projection. The most straightforward example is the passage which states “like what one sees in a dream, [the perceived object] is not separate from one’s own mind” (如夢所見，不離自心).<sup>66</sup> In addition to this, in Hanshan’s introduction to this commentary, his explanation as to why he chose the name “Contemplations on the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*” invokes the concept of Dream Speech as it is defined in his MYS. For instance, his GLJ notes: “I have not, in this case, called it a “commentary”, but have called it a “record of contemplation / observation” of the sutra, because through contemplation/observation I pondered intensively [lit. “travelled through the mind”] (*youxin*, 遊心), and what it records is the objects [i.e., settings] encountered in these contemplations [or “observations”]”.<sup>67</sup> We may note the use of the word *guan* (觀) here has the dual meaning of “observe” and “contemplate”, and the term *youxin* can mean “pondered intensively”, but literally means “travelled though the mind” - something which clearly resonates with the notion of “dream

66) X17, no. 326. This appears on page 342 - similar claims can be found on page 373 and 367.

67) 今不曰注疏而曰觀經記蓋以觀游心，所記觀中之境耳，fascicle 8, GLJ, X17, 326, p.470.

travels” (*mengyou*) emphasized in Hanshan’s MYS preface. An alternative reading of this passage, thus, is that Hanshan used the word “observations” in the name of this commentary because his inspiration for compiling it came about as the result of a process of having “travelled” through his mind (i.e., his dreamscapes) and having recorded what he “observed” therein. Put another way, and given that Hanshan stated on several occasions (i.e., MYS, CJS postscript) that his descent into Lingnan inspired his composition of this commentary, it could be argued that Hanshan’s writings on the *Laṅkāvatāra* were a product not only of a form of intellectual engagement with the source text, but were in part of product of the insights he intuitively attained into the “dreamlike” nature of reality during his “nightmarish” exile in Leifeng. Further evidence supporting this interpretation can be found in another text wherein Hanshan, noting an encounter he had with an exiled official who was about to be exiled to Leifeng called Fan Youxuan (樊友軒), recalled that when the latter asked Hanshan if he could describe the scenery there, he merely held up his GLJ and stated “This is the scenery of Leiyang” 此雷陽風景也。<sup>68)</sup>

## 2. Hell and Mind-only Doctrine

This last point brings us to the issue of the religious power associated with the “hellish” (i.e., “hot” and “impure”) character of Leifeng. This is the second key quality of Leifeng, along with the notion of the “dreamlike”, that Hanshan invoked in his line about “falling into one of the perilous realms [i.e., hell] in a dream” (while there are three perilous realms, the term is often a synonym for hell). It also

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68) Fascicle 54, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.841.

returns us to the core argument of this article – that poetry which depicts a “hellish” qua “heated” and defiled setting could have religious power.

Above I discussed how the notion of the “dream-like” linked the surrealness of Hanshan’s experience and his post-exile revelations on Buddhist idealism. Yet it should be noted that the concept of “hell” also had an established link with Buddhist idealism. In fact, the concept of “hell” was often directly used as a pedagogical tool in the Yogācāra school for demonstrating that all phenomena is “mere consciousness” (*viññaptimātra*). This has its most well-known expression in Vasubandhu’s (400-480) *Viṃśatikāvijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (Twenty Verses on Consciousness-Only), which was the subject of exegesis of the most important ‘idealist’ text in Chinese Buddhism, the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra*\* (Commentary on the Verses on Consciousness-Only = 『成唯識論』 Cheng weishi lun). In the *Viṃśatikāvijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, Vasubandhu argued that it was absurd to claim that a realm existed solely to engender the suffering of some sentient beings,<sup>69)</sup> and argued that such a realm could only be a product of the evil karma of those that experience it - that is, a product of their ‘minds’. The fact that numerous occupants could perceive the same hell (a projection of “inter-subjectivity”) was not a problem for Vasubandhu, as the evil karma that created this “world”<sup>70)</sup> was, at least in part, common to all the occupants in hell (it was

69) See, for instance, verse 3b-c of Vasubandhu’s *Viṃśatikāvijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (Twenty Verses on Consciousness Only), and the commentary of this verse (Kārikā). An excellent English translation of the *Viṃśatikāvijñaptimātratāsiddhi* has been rendered by Stephen Anacker (*Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor*, Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass Publishers, 1984). For the discussion on hell see pages 160-176 [translations of 3b-c are found on p. 162].

70) See, for instance, Vasubandhu, 1984, pp.162-176. For a description of what *gongye* means in this context, see fascicle 3 of the Tang monk Zhizhou’s (知周) *Cheng weishi lun yanmi* 『成唯識論演秘』, T43, no.1833.

“common/shared karma” (*gongye*, 共業).<sup>71)</sup> Reflecting on hell was, on account of this, viewed as a potent instrument for challenging the idea that “inter-subjectivity” – the fact that many sentient beings bear witness to the same “world” – was a basis for asserting that the external world exists apart from the mind.<sup>72)</sup>

This notion that Leifeng was “hell-like” is, in fact, an explicit and recurring theme in Hanshan’s CJS, his writings on poetry, as well as his other writings. For instance, as noted previously, Hanshan’s CJS sarcastically describes Leifeng as the “heaven (*tian*, 天) of heat and vexation (*renao*, 熱惱)” – however *renao* is actually the name of a Buddhist hell. Hanshan’s CJS poems similarly often depict Leifeng/Lingnan as otherworldly and hell-like. For instance, in one poem he states: “Pestilent mist - the thousand mountain ranges are black;... People mock, and ferocious ghosts have supernatural powers;... Smoked by toxic fog, one’s mind is drunk; Penetrated by hot winds, one’s bones are steamed”.<sup>73)</sup> Most importantly, there appears to be a link between these depictions of Leifeng as hellish, and Hanshan’s GLJ. The original preface to Hanshan’s CJS describes the “hellishness” of the scenes that confronted Hanshan when he first arrived at Leifeng through references to rotting corpses and exposed bones etc.. Not only are the descriptions of this ‘hellish’ environment similar to those provided in Hanshan’s MYS (given above) – they are also very closely matched by the descriptions of Leifeng that appear in a note Hanshan wrote and appended to his GLJ.<sup>74)</sup> This is significant because, as

71) This can also be translated as “collective karma”.

72) For a brief discussion on this, see Lusthaus, 2013, pp.29-30.

73) 瘴烟千嶂黑...人斬厲鬼靈...毒霧熏心醉；炎風透骨蒸, CJS, X73, no.1456, p.792.

74) Hanshan’s “Guan Lengqie bao jingge biji” 「觀楞伽寶經閣筆記」 (Brief Note on *Contemplating the Mansion of the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*), dated 1619, states: “On the 10<sup>th</sup>

noted, these scenes inspired Hanshan to commit himself to an intense study of the idealist *Laṅkāvatāra* sutra.

Equally importantly, the notion of being “hell-like” is clearly intimated in Hanshan’s CJS postscript’s description of Leifeng as a hot and stifling site of purgatory (the “end of the dragon”) for the exiled official. This returns us to Vasubandhu’s point about inter-subjectivity. The scholar-officials who had served in the ‘cool’ north near the capital may not have found the ‘stifling’ tropical climate of the south to be particularly discomforting. Added to this was the fact that it was the site of their exile - it was a place of ‘purgatory’, and the fact that it marked the ‘end’ of the career of aspirant officials would have added an additional layer of psychological aversion to the region which would not have been experienced by its long term residents. In other words, those who were condemned to exile in Leifeng/Lingnan may have viewed it as

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day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar month of that year I arrived at the garrison. On the first day of the 4<sup>th</sup> lunar month I set pen to paper [on this commentary]. At that time the place was beset with famine and pestilence; the dead and injured covered the fields. I sat amid the toxic fog and in a “forest of corpses” (*shi tuo lin* = cemetery) and every day studied this sutra so intensively that I neither ate nor slept. I was awakened [so that it was] like residing in a “country of purity and coolness” (是年三月十日抵戍所。於四月朔即命筆。時值其地飢且癘，死傷蔽野。余坐毒霧屍陀林中，日究此經至忘寢食，了然如處清涼國。) – see fascicle 8, GLC X17, 326 (see also fascicle 23, MYJ, X73, no.1456). Notable, the MYS similarly says that at that time, Hanshan saw “exposed bones covered the fields. It was as though I was sitting in the midst of a cemetery (forest of corpses = *shi tuo lin*)” (白骨蔽野。予即如坐屍陀林中, X73, no.1456), while the CJS preface also states: “the corpses of those who had starved to death could be seen littering the streets. Fighting filled my sight, plagues were rampant and the dead and wounded covered the fields. Words cannot convey the pitifulness of this scene” (道殣相望，兵戈滿眼，疫氣橫發，死傷蔽野。悲慘之狀，甚不可言, X73, no.1456).

something akin to “hell”, while it might not have appeared “hellish” to its other residents (i.e., limits to inter-subjectivity). Poems composed by banished officials would have special significance in view of this - Hanshan, who shared with these authors a form of “shared karma” as a fellow victim of exile, found himself specially equipped to verify the “authenticity” of depictions of Lingnan as surreally unworldly and “hellish”. In other words, the fact that the writings of those who suffered this “common karma” reproduced a depiction of a “hellish” otherworldly setting that was both surreal / fantastic, and was consistent between them and them alone, meant that these poems provided an ideal material for reflecting on the principle that apparent intersubjectivity was not universal, and as such could not be a foundation for affirming reality. Returning to the CJS postscript, one could see why, for Hanshan, faithful depictions of Lingnan by loyal subjects in “purgatory” could transform this setting into an ideal *bodhimaṇḍala* for gaining insight into the “intricacies of creation” from a Yogācāra or *cittamātra* perspective.

## VI. From Pseudo-enlightenment to Genuine Chan - Exile/ Frontier Poetry and the Enlightening Power of the “Hellish Nightmare”

We return, finally, to a core theme in this article – how did Hanshan compare the enlightening power of poetry that captures the “sweltering and impure” ambience of Leifeng with traditional monastic forms that depict “cool and pure” realms? Firstly, it should be noted that a tentative answer this can be found in the end of Hanshan’s MYS. Herein, Hanshan noted that he felt reluctant to show others those pre-exile poems that depicted the “pure realms”



(清淨界) that he had been to, because: “If we try to capture it [i.e., the “pure and cool” ambience of these realms] with words it would be like sky-flowers that dazzle the eyes: in the final analysis one could not avoid speaking about a dream from within a dream”.<sup>75)</sup> Put another way, pleasant or “pure” scenes beguile the observer as they increase the allure of *samsāra* qua our “dreamscape” realm (Dream Speech in the pejorative sense), while recording a “nightmare” (Hanshan’s Dream Speech) can be a powerful tool to shatter the allure of the “dream” and to end the perpetuation of its false epistemology.

Again we must ask - what Buddhist doctrines did Hanshan invoke to justify this position? In both the MYS and the CJS postscript, Hanshan claimed that revelations on Buddhist idealism derived as a result of his bitter experience of being exiled in Leifeng, and refined and confirmed by his subsequent studies on the *Lankāvatāra*, helped him realize that his former attainments - those cultivated in the “cool and pure” realms of his pre-exile existence - were but “light and shadows”. One passage which arguably explains the difference between Hanshan’s earlier, inferior understanding of Buddhism, and the “authentic” enlightenment he felt that he had gained after his exposure to the “hellish” and “nightmarish” scenes of Leifeng, is contained in a letter that Hanshan addressed an obscure monk called Guyu (古愚):

When performing contemplative meditation (*vipaśyanā*) one appears to be oblivious to the setting [or “object realm”] (*jing*, 境).<sup>76)</sup> But on encountering

75) 若以文字語言求之則譬目空華，終不免爲夢中說夢也，MYS, X73, no.1456.

76) As can be seen in many of the passages quoted in this article, Hanshan used *jing* interchangeably to denote both the object of an instance of sense perception and also the

an object (*ālambana*), one still discriminates (*vikalpayati*), and in this way the external world generates the [defiled] mind. If one obstinately states that “there is only the mind”, then in the end, one will be unable to obtain real proof [of this principle]. Even if one succeeds in becoming oblivious to the former setting, if one is attached to [the idea that] “there is only mind”, then one cannot become oblivious to the mind, which is to say, one is oblivious to perceived objects but not yet oblivious to the perceiving agency. Because of this, mind and setting [or “object realm”] are unable to merge. This is what is called a “cognitive obstruction” (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) [as opposed to an afflictive obstruction (*kleśāvaraṇa*)].<sup>77)</sup>

We have seen how poetry that records the experience of being exiled into a “hellish” locale can be a tool for revealing that phenomenal reality (the dreamscape) is merely a projection of consciousness (that is, the mind of the dreamer). However, for Hanshan, this understanding merely reflects the understanding of “consciousness only” (*vijñaptimātra*), which he likened to “mundane truth” (*saṃvṛti*). It did not convey the true understanding of “mind only” as it is articulated in the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and which he likened to “ultimate truth” (*paramārtha*).<sup>78)</sup> For Hanshan, the latter is only achieved when one understands

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external world, scene or setting more generally. In this sense *jīng* served as an important nexus between Hanshan’s ideas on poetry and his ideas on Buddhist idealism.

77) 若作觀時，似乎忘境，緣緣依然分別。逐境生心，如此捺硬說唯心，終是不得實證。縱是忘得前境，若執著唯心，則是不能忘心，乃忘所未忘能。故心境不得混融，是名智礙。 “Shi Guyu-zhuo chanren” 「示古愚拙禪人」 ([Dharma discourse] Given to the Chan Monk Guyu-zhuo), fascicle 6, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.498.

78) I noted this distinction previously in relation to the quote in which Hanshan compared “the ten thousand dharmas are only consciousness” qua a preliminary/preparatory understanding, and “The three realms are mind-only” as the ultimate doctrine and the

that just as “dreamed” objects are “false” because they are dependent on the “mind”, the dreaming mind is also “false” because it also exists (as the perceiving “dreamer”) dependent on the setting or object that it “dreams”. Or as stated in Hanshan’s friend Zeng Fengyi’s commentary on the *Laṅkāvatāra*, “There are no dharmas outside the mind and there is no mind outside of dharmas: the mind and the setting [or object] merge together, and they are equal with each other. [The intuitive realization of] this transforms the five consciousnesses [i.e. the consciousnesses pertaining to the five senses] into the all-encompassing wisdom (*kṛtyānusthānajñānam*).<sup>79)</sup>

Here we can see the idea that a bi-directional “merging” between subject and object - or the merging between mind and setting advanced in the CJS preface - may have marked for Hanshan the gateway to true enlightenment or Chan. As Hanshan stated explicitly: “one uses the point of realization to merge mind and setting. [Through this] one purifies and removes manifest karma [associated with perceptual objects] and the flow of consciousness [that defines the perceiving mind]; all delusions, sentiments and vexations coalesce with the unadulterated “true mind”. This is “enlightenment by intuitive verification”.<sup>80)</sup>

This explanation sheds light on the special connection between the achievement of “merging mind and setting”, and the “hellish/nightmarish”

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dharma gate of *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*.

79) (心外無法，法外無心。心境雙融，即相平等。此轉前五識為成所作智也)。fascicle 5, *Lengqie Zongtong*, X17, no.330, p.751.

80) 然後即以悟處融會心境，淨除現業流識；妄想情慮，皆鎔成一味真心。此證悟也 “Da Zheng Kunyan zhongcheng”. 「答鄭崑巖中丞」(Reply to Vice Censor-in-chief Zheng Kunyan), fascicle 2, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.469.

qualities of Leifeng. A pure and cool setting can aid the practitioner to understand that the setting is a product of the mind (i.e., remove the obstruction associated with the affirmation of the existence of manifest karma). However, for Hanshan, the reintroduction of the strongly evocative object (i.e., hellish nightmare) inevitably defiles the mind, and in so doing breaks down the façade of the mind's inherent purity, and its omnipotence as the architect of its reality. In other words, one realizes that what one formerly assumed to be the pure mind was not the true mind (i.e., Buddha nature) at all, but was merely a product of a "pure" setting (i.e., one removes the obstruction regarding the existence of the flow of consciousness). One may, as a result, see that the fake 'pure' mind one may have identified with self is as much dependent on its object as its object (i.e., the dreamscape) is dependent on the mind (i.e., the dreamer). At that moment, one will realise that the subjective "mind" and "scene" are at all times dependent upon each other – that they are bidirectionally "merged". At this stage one will be equipped to see beneath the surface of the mind, and leave the gate of "light and shadows". As a consequence, one will for the first time attain insight into the "true" mind that is the substratum of both subjective and objective reality.

When the merging between mind and scene is defined this way, it can be seen that the depiction of the experience of exile provides an excellent material for realising this attainment without – in the words of the CJS postscript – being consciously "cognizant" of it on an intellectual level (i.e., Chan). This can occur primarily because exile is a form of punishment by geographical displacement wherein the psychological effect of punishment (the mind) and the alteration of one's external setting are inextricably and intuitively linked. When one is exiled, the indignity of being banished (i.e., the mental state) would undoubtedly influence the exiled person's perception of the locale (that is, the

scene or setting) into which he is exiled. At the same time, the alien, sweltering nature of this locale (‘hellish’ external setting) would likely serve as a perpetual source of despair (mental state). In other words, the “anguish” of exile engenders the “defiled” scene, and the “hellish” scene in turn perpetually produces a “defiled” mind. By capturing this bi-directional “merging” of mind and setting, exile/frontier poems can be imbued with special spiritual power that poems that depict the “pure and cool” of secluded mountain settings cannot (i.e., the latter only reveals that the setting is dependent on the mind). Moreover, by making this hellish realm a *bodhimaṇḍala*, one attains a form of “true Chan” – a state of inner “cool” that can be maintained entirely independent of the setting one finds oneself in. As Hanshan stated in a letter in reply to Yang Yuanru:

It is hard to achieve cool detachment within a tumultuous [‘hot and chaotic’ (*reluan*, 熱亂)] scene. As the three realms are without peace, they are like a house on fire; all that pass through it are burned. To find a piece of cool land within raging flames – no one but a person with cool detachment can attain [this]. If one can, at the present moment, [attain] coolness within the space of a single thought, and suddenly see that the great realm is all ice, from this point on, one will not take the body, the mind or the world as a place of refuge.<sup>81)</sup>

81) 熱亂場中難當冷眼。以三界無安，猶如火宅，出入其中者，靡不為其燒爇。若從烈燄中覓得一片清涼地，非冷眼人不能得。苟能當下一念清涼，頓見大地皆冰，自不在身心世界中作歸宿也。“Da Yang Yuanru yuanrong”, fascicle 15, MYJ, X73, no.1456, p.571. Quoting the sutra, Hanshan also noted in his *Huayan Gangyao* 『華嚴綱要』(Essentials of the Avatamsaka) that when one truly attains the “mind of Bodhi” (i.e. the “Buddha mind” or “genuine mind”), “the fires of *samsāra* and all defilements cannot burn it; they cannot cause it to be hot” (菩提之心亦復如是，一切生死諸煩惱火不能燒然不能令熱). See

## VII. Afterword

From the above we can see that Hanshan's writings on poetry conveyed an approach to poetry-Chan that differs markedly from the eremitic values that were far more prevalent in Buddhist poetry, and that were, at least tacitly, often associated with Buddhist practice/enlightenment. What is most significant about these changes is not their novelty, but diametric contradictions with those more widely received Buddhist literary values, and the underlying doctrines that some literary figures associated with them. It could be argued, on this basis, that Hanshan's writings contributed to the shift in Buddhist values in that area. In looking beyond the ideal of eremiticism / reclusion and recognizing the intractable nature of worldly entanglements, setting aside the ideal of mental tranquility and facing a reality of agitated emotions, Hanshan's writings appear to mark a movement towards a Buddhist poetics compatible with the socially engaged and humanist tendencies that are a prominent feature of late imperial, and in particularly late Ming Buddhism.

However, intellectual milieu aside, the formation and transmission of Hanshan's radical, emancipatory poetics must also be viewed in terms of the specificities of their historical context – in particular, in the context of an era in which monks became increasingly exposed to political violence. This affected Hanshan at the same time that it affected a number of monks, including his friend Zibo Zhenke (紫柏真可, 1543-1603). Moreover, this phenomena continued after Hanshan's death both during and immediately subsequent to the violent

collapse of the Ming, and during this time some eminent monks who, like Hanshan, were victims of the pervasive political violence of this era, found themselves drawn to Hanshan’s poetics, or at least approaches to Buddhist poetics that resonated with Hanshan’s views. We may note, for instance, that the so-called Ming “loyalist” monk Juelang Daosheng (覺浪道盛, 1593-1659), who – not dissimilar to Hanshan – suffered imprisonment for sedition when he was middle age, valorized “fire” and the *li* hexagram, and affirmed the Confucian view that “poetry can express indignation” (*shi ke yi yuan*, 詩可以怨). His “Shi lun” (Discourse on Poetry, 詩論), which affirms this view, states “Master Han [i.e., Hanshan] said that Poetry and Chan are one; our school continues to transmit this pivotal idea”.<sup>82)</sup>

In the same vein, the eminent monk Jinshi Dangui (今釋澹歸, 1615-1680),<sup>83)</sup> a loyalist leader who later “escaped to Buddhism” (*taochan*, 逃禪), revered Hanshan (he played an integral role in printing and popularizing the latter’s writings),<sup>84)</sup> and similarly

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82) 憨公曰:詩禪一也;吾宗以之接機, fascicle 19, *Tianjie Juelang [Dao]sheng chanshi quanlu* 『天界覺浪盛禪師全錄』(Complete Records of Chan Master Juelang [Dao]sheng of the Tianjie [Monastery]), J34, no.B311, p. 701.

83) The most important sources for information on Dangui’s life are Wu Tianran’s (1991) *Dangui chanshi nianpu* 『澹歸禪師年譜』(Annals of Chan Master Dangui), and Dangui’s *Bianxing tang ji* 『徧行堂集』(Collection of the Hall of Pervasive Wonderings). An excellent analysis on Buddhist influences on Dangui’s literary thought can be found in Liao’s *Shichan*, 2010, pp.228-247.

84) Jinshi Dangui in his “Lu mengyou quanji xiaoji” 『錄夢遊全集小紀』(Short Memorial Note regarding the Recording of the *Dream Travels Complete Collection*) (MYJ, fascicle 1) discusses the role his order played in preserving, compiling, editing, and printing the MYJ, and states “the merit for circulating this book – how can it be measured? Because [of the enormity of its merit] we recorded it so that it may reach across more than one thousand *li* (是書流通功德, 豈可量耶? 因記之, 以博數千里外,

voiced the opinion that poems that express sincere emotions, including indignation, can have moral and religious value.<sup>85)</sup> His Haichuang (海幢) branch, moreover, was part of the Caodong monk Tianran Hanshi's (天然函是, 1608-1685) lineage, which produced what was arguably one of the largest assembly of poet-monks in Chinese history.<sup>86)</sup> There were not infrequent exchanges between this lineage and devotees of Hanshan,<sup>87)</sup> and it has even been intimated that the approach to poetry of Tianran's Haiyun (海雲) lineage was influenced by Hanshan. We may note that the late Ming scholar He Jialin (何佳林) expressed

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X73, 1456. Daosheng also states in this text: “Tong Jiong (通炯), pseudonym Ji'an (寄菴), is the chief disciple of the Venerable [i.e., Hanshan]. Today all the monks of Haichuang are his [dharma] descendants' (通炯號寄菴爲大師首座, 今海幢諸僧皆其諸孫也, X73, no.1456).

- 85) Dangui's dharma brother Yueshuo Jinbian (樂說今辯, 1637-1695), when explaining why Dangui's poetry was included in his recorded saying collection (*Danxia Dangui-shi chanshi yulu* 『丹霞澹歸禪師語錄』) (The Recorded Sayings of [Mount] Danxia's Chan Master Dangui [Jin]shi), stated: “What is likeable he likes: what is detestable he detests, what is sorrowful he laments, what is pleasant he enjoys: he does not have different sentiments from the people, he is not of the same utility as the people” (喜而喜之, 怒而怒之, 哀而哀之, 樂而樂之, 不與人異情, 不與人同用), in *Bianxing tang ji* (I), p.8. As with Daosheng's “Shi lun”, Dangui, in his “Zheng Suju shi xu” 『鄭素居詩序』 (Preface to the Poems of Zheng Suju), affirmed the legitimacy and spiritual power of using poetry to express “indignation” – see *Bianxing tang ji* (I), 2008, pp.172-173.
- 86) See Tan Zhaowen's *Lingnan chan wenhua* 『嶺南禪文化』, Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1996, p.141 – see also p.34.
- 87) An important intermediary between the two lineages was the loyalist Qian Qianyi (錢謙益, 1582-1664), who was said to have “taken it upon himself to carry out the unfinished work of Hanshan and Zibo [Zhengke] (紫柏正可)”. See Lian Ruizhi “Qian Qianyi de fojiao shengya yu linian” 『錢謙益的佛教生涯與理念』 (*Zhonghua foxue xuebao* 『中華佛學學報』 7, *Zhonghua Foxue yanjiusuo* 中華佛學研究所, 1994, p.318; pp.322-324). Summary accounts of the interactions between Qian Qianyi and Jinshi Dangui, Tianran, his teacher Zongbao Daodu (宗寶道獨, 1600-1661) can also be found in “Qian Qianyi de fojiao shengya”, 1994, pp.318, 338-240, 362, 365, 367).



the following in his *Lianxi shi cun xu* 『蓮西詩存』 (Preface to the *Lianxi Poetry Anthology*), a collection published in 1893 by the late Qing monk Baofa (寶筏):

After Tianran preached the dharma in Lingnan, the *Haiyun Chan Literature* anthology – which selected the collected writings of more than 120 authors of the ilk of Azi – greatly opened up the teachings of the orthodox doctrine. In general, its genre of poetry is works that reflect poignantly on their times and narrate events; like the school of Hanshan, they all emanate from sincerity of character. For this reason it has lasted a long time and is widely available. Over the past hundred years and more, the compositions of the elders [Jindan] Chenyi, Shidong [Lihuan] and Jishan [Chengjiu] have been as numerous as the trees in a forest... – these all take Haiyun as their ancestral lineage and Haichuang as their school; we can trace their source back to this [school].<sup>88)</sup>

The above passage proposes a Lingnan or southern “lineage” of monastic poetry that was characterised by “sincerity of character” and by “reflecting poignantly on the times and narrating events”, that possibly stemmed from the approach to poetry of Hanshan. Little evidence is contained in this passage to

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88) 自天然之聞[開]法嶺南，所采阿字輩一百二十餘人之集編而為《海雲禪藻》，大啟宗風。其詩類多感時述事，亦如憨山之一派皆出乎性情之正，所以歷久而彌彰。百餘年來，塵異，石洞，跡跚諸宿著作如林…悉以海雲為宗，海幢為派，由源溯流焉。For the original passage, see the Qing dynasty monk Baofa's *Lianxi shicun* 『蓮西詩存』 (In *Beijing Shifan daxue tushuguan cang xijian Qingren bieji congkan* 『北京師範大學圖書館藏稀見清人別集叢刊』, Vol. 30, Guilin: Guangxi shifandaxue chubanshe, Rpt. 2007, p.365).

affirm the validity of this claim. However, it points to the potential that new approach to poetry of Hanshan may have had, at some level, a broader and still unexplored influence in southern Chinese Buddhist monasteries.

In view of the above, I would assert that Hanshan's innovations are far too intellectually substantial, and possibly too influential, to be dismissed as a trivial novelty, and relegated to a mere footnote in the intellectual history of Chinese Buddhism's engagement with poetry. Conversely, I hope that this study of Hanshan's ostensibly radical ideas could prompt scholars to adopt more flexible approaches to Buddhist intellectual history in order to challenge the narrow purview of contemporary studies on this relationship, and invigorate a radical reassessment of the nature and purview of poetry-Chan, qua a method of religious practice, in – at least - the late imperial period. In line with the spirit of Liao Zhaoheng's ground-breaking explorations on late imperial monastic "cultural discourses",<sup>89)</sup> it may even inspire modern scholars to unearth and understand hitherto unappreciated models of "poetry-Chan" that reflected the shift in late imperial-era Buddhism to an increasingly syncretic, socially engaged Buddhism.

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89) (2008).

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### Abbreviations

- MYJ = Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清), *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 『憨山老人夢遊集』 [The Dream Travels Collection of the Venerable Hanshan] (X73, 1456).
- CJS = Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清), *Congjun shi* 『從軍詩』 [Poems on Serving in the Army], fascicle 47, MJY (X73, 1456).
- GLJ = Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清), *Guan Lengqie jing ji* 『觀楞伽經記』 [Contemplations on the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra] (X17, 326).
- MYS = Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清), “*Mengyou shiji zixu*” 『夢遊詩集自序』 [Author’s Preface to the *Dream Travels Poetry Collection*], fascicle 47, MJY (X73, 1456).

*Jiaxing Tripiṭaka* 嘉興大藏經 = J.

*Shinsan Zokuzōkyō* 己新纂大日本續藏經 = X.

*Taishō Tripiṭaka* 大正新脩大藏經 = T.

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## Abstract

### ‘청정(淸淨)’부터 ‘열뇌(熱惱)’까지 - 감산덕청(愍山德淸)의 이색적 불교 시학\*\*

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A distinctive feature of Chinese Buddhist literary theory was the development of the idea that non-Buddhist poetry can have religious value. This is commonly associated with the idea that the ‘pure and cool’ (淸淨) scenes of some landscape/reclusive poems celebrated Buddhist eremitic ideals, and could even reflect the inner ‘coolness and purity’ of the enlightened author. However, especially in the late imperial period, less widely celebrated ways of understanding the Buddhist value of secular poems were proposed by monastic writers. Of these, the rubric advanced by the eminent late Ming

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cleric Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清) is particularly marked on account of its stark contrast with more established conventions – he proposed that poems which depicted agitated emotions prompted by ‘steamy’ and defiled scenes were ideal resources for enlightening Buddhist disciples. These ideas emerged after Hanshan was exiled to Lingnan (Guangdong), and were attributed to religious insights he developed as a result of this bitter experience – in particular, revelations in relation to the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. These ideas arguably exerted some influence on monastic writers – especially those who were similarly exposed to political violence as a result of the collapse of the Ming dynasty.

Aiming foremost to contribute to a greater awareness of the diversity and sophistication of monastic discourses on the religious utility of poetry, this article discusses the formation and constitution, and tentatively explores the influence of, the post-exile writings on poetry-Chan of Hanshan Deqing. Its methodology is somewhat unconventional in that, in line with the approach to Hanshan’s thought of Sung-peng Hsu, it seeks to uncover both the doctrinal and experiential influences that shaped Hanshan’s unique approach to poetry-Chan. It begins by briefly discussing conventional ideas on the religious value of poetically depicting ‘pure and cool’ settings. It then discusses how, subsequent to Hanshan’s exile to the tropics of southern Lingnan, he began to affirm the religious utility of poems which depict steamy, “hellish” settings, and analyzes how this transformation was related to Hanshan’s post-exile revelations regarding the *Laṅkāvatāra*. It explores, in particular, how the notions of “hell”, “dreamlike-ness” and “dream-speech” were drawn upon to construct new, Mind-only school-inspired theories on how genres such as frontier/exile poetry can be radically identified with Chan. The last section briefly explores the influence of Hanshan’s unorthodox emancipatory poetics

in Qing dynasty southern Chinese monastic orders, and encourages further studies aimed at challenging the relatively narrow purview of conventional approaches to poetry-Chan.

**Key-words**

Hanshan Deqing, Chinese Buddhist poetics, poetry-Chan, late Ming Buddhism, *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Mind-only school.

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