1

Monastic Innovator, Iconoclast, and Teacher of Doctrine: The Varied Images of Chan Master Baizhang

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Over the centuries, diverse Chan or Zen traditions throughout East Asia have venerated Baizhang Huaihai (749–814) as one of the greatest Chan teachers of the Tang era (618–907). Baizhang (known in Japanese as Hyakujō Ekai) is widely recognized as the leading disciple of the renowned Mazu Daoyi (709–788), the "founder" of the Hongzhou school that came to dominate the Chan movement during the mid-Tang period. Because of his broad renown and perceived historical importance, Baizhang's name and religious persona are often featured in various Chan texts and other pertinent sources, most of them composed from the early Song period (960–1279) onward. Baizhang's high standing in the pantheon of Chan worthies is primarily based on broad appreciation of his putative roles as the originator of Chan monasticism and key exemplar of an iconoclastic ethos celebrated in traditional Chan lore. Even today, he is still widely evoked as a source of religious authority or inspiration, and he remains one of the most recognized Chan teachers of all time.

As subsequent generations of Chan/Zen writers and adherents formulated and wrote down their visions of Chan orthodoxy, they imputed aspects of their ideological agendas and religious sentiments back to Baizhang and other Chan teachers from the same era. In so doing, they refashioned Baizhang's image in light of changing religious, institutional, and historical circumstances. Although some

elements of that hagiographic transformation were unique to Baizhang, on the whole they closely mirrored the ways in which communal remembrances of the great monks from the Tang period were repackaged as part of an ongoing rewriting of Chan history. Accordingly, critical examination of the hagiographic transformations of leading Chan teachers, such as Mazu and Baizhang, provides us with valuable insights about the Chan school's larger historical trajectories and ideological repositionings. That includes improved appreciation and understanding of the socioreligious predicaments and cultural constraints that shaped the growth and diffusion of Chan beyond the Tang era—in China, Japan, and elsewhere.

This chapter is a study of those kinds of changing perceptions and shifting images, in addition to being a source of information about the historical person that is behind those images. I focus on three key hagiographic transmutations of Baizhang's religious persona: paradigmatic Chan iconoclast, patron saint of Chan monasticism, and sophisticated teacher of Chan doctrine and contemplative practice. The chapter includes five main sections. I start with a biographical summary of the life of Baizhang, which includes a survey of his early life as a scion of one of the most powerful clans of Tang China, early study of Buddhism and training under Mazu, subsequent creation of a monastic community at Baizhang mountain, and training of disciples during the last two decades of his life. The second section explores the general ways in which the Chan tradition remembered or reconstituted its past, in large part by creating and revising hagiographic narratives about Chan teachers such as Baizhang. The next three sections each takes separately one of the aforementioned hagiographic transformations of Baizhang. These evolving representations of Baizhang's religious persona, I argue in the conclusion, mirror the multifaceted and far-reaching changes that marked the Chan school's historical trajectory as a major tradition of East Asian Buddhism.

Baizhang's Life

Baizhang was born into a privileged background in 749, toward the end of the glorious reign of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756).[1] He was a scion of the prominent Wang clan of Taiyuan (now the capital of Shanxi province), although at the time his family resided in Fuzhou (now the capital of Fujian province).[2] His clan had a long and illustrious history, and was among the most prestigious aristocratic clans in the Tang empire. Although we do not have detailed information about Baizhang's childhood, it is safe to assume that he received at least some classical education, as was common for sons of families of that social

standing. He was still in his teens when he entered monastic life as a novice (*chujia*, literally, "leave home"). At that time he was given the monastic name Huaihai (Embracing the Sea). His tonsure master was a little-known monk called Huizhao, who originally hailed from Guangdong province in the south of China. Another famous disciple of the same monk was Yaoshan Weiyan (745–828), who later also became a student of Mazu and a leading Chan teacher of his era.[3]

Baizhang received the full monastic precepts in 767 from a Vinaya teacher called Fazhao. His ordination as a full-fledged monk (Skt. *bhiksu;* C. *biqiu*) took place at a monastery in Nanyue (literally, "The Southern Peak"), the famous mountain in Hunan that was the location of many Buddhist and Daoist monasteries. Also known as Hengshan, the mountain was also a popular site of pilgrimage and was one of the Five Sacred Peaks of China, a grouping of religiously important mountains that were especially associated with Daoism. After his ordination, Baizhang traveled northeast and settled in what is now Anhui province. There he dedicated himself to scriptural reading and doctrinal study. After doing that for two or three years, around 770 he traveled to southern Jiangxi. There he met Mazu for the first time at Gonggong Mountain, where Mazu had already been residing for well over a decade. At that point, the young Baizhang joined the growing monastic community as a disciple of Mazu.[4]

Soon after Baizhang's arrival at Gonggong Mountain, Mazu was invited by the provincial governor to move to Hongzhou, the capital of Jiangxi (present-day Nanchang). Baizhang and other disciples followed Mazu to his new position as the abbot of Kaiyuan Monastery in Hongzhou. Mazu's new monastery was an official monastic establishment, part of a network of monasteries with the same name that was established by Emperor Xuanzong and was supported by the imperial government. Baizhang remained at Kaiyuan Monastery until Mazu's death in 788, by which time Mazu had become arguably the best known and most influential Chan teacher in China.

Mazu had many disciples, more than any other Chan teacher of the Tang era. His disciples came from virtually all parts of China, and after their study with him many of them went on to establish new monastic congregations all over the sprawling Tang empire.[5] At the time of Mazu's death, Baizhang did not particularly distinguish himself, nor did he stand out among the most senior and prominent disciples. His relatively modest standing among Mazu's surviving disciples at that point is acknowledged in his stupa inscription. While the inscription is full of praise about Baizhang's virtue and wisdom, it also offers a rather lame excuse for the omission of Baizhang's name from the list of prominent disciples that was included at the end of the prose section of Mazu's stele

inscription. The reason for the omission, we are told, was that Baizhang was very humble and completely unconcerned about fame or status:

> Baizhang's words were succinct and his reasoning was insightful. His physical appearance was affable and his spirit was lofty. He was respectful to all those he encountered and he slighted himself wherever he stayed. Being virtuous, he did not seek any renown. Therefore, in the stele inscription of his late teacher Mazu, only his name did not appear in the list of main disciples.[6]

Initially Baizhang's elder dharma brother Xitang Zhizang (735–817), who was among Mazu's most senior and respected disciples, took the leadership of the remaining monastic community in Hongzhou.[7] Baizhang then moved to Letan monastery at Shimen (Stone Gate) Mountain (also situated in Hongzhou prefecture), which was Mazu's resting place and the site of his memorial pagoda. From there he later moved to Baizhang (Hundred Zhang) Mountain, at the invitation of local patrons.[8] Also known as Daxiong (Great Hero or Greatly Imposing) Mountain, Baizhang Mountain was located in the vicinity of Shimen. At the time, that was a fairly isolated area, and Baizhang was the first monk associated with the Chan school to establish a monastery there.

During the final two decades of his life, Baizhang remained at the mountain. There he trained numerous disciples, although not nearly as many as his teacher Mazu. Some of his disciples became prominent Chan teachers and established their own monastic congregations. Among them, by far the best known are Guishan Lingyou (771–853) and Huangbo Xiyun (d. 850?), both of whom were widely recognized by the later tradition as being the leading Chan teachers of their generation. After Baizhang's death, the abbotship of the monastery on Baizhang Mountain was passed on to one of his senior disciples, and for a long time it remained a major center of Chan practice. Seven years after Baizhang's passing away, in 821, the Tang imperial government granted him the posthumous appellation of "Chan teacher of great wisdom" (Dazhi chanshi). Subsequently Baizhang came to be recognized as the foremost disciple of Mazu, although Chan sources from the post-Tang period usually list him and Xitang together as Mazu's two main disciples, with Nanquan Puyuan (748–834) also joining the exclusive list at a later stage, to form a troika of chief disciples.[9]

Along with his fame as the patron saint of Chan monasticism (see below), Baizhang's prominent standing within the later Chan tradition was to a large extent based on his inclusion (along with Huangbo) in the direct ancestral line of transmission that linked Linji Yixuan (d. 866), the "founder" of the Linji school of Chan (known as Rinzai in Japanese), with Mazu. That established the

notion of an "orthodox" line of transmission, with the names of four dominant Chan teachers from the Tang era at its core:

> Mazu → Baizhang → Huangbo → Linji → all later Chan masters in the Linji/Rinzai line of transmission

During the Song era, the Linji school became the most influential Chan faction and the main line of transmission. It was also transmitted to Korea and Japan, where it assumed dominant positions. These developments further buttressed Baizhang's position as a prominent Chan figure, whose image and persona are indelibly linked with the (real and imagined) glories of the Tang era. Over the centuries Baizhang remained a permanent fixture in traditional Chan lore, and to this day his name is frequently evoked in diverse Chan or Zen circles.

Hagiography in Three (or More) Keys

Remembering, recording, and reconfiguring of the past were all essential elements in the broad historical processes by way of which the Chan school fashioned its identity as a distinct tradition within Chinese Buddhism. That was especially the case during the Tang-Song transition, but it is also applicable to subsequent periods in Chan history. At different historical junctures, Chan writers and adherents created new or revised quasi-historical narratives by selectively remembering or reimagining their tradition's past. Often that was undertaken in response to specific institutional developments or changing socioreligious predicaments. This process was influenced by established traditions of Buddhist historiography, which played important roles in the demarcation of orthodoxy and the shaping of religious identities in medieval (and later) Chinese Buddhism. Within that context, the positioning of Chan "history" as the central narrative within a broader chronicling of the Buddhist past was as concerned with legitimizing the present and reshaping the future of the Chan school as it was with the compiling of factually accurate accounts of bygone events.

Communal remembrances or ingenious reinventions of the past have traditionally played important roles in the construction of religious identities across a broad spectrum of religious traditions—past and present, in China and elsewhere. Although these processes are not unique to the Chan school, in general they have played an especially important role in its historical growth and transformation, and have often taken forms that are unique to it. Accordingly, a useful way of understanding the Chan school and situating it within a

broad historical framework is to look at it as a community of memory, in which the past and the present are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Throughout the whole sweep of Chan history, an enduring feature that underscored virtually all of its beliefs, ideological suppositions, ritual observances, and spiritual practices was the perpetual looking backward in time, with a focus on the lives of paradigmatic figures such as Baizhang and on seminal events in which they were allegedly involved.

The tendency to look back toward the past became especially predominant during the early Song period—although elements of it were already present in the Tang era—and remained a major factor from that point onward. That was reflected in the continuous invocation or allusion to the Buddha's awakening, which was domesticated and integrated into the Chan school's myth of origins. With an adroit, mythologizing sleight of hand, Chan writers and historians brought into China the central event and high point of Buddhist spirituality—symbolized by the image of Buddha sitting under the *bodhi* tree in India—via a putative lineage of patriarchs that featured seminal figures such as Bodhidharma (fl. late fourth and early fifth centuries), who was widely celebrated as the first Chan patriarch in China.[10] The focal point of the historical gaze, however, were the great glories of Tang Chan, chiefly represented by the words and deeds of such luminaries as Huineng (638–713), the celebrated "sixth patriarch," Mazu, and Baizhang. During the early Song era, when the Chan movement as a whole was reconfigured and repositioned as the main tradition of elite Buddhism in the newly reunified empire, this propensity was expressed in the form of an ongoing dialogue—or rather a monologue—with the past, as evident in the important Chan chronicles and other records compiled during that period. Within that context, the past was interpreted in light of cumulative traditions, but also in terms of current concerns and exigencies.

When looking at the Chan school as a community of memory, we can readily appreciate the inherently conservative tendencies that usually lurk behind its habitually lofty rhetoric and iconoclastic posture. As we carefully examine the provenance, character, and function of traditional historical narratives, we begin to see how the larger historical trajectories of Chan Buddhism can be construed as a series of creative interpretative distortions, which were both expressions of religious piety and tools of ideological dominance. The main medium for such creative remembrance and reconstitution of the past were the monastic hagiographies of great Chan teachers such as Baizhang, which from the mid-tenth century onward increasingly came to feature quaint stories—some perhaps real, but for the most part invented—about their dramatic acts and inscrutable statements.

Hagiographic elements are copiously included in a broad range of texts composed in the various Chan genres and in other sources used for the study of Tang (and Song) Chan. Hagiographic modes of narration are especially central in the Chan records of sayings (*yulu*) and the transmission of the lamp (*chuandeng*) histories, which contain a wealth of information about Chan history and doctrine, albeit often of an uncertain provenance.[11] They also perform important functions in the various *gong'an* (or *kōan* in Japanese) collections, such as *Biyan lu* (Blue Cliff Record) and *Wumen guan* (Gateless Pass). The Chan monastic codes (*qinggui*, literally, "rules of purity") represent the only major Chan genre that does not prominently incorporate hagiographic components, although in the case of Baizhang his hagiography is a major part of most texts associated with this genre.[12] Hagiographic retellings of the monastic lives of noted Chan teachers are also central to other important textual sources, such as the stele inscriptions (*beiming*) composed for individual monks and the collections of biographies of eminent monks (*gaoseng zhuan*), which by the Song era came to be dominated by the hagiographies of Chan teachers, as evident in Zanning's (919–1001) influential *Song gaoseng zhuan* (Biographies of Eminent Monks from the Song Era), composed in 988.[13] Hagiographic pieces also appear in various local gazetteers (*difangzhi*), especially those that cover areas where major monasteries led by Chan monks were situated.

When we look at the various texts that provide information about Baizhang's life and his teachings, we can uncover several layers of materials that present different images of him. Although it is possible that a medieval monk such as Baizhang could have had a complex and multifaceted personality, a closer examination of the texts where these contrasting images appear reveals that they were composed at different times, and in response to different needs and circumstances. Therefore, these assorted modulations or revisions of Baizhang's religious persona convey distinct images of him as a major historical actor that left notable imprints on Chan history. As was suggested in the introduction to this chapter, my analysis of the extant literature ascertained several textual strata and distinct narrative modes. These can be organized into distinctive images or modes of representation of Baizhang, each with its own provenance. Consequently, we are faced with divergent hagiographic portrayals of Baizhang's life and his role as a Chan teacher, presented in three distinctive keys: Chan iconoclast in the classical mold; patron saint of Chan monasticism; and learned teacher of doctrine and contemplative practice. At times, two or even all three of them are mixed together into a single text—for instance, in Baizhang's biography in *Jingde chuandeng lu* (Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Lamp) published in 1004—which points to the origins of such texts as compilations that drew on a variety of sources.[14]

The depictions of Baizhang as a paradigmatic Chan iconoclast are primarily found in the kind of popular stories that form the central element of traditional Chan lore. This mode of representation is not unique to Baizhang, as it was applied to virtually all prominent Chan teachers from the second half of the Tang era, starting with Mazu, as well as to their spiritual descendants who lived during the Five Dynasties era (907–960). In contrast, the traditional image of Baizhang as the creator of a unique pattern of monastic life and patron saint of Chan monasticism is unique to him, although the legend in which it is imbedded played important functions in later Chan history that transcended the singular significance of Baizhang as a historical individual. Finally, the divergent image of Baizhang as a sophisticated teacher of doctrine, who is at ease with both the philosophical and contemplative aspects of Buddhism, is based on the earliest strata of sources about his teachings.[15] Although this representation of Baizhang has been largely ignored within Chan and Zen circles over the centuries—and still continues to be largely unknown and unacknowledged at the present—in my recent study of the Hongzhou school I showed that it was not unique to Baizhang, but was representative of the lives and teachings of other noted Chan teachers from the same period, especially those affiliated with the Hongzhou school.

If we were to look beyond Baizhang's hagiographic representations, there are a few further interpretive possibilities. The records of his teacher Mazu and other Tang monks suggest additional ways in which Chan masters were remembered or envisaged, for instance as thaumaturges, poets, or popular religious figures. A case in point is the depiction of Mazu as a thaumaturge, albeit of a peculiar Chan type, presented in his biographies in *Song gaoseng zhuan* (Song Biographies of Eminent Monks) and *Zutang ji* (Hall of the Patriarchs Collection). In one of these stories he is depicted as a tamer of malevolent demons that dwelled on Gonggong Mountain and terrorized the local populace at the time of his arrival in the area.[16] In another story, he saves the learned but arrogant and spiritual undeveloped abbot of Da'an monastery in Hongzhou from the demon of death.[17] Furthermore, the image of an exemplary Chan poet is amply represented in the records about the life of Mazu's disciple Pang Yun (d. 808), who came to be celebrated not only for his poetic achievements but also for his role as a paradigmatic Chan layman.[18]

Paradigmatic Iconoclast

The most common and best-known cluster of imagery associated with the orthodox or classical Chan tradition, especially in the style that purportedly

flourished during the Tang era, revolves around dramatic portrayals of Chan teachers' iconoclastic acts and outlandish statements. In their standard variety, these representations of notable Chan monks from the Tang period come to us in the form of numerous short stories and vignettes. These kinds of accounts, which inhabit unstable or alterable intersections of legend and history, constitute a literary format that contemporary scholarship often refers to as "encounter dialogue" (*jiyuan wenda* or *kien mondō* in Japanese). These stories are prominently featured in a wide range of classical Chan texts, especially the various *gong'an* collections, transmission of the lamp histories, and records of sayings. The main heroes of the encounter dialogue anecdotes are Chan teachers such as Mazu and Baizhang, who typically are depicted as incorrigible iconoclasts bent on subverting conventional mores and rejecting established religious traditions. The Chan teachers featured in these stories dispense their wisdom in an array of peculiar or unconventional ways, which include shouts and beatings that are meted out to their eager disciples.

The encounter dialogue stories embody a unique iconoclastic ethos that by the early Song period came to be portrayed as a central element of Chan spirituality. In the course of the subsequent historical growth and transformation of Chan teachings and institutions across East Asia, such depictions of Chan iconoclasm were canonized and refracted via the interpretative prisms of later Chan/Zen traditions in China, Japan, and elsewhere. The popular images of Chan iconoclasts found especially receptive audiences in the West, ever since they were first introduced by D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) during the early twentieth century as a crucial component in his repackaging of Zen for Westerners. They became accepted as emblematic expressions of a timeless and unique form of Chan spirituality among Western audiences that were largely unfamiliar with the historical forms or expressions of Chan institutions, beliefs, and practices. For a variety of reasons, such representations resonated with the intellectual or religious sensibilities of Zen practitioners and aficionados, and they remained with us even as Zen became an integral part of popular culture, along with being a viable topic of intellectual enquiry or artistic expression.

As is the case with other prominent Chan monks from the Tang era, classical Chan texts often present Baizhang as an embodiment of the aforementioned iconoclastic ethos. In classical Chan literature there are a number of encounter dialogue stories that feature him either as the main protagonist or in a supportive role. These stories span his whole life, from the first childhood visit to a local Buddhist temple to his final days as an abbot of a sizable monastic congregation and an influential Chan teacher. Here is one well-known example from his early years, which purports to depict his formative training under Mazu's tutelage:

> One day as the Baizhang accompanied Mazu for a walk, they heard a cry of wild duck. Mazu asked, "What kind of sound is that?"
>
> Baizhang replied, "It is a cry of wild duck."
>
> After a while, Mazu asked, "Where is the sound gone?"
>
> Baizhang said, "It has flown away."
>
> Mazu turned his head, grabbed Baizhang's nose, and pulled it out. Baizhang cried out with pain. Mazu then said, "And yet, you said it has flown away." On hearing that, Baizhang had an insight.[19]

This story contains most of the main elements of the encounter dialogue format. Here we have a Chan teacher and his student engaged in a spirited exchange that incorporates enigmatic statements and dramatic acts, including certain amount of symbolic and physical violence. In a familiar Chan fashion, the story ends with the student's insight into the profound truth that was supposedly communicated by the teacher's unconventional pedagogical technique (if it can be called that).[20] Some Chan texts also include a couple of follow-ups to this exchange between Mazu and Baizhang, which adhere to a similar pattern. The related exchanges are filled with conventional tropes and incorporate dramatic elements often encountered in stories of this kind. In one of them we find Baizhang both crying and laughing at the monks' residence in the company of a fellow monk. That is followed by another seemingly bizarre incident that features Baizhang rolling up his bowing mat in front of Mazu, which in a later version of the story elicits a shout from Mazu.[21]

There are variations among the different extant versions of these exchanges, which is quite common among encounter dialogues of this kind. Generally speaking, later versions of the stories tend to be more elaborate and to include a greater number of illogical or iconoclastic elements.[22] Here is an example of another well-known story that once again features Mazu and Baizhang:

> When Baizhang went to see Mazu again, Mazu took his whisk and held it upright. Baizhang said, "It is that function; it leaves that function." Mazu put the whisk back at its old place.
>
> After a while, Mazu asked, "Later, when you open your mouth, what are you going to tell other people?" Baizhang took the whisk and held it upright.
>
> Mazu said, "It is that function; it leaves that function." Baizhang put the whisk back at its old place.
>
> Mazu gave a shout, which made Baizhang temporarily deaf for three days.[23]

In other stories we come upon Baizhang as a mature Chan teacher who interacts with his own disciples. Below I present a couple of such examples. The first case comes in the form of a dialogue between Baizhang and his disciple Guishan, who became one of the most prominent Chan teachers of the late Tang era. Subsequently, Guishan also came to be known as the "cofounder" of the Guiyang school of Chan.[24] That was the earliest of the so-called Five Schools of Chan, which during the Song era were recognized as the core orthodox lines of transmission:

> Once when Baizhang and Guishan were engaged in manual labor, Baizhang asked, "Do you have any fire?"
>
> "I have," replied Guishan.
>
> Baizhang then asked, "Where is it?"
>
> Guishan took a branch of brushwood, blew into it, and then gave it to Baizhang.
>
> After receiving it, Baizhang said, "This is like an insect gnawing on wood."[25]

The second illustration is an oft-quoted exchange between Baizhang and an anonymous monk that is meant to convey Baizhang's fondness for Daxiong Mountain, where his monastery was located. This time the story does not conclude with the student's spiritual awakening, but at the end we witness the by now familiar act of beating:

> A monk asked Baizhang, "What is the most special thing?"
>
> "Sitting alone on Daxiong Mountain," replied Baizhang. The monk bowed, and Baizhang then hit him.[26]

During the Song era, stories like these were subjected to extensive elaboration and exegesis, prime examples of which are preserved in the influential *gong'an* collections, perhaps best represented by *Biyan lu*. This widely used text was compiled by Yuanwu Keqin (1063–1135) on the basis of an earlier collection composed by Xuedou Zhongxian (980–1052). Xuedou's original text featured a hundred well-known "cases," which were primarily exchanges between noted Chan teachers (mostly from the Tang era) and their disciples, composed in the encounter dialogue format. To these he attached his poems, which were supposed to serve as running commentaries of sorts on the original cases. Yuanwu introduced additional layers of literary complexity by adding commentaries on both the original cases and Xuedou's poems, along with interlinear glosses and introductory pointers. The end result of these literary endeavors was an

intricate and multilayered work, written in an ornate language and replete with oblique allusions and obscure metaphors.

The utilization of such elaborate style and involved structure by Yuanwu (and by other authors of similar collections) was to a large extent aimed at meeting the literary tastes, cultural sensibilities, and horizons of expectation of the Song literati, who were major patrons of Chan monasteries. In the process, the historical personage of earlier Chan teachers like Baizhang receded into the background, becoming approachable only via thick layers of meandering poetic and prose commentary or interpretation. This kind of exegesis often seems to have a tenuous connection even with the (mostly) apocryphal contents of the original stories, let alone with the actual lives and teachings of the historical figures that are featured in them. To illustrate that, let us look at what happens with the aforementioned image of Baizhang sitting alone on Daxiong Mountain when it is appropriated and integrated into a text such as *Biyan lu*. In this short passage extracted from case twenty-six in *Biyan lu*, we have Xuedou's commentary in the form of a four-line verse, along with Yuanwu's interlinear glosses (set in parenthesis), which are supposed to be explaining the original exchange between Baizhang and the anonymous monk who asked him about the most special thing:

> In the ream of the patriarchs gallops a heavenly colt. (Such a person is born only once in every five hundred years. Among a thousand or ten thousand individuals, there is but one or a half. The son [Baizhang] takes on the work of the father [Mazu].)
>
> Among the expedient teachings, rolling out and rolling up are not the same paths. (It is already so before any words have been uttered. Baizhang gains freedom, which is a matter of his adepts' methods.)
>
> In a flash of lightening or a spark coming from stone, he retains the ability to change in accord with circumstances. (He came head-on, turning to the left, turning to the right. Do you still see if Baizhang is helping people or not?)
>
> How laughable: a person comes to grab the whiskers of a tiger! (He deserves thirty blows. Where there is a great reward, there must be a valiant person. He does not shy away from losing his body and his life. I leave this move to you, venerable sir.)[27]

The earliest examples of Chan stories composed in the encounter dialogues format can be traced back to the middle of the tenth century, as we can see from their inclusion in *Zutang ji*, composed in 952 in the kingdom of Min (909–945), located in southeastern China (corresponding to present-day Fujian province). In Baizhang's case, that is about a century and a half after his death. The

earlier sources about his life and teachings, including his stupa inscription, do not contain any stories of this kind. As I have shown in a previous publication, none of the encounter dialogue stories or exchanges, neither those that feature Baizhang nor any other Chan monk, can be traced back to the Tang period.[28] From what we know, the encounter dialogue format was not even known during the Tang dynasty. Consequently, it is erroneous to assume that it was a major mode of instruction or communication used in Chan circles, which until recently was the operative assumption in both popular and scholarly writings on Chan history and literature.

The initial emergence of the encounter dialogue model as the quintessence of an iconoclastic ethos that was unique to the Chan school occurred during the Five Dynasties–Song transition. Popular stories that feature the outlandish acts or inscrutable ramblings of Baizhang and other noted Chan teachers from the Tang era became key elements of traditional Chan lore only during the Song period. Subsequently they remained focal points in an ongoing process of reimagining or reconfiguring Tang Chan, within (and also beyond) the various Chan/Zen milieus that grew and thrived across East Asia. The stories about Baizhang recounted above—and all other similar stories—thus need to be read as apocryphal or legendary narratives, in the sense of being reflections of Song-era efforts at creating a new image of Baizhang that fit into a particular religious prototype, which was communicated via a predetermined and formulaic mode of narration.

The fashioning of that iconoclastic image was linked to the growth of a nascent Chan orthodoxy that became dominant during the Song era, which had its own institutional concerns and ideological suppositions. Accordingly, the stories recounted above need to be placed within the relevant historical context, and interpreted in relation to the traditions that produced and disseminated them. At its core, the fashioning of the iconoclastic image of Baizhang presented here involved a creative hagiographic process, which conveyed novel religious ideals and reflected a far-reaching reformulation of Chan orthodoxy. An important part of that change was the legitimization of Song Chan by retroactive attribution of assorted religious ideals and images back to Baizhang and other great Chan teachers from the Tang era.

Patron Saint of Chan Monasticism

One of the best-known sayings associated with Baizhang is the dictum "a day without work is a day without food." This oft-cited statement is said to succinctly convey the Chan school's embrace of manual labor as an essential part

of its monastic paradigm, as well as an integral aspect of its comprehensive program of spiritual cultivation. In the institutional arena, the egalitarian ideal conveyed by Baizhang's dictum is linked with the Chan school's presumed spirit of economic self-sufficiency, which is often taken to be a cornerstone of its unique style of monastic life. The context in which Baizhang purportedly came up with the "a day without work is a day without food" dictum is told in a story that dates back to the Song era. Set at the monastic community on Baizhang Mountain, the story describes how the elderly Baizhang refused to eat when his disciples tried to prevent him from unduly exerting himself in the fields, as was his habit, by hiding his work tools:

> Baizhang toiled hard whenever he was engaged in [manual] labor, always going ahead of the monastic congregation. All the monks could not endure that, so they secretly took away his tools and asked him to take rest. Baizhang said, "I am a person without any virtue. How can I cause trouble for others?" He then went on to look for his tools everywhere, but was unable to find them. Consequently, he failed to take his meal. Because of that, there is the saying, "a day without work is a day without food," which became widely known all over the world.[29]

This story is part of a well-known legend about Baizhang, which depicts him as the originator of a new system of rules and procedures for organizing monastic life. According to the legend, at his monastery Baizhang established the first autonomous monastic community that marked the Chan school's incipient independence from the rest of Buddhism. That was accompanied by his codification of new monastic rules that were unique to the Chan tradition. Because of that, over the last millennium generations of Chan adherents have celebrated Baizhang as the founding father and patron saint of "Chan monasticism," even though the symbolic meanings associated with the Baizhang legend assumed broader significance, as its multifaceted connotations transcended the historical reality of a single person. As a result, the assumed role of an important monastic leader and legislator became a key part of Baizhang's religious persona. His accomplishments in that area were linked with the belief that he composed an influential monastic code, usually referred to by the title *Baizhang qinggui* (Baizhang's Rules of Purity), which was subsequently lost. Later Chan monastic codes composed during the Song and subsequent dynasties evoked the spirit of Baizhang's original code and alleged to contain elaborations of its basic ideals and principles.

The earliest mention of Baizhang's founding of a distinct Chan monastery goes back to the late tenth century. That seminal event is recalled in a

passage embedded in Baizhang's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*.[30] The same information is also presented, in a somewhat modified form, at the beginning of "Chanmen guishi" (Rules for the Chan School), a short but influential text that is appended to Baizhang's biography in *Jingde chuandeng lu*. Here is the *Jingde chuandeng lu* version of the traditional account about the events and considerations that led to Baizhang's decision to establish a separate Chan monastery:

> From the initial establishment of the Chan school [in China] by [the first patriarch] Bodhidharma until after the time of [the sixth patriarch] Huineng, its followers mostly resided in Vinaya monasteries.[31] Although they occupied separate monastic compounds, they did not yet have their own system of rules regarding [such matters as] preaching the Dharma or [procedures associated with] abbotship. Being constantly concerned with such state of affairs, Baizhang stated, "I wish for the way of the patriarchs to spread widely and enlighten the multitudes. If we are to hope that in the future it will not come to an end, how can we afford to follow the practices of the various Hīnayāna traditions?"[32] . . . Baizhang then said, "Our [Chan] school does not belong to either the Mahāyāna or the Hīnayāna tradition. Neither does it differ from either Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna. We should carefully consider both of them, and then establish monastic rules that will include them both in a harmonious way, while also being appropriate to the needs of the present situation." With that in mind, Baizhang initiated the establishment of a separate Chan community.[33]

The same text then goes on to briefly describe Baizhang's introduction of supposedly innovative features in the structuring of Chan practice and the organization of monastic life. While generations of Chan scholars and adherents have interpreted that as a major paradigm shift in the history of Chinese monasticism, on closer inspection Baizhang's assumed innovations turn out not to be revolutionary or unique to the Chan school. During the Song era, the notion that Baizhang was the first Chan teacher to institute separate rules, meant for a new type of a monastic community, became a central element of Chan belief and ideology. Furthermore, the supposed rejection of the hallowed Vinaya tradition—which, being imported from India, had canonical basis and sanction—came to be perceived as a seminal event in the history of Chinese Buddhism. That has been construed as a key point in the Chinese transformation of the "foreign" religion, when monastic institutions and observances at long last became truly Sinicized.

The Baizhang legend was subsequently picked up by the various Chan abbots who wrote comprehensive monastic codes for the running of their and other Chan monasteries, which became a distinct and officially recognized type of Buddhist establishment only during the Song era. The author of the earliest and one of the most important texts in that genre, Changlu Zongze (d. 1107), evoked the Baizhang legend as a source of inspiration for his monastic code. In his *Chanyuan qinggui* (Rules of Purity for Chan Monasteries) he linked his rules to those contained in the code composed by Baizhang.[34] The same sort of connection is also implied in *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* (Imperial Edition of the Baizhang Rules of Purity), compiled by Dongyang Dehui in 1338, which was more comprehensive than its predecessors and became widely used in Chinese monasteries throughout the late imperial period.[35] Because of that connection, Baizhang came to be perceived as one of the historically most significant Chan figures. Some later Chan text even compared his stature to those of Bodhidharma and Huineng, arguably the two most revered Chan patriarchs of all time.[36]

On the basis of widespread beliefs about Baizhang's important role in the development and codification of Chan monastic life, from the Song period onward his image was featured prominently in the hall of patriarchs (*zu tang*), just to the right of Bodhi-dharma, who occupied the central position as the founding Chan patriarch.[37] That building was an important element in the architectural layout of Chan monasteries. It served as an ancestral hall for the resident monastic community, which was represented by the current abbot, and housed the ancestral tablets of the previous abbots of the monastery. This practice was grounded in traditional religious culture, as the hall of patriarchs performed functions similar to those of Confucian temples or ancestral shrines built by well-heeled families.

Because of his status as a key monastic ancestor, Baizhang was given special memorial services. These were important ritual occasions in the monastic calendar. The main ceremonial observances were presided over by the abbot and were attended by the whole congregation. *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* contains fairly elaborate description of the various liturgical elements that were included in the memorial service dedicated to Baizhang, which took place in the Dharma hall. That included the setting up of a special altar that contained the image of Baizhang, along with the making of sacrificial offerings, the chanting of scriptures, the ritualized offering of incense, the performance of prostrations, and the intoning of special prayers and invocations.[38] The same text also contains flowery words of praise that extol Baizhang's virtue and highlight his importance, which in part read as follows:

> When he spoke, that became the law of the land. It marked the norm and established the standard [for all to follow]. Over the course of myriad generations, the Way he instituted is known as being worthy of reverence. It contains [key] principles and precedents on the basis of which a harmonious way of life has ever since flourished in [Chan] monasteries, which have produced many notable religious personalities. . . . Regardless of whether one follows a particular norm or departs from it, the words avoid the weight and subtlety [of thought?]. Regardless of whether one departs from a particular occasion or enters into it, the principle permeates the multitude of wonders. It is proper to worship him in the company of the Chan patriarchs.[39]

The Baizhang legend and its connection with the emergence of Chan monasticism have received sustained and substantial amounts of scholarly attention. Early scholarship, most of which was presented by Japanese scholars, took for granted the historicity of Baizhang's role as a monastic innovator and presumed that there was an actual code that he composed for his monastic community.[40] That led to various efforts to reconstruct the contents of the lost Baizhang code, typically on the basis of later sources, which were read in light of normative Zen views and romanticized imagining of Tang Chan. Eventually some scholars started to doubt the existence of Baizhang's code, and even question Baizhang's historical role in the codification of Chan monastic life.[41] We now know that the story about Baizhang's creation of a unique system of Chan monasticism is the stuff of legend, and is not connected in any meaningful way with Baizhang as a historical person. Similarly, the search for establishing the contents of his lost code turned out to have been a futile academic exercise, since by now it is fairly clear that no such text ever existed.

There is no evidence from the Tang era about Baizhang's creation of distinctive Chan monastic rules, nor is there any intimation of the existence of a new system of Chan monastic life that was institutionally separate from mainstream Buddhist monasticism.[42] Furthermore, *Guishan jingce* (Guishan's Admonitions), an important text on Chan practice and monastic discipline composed by Baizhang's disciple Guishan, reveals how after Baizhang's death his disciples and other monks associated with the Hongzhou school continued to adhere to traditional monastic mores and ideals.[43] The same attitudes remained prevalent during the final decades of the Tang dynasty, as can be seen from "Shi guizhi" (Teacher's Regulations), the earliest monastic code written by a Chan teacher that is still extant, composed in 901 by Xuefeng Yicun (822–908).[44] Even the actual rules and monastic innovations that are attributed to Baizhang in "Chanmen guishi," and are further elaborated and expanded

in *Chanyuan qinggui*, turn out for the most part to be based on various Vinaya rules, to be derived from monastic customs that were not unique to the Chan tradition, or to be influenced by common Chinese cultural practices and ritual observances.[45]

To sum up, the legend about Baizhang's creation of a new system of Chan monastic rules had tenuous connection at best with actual events in the life of Baizhang. It also tells us little about the historical realities of Tang Chan. During the Song era the legend gradually became a centerpiece of an expansive narrative about the consolidation of Chan into a distinct Buddhist tradition with its own institutional moorings and a distinct pattern of monastic life. Accordingly, the hagiographic transmutation of Baizhang into the patron saint of Chan monasticism is indicative of important changes that took place within the Chan school in the course of its historical growth and transformation during the Tang-Song transition. Here we have a prime illustration of how the Chan school, or at least some of its influential leaders, responded to changing historical predicaments and navigated key ideological and institutional realignments. A central element of that was the creative reconfiguring or reinventing of its past, a notable expression of which was the hagiographic transmutation of Baizhang into the patron saint of Chan monasticism.

Teacher of Doctrine and Contemplative Practice

If the depictions of Baizhang as an indomitable iconoclast and patron saint of Chan monasticism were developed and disseminated by later generations of writers and Chan adherents, what about the historical person to whom that kind of imagery was retroactively ascribed? As we transpose ourselves into the medieval world of Tang China, what can we say about the actual religious personas of Baizhang and other Chan teachers like him, or at least about their perception among contemporaries? And what about their teachings and the responses they elicited among select Tang audiences? Some of the recent Western scholarship about Chan has exhibited a tendency to question the traditional reliance on textual sources and the objectivist historians' quest for factual knowledge about early Chan figures and teachings. That has resulted in thinking about Chan history as a literary artifact, in which noted Chan patriarchs such as Bodhidharma and Huineng are treated as textual paradigms rather than as historical persons.[46]

To some degree, the introduction of these kinds of critical perspectives has been useful in terms of moving scholarship away from naïve reliance on traditional sources and interpretations. It has also helped shed light on slanted

historical reconstructions of Chan history in terms of normative interpretative templates or ideological supposition that exude latent sectarian biases. However, at times these trends have led to broad mischaracterizations of key features of Tang Chan, which usually go together with a tendency to gloss over the actual lives and contributions of notable historical actors. While it is, of course, important to trace the development of key literary transmutations of major Chan figures such as Baizhang, or of the movements they belonged to, that should not lead to scholarly neglect of historical analysis of their lives and teachings, set against the backdrop of the appropriate social, religious, intellectual, and institutional contexts. In addition, we cannot fully understand or appreciate the Song (or later) perceptions and imaginings of Tang figures—or of the whole of Tang Chan as the tradition's golden age—if we do not have adequate knowledge about the historical actualities of Chan monks, or if we are unable to ascertain the contours of their teachings, as they existed during the Tang era.

It is true that Baizhang's religious persona is somewhat elusive, as we can only approach it on the basis of limited literary artifacts. The same applies to his teachings. At the same time, by making good use of the available sources, and by situating them within the pertinent religious, intellectual, and social milieus, we can arrive at a clearer picture of Baizhang's life and teachings, as they unfolded during the mid-Tang period.[47] The picture that emerges from the early sources, especially Baizhang's stupa inscription and his *Extensive Record* (*Baizhang guang lu*) represents a striking contrast with the hagiographic representations surveyed in the previous two sections.[48] The *Extensive Record* is an especially valuable source of information about Baizhang's teachings, and it is also among the most valuable resources for the study of Chan doctrine from the Tang period.

The image of Baizhang conveyed by the Tang-era sources is that of a learned and sagacious monk who is well versed in both the theoretical and contemplative aspects of medieval Chinese Buddhism. Here we encounter Baizhang as a teacher of a particular Chan brand of Buddhist doctrine, formulated in a manner and idiom that are unique to him and to the Hongzhou school as a whole. Nonetheless, he also comes across as someone who is cognizant of major intellectual trends in Tang Buddhism, as well as deeply steeped in canonical texts and traditions. His discourses are filled with scriptural quotations and allusions. He also often resorts to technical Buddhist vocabulary, of the kind one usually finds in the texts of philosophically oriented schools of Chinese Buddhism such as Huayan, Faxiang, and Tiantai. Here the primary mode in which Baizhang communicates his teachings is the public Chan sermon, presented in the ritual framework of "ascending the [Dharma] hall [to preach]" (*shangtang*).[49]

In the Tang context we find Baizhang assuming a traditional role of Dharma teacher, albeit of a peculiar kind that developed within the religious milieu of the Chan school. Seated on a high seat in the main hall of his monastery, he offers fairly detailed instructions about Chan doctrine and practice. From what we can gather, the solemn audience to whom his teachings and exhortations were directed was primarily constituted of his monastic disciples, although he also preached to laymen. In form and content, the sermons he gives represent idiosyncratic modulations of prevalent forms of preaching rituals, which collectively constituted a key element of medieval Chinese Buddhism. On the whole, here we are on familiar Buddhist ground. Furthermore, in this narrative context, Baizhang operates within a fairly conventional institutional framework.

Elsewhere I have written in some detail about Baizhang's teachings, so here I will provide only a brief summary of some of the key themes and basic religious outlooks communicated in the extant redactions of his sermons.[50] A central idea that infuses most of Baizhang's sermons is the ineffability or indescribability of reality. Ultimate reality cannot be predicated in terms of conventional conceptual categories, as it transcends the familiar realm of words and ideas. Nonetheless, it can be approached or realized—as it truly is, without any accretions or distortions—as it manifests at all times and in all places. That is done by means of intuitive knowledge, whose cultivation is one of the cornerstones of Chan soteriology.

Since the essence of reality cannot be captured or conveyed via the mediums of words and letters, according to Baizhang it is pointless to get stuck in dogmatic assertions, or to attach to a particular doctrine or practice. Like everything else, the various Chan (or more broadly Buddhist) teachings are empty of self-nature. They simply constitute expedient tools in an ongoing process of cultivating detachment and transcendence that supposedly free the mind of mistaken views and distorted ways of perceiving reality; to put it differently, they belong to the well-known Buddhist category of "skillful means" (*fangbian*, or *upāya* in Sanskrit). Holding on rigidly or fetishizing a particular text, viewpoint, or method of practice—even the most profound and potent ones—can turn out to be counterproductive, as it becomes a source of attachment that impedes spiritual progress. The perfection of the Chan path of practice and realization, therefore, does not involve the attainment of some particular ability or knowledge. Rather, in Baizhang's text it is depicted as a process of letting go of all views and attachment that interfere with the innate human ability to know reality and experience spiritual freedom. Here is a passage from one of Baizhang's sermons in which he elaborates on the ineffability of reality and the subtle processes of mental restructuring and contemplative discernment that lead to its realization:

> Fundamentally, this principle is present in everyone. All the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are called persons who point out a jewel. Originally, it is not a thing. You need not know or understand it; you need not affirm or deny it. Just cut off dualism. Cut off the supposition that it exists and the supposition that it does not exist. Cut off the supposition that it is nonexistent and the supposition that it is not nonexistent, so that there are no traces of either side. Then, when the two sides are brought up, you are unattached to them, and no measures can control you. [In reality,] there is neither deficiency nor sufficiency, neither profanity nor holiness, and neither light nor darkness. That is not having knowledge, yet not lacking knowledge. It is neither bondage nor liberation. It is not any name or category at all. Why is this true speech? How can you carve and polish empty space to make a Buddha image? How can you say that emptiness is blue, yellow, red, or white?[51]

One of the particular doctrinal innovations presented in Baizhang's sermons is his ingenious schematization of a progressive Chan path of spiritual cultivation that involves the perfection of three distinct mental states or ways of knowing (or relating to) reality. In Baizhang's *Extensive Record* they are referred to as the "three propositions" (*sanju*), which can also be understood as three distinctive stages of spiritual realization. The three propositions are: thoroughgoing detachment from all things and affairs; nonabiding in the state of detachment; and letting go of even the subtlest vestiges of self-referential awareness or knowledge of having transcended detachment. They mark key points in a spiritual continuum, which culminates with the realization of ultimate detachment, whereas the mind becomes devoid even of the subtlest elements of ignorance and self-centered awareness.

Taken as a whole, the three propositions are hierarchical and progressive, implying dialectical ascent to increasingly rarefied states of awareness, distinguished by gradually more subtle levels of detachment and transcendence. While each stage rectifies the imperfections and limitations of the preceding stage(s), it also integrates the qualities characteristic of the previous stage(s). This soteriological scheme visibly diverges from normative models that are typically associated with Chan orthodoxy, which prioritize the notion of "suddenness" as the central ordering principle of classical Chan doctrine. Instead of refuting the validity of canonical formulations of the Buddhist path in terms of diverse stages and practices, as we are led to expect from leading Chan teachers of the Tang (and subsequent) eras, Baizhang is introducing an innovative conceptual scheme that takes into account the inevitably gradual

character of actual Chan practice. Let us have a closer look at one of Baizhang's explanations of the third and final stage (or proposition):

> Once one does not abide in nonattachment anymore, and does not even engender any understanding of not abiding in it either, then that is the final good. That is the full-word teaching. Such a person avoids falling into the formless realm, avoids falling into meditation illness, avoids falling into the way of the bodhisattvas, and avoids falling into the condition of king of demons. Because of hindrances of knowledge, hindrances of stages, and hindrances of practice, seeing one's Buddha nature is [as difficult as] seeing shapes at night. As it has been said [in the scriptures], at the stage of Buddhahood one obliterates two forms of ignorance: the ignorance of subtle knowledge and the ignorance of extremely subtle knowledge. Therefore, it has been said [in the *Huayan Sutra*] that a man of great wisdom smashes an atom to bring into the world a volume of scripture.[52]

The first sentence defines the third proposition in relation to the first and second propositions (denoted by the expressions "nonattachment" and "not abide in nonattachment," respectively). The text then goes on to describe the genuine and accomplished Chan adept as someone who has realized such rarefied state of wisdom and awareness of reality. There are a couple of things that are striking about this passage, which overall is representative of the form and contents of Baizhang's sermons. First, there is a profusion of technical Buddhist terms, of the kind one usually encounters in canonical sources and exegetical literature: formless realm, meditation illness, way of bodhisattvas, hindrances of practice, Buddha nature, and ignorance of subtle knowledge, to name a few. It is quite remarkable that Baizhang is able to cram so much technical vocabulary into such short passage. That is indicative not only of Baizhang's extensive learning but also of the fact that the monks in his monastery, as well as at least some of the lay disciples who came to hear his sermons, were reasonably familiar with such specialized terminology.

Second, Baizhang's description of the third proposition is capped with a quotation from a well-known canonical text, the *Huayan Sutra* (also referred to as the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* or the *Flower Ornament Scripture*). This kind of scriptural use and invocation of canonical authority are common occurrences in Baizhang's sermons, as well as in the sermons of his teacher Mazu and his disciple Huangbo. The passage in question appears in the "Manifestation of the Tathagata" chapter of the *Huayan Scripture*, and is part of one of the most often quoted sections in this immensely important and popular text.[53] It introduces the metaphor of a limitless scripture—said to be as expansive as the

great universe, and to contain knowledge about everything in it—being enclosed within a particle of dust, just as the infinite Buddha wisdom inheres in the mind of each person. As the wise person in the scripture's simile breaks out the particle of dust and releases the mysterious scripture into the world for the benefit of all, likewise by his wise and effective teachings the Buddha enables each person to release the inherent Buddha wisdom from within and manifest it in the world for the sake of all beings.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I explored the broad issues of historical remembrance and representation within the Chan tradition by looking at key hagiographic depictions of Baizhang, as revealed in various Chan texts and other pertinent sources. The shifting images and evolving hagiographic representations of Baizhang that were surveyed in the previous pages are reflections of the multifarious and momentous changes that marked the Chan school's historical trajectory as a major tradition, first of Chinese and then of East Asian Buddhism. The ongoing fashioning and transformation of the images of famed Chan teachers like Baizhang had significant ramifications within and beyond the complex evolution of Chan as a distinct Buddhist tradition. It also affected the reception of Chan ideas and teachings among varied audiences in China and elsewhere. In the process, the image and persona of Baizhang underwent notable transformations: from the learned and wise teacher of Chan doctrine and contemplative practice that existed during the Tang era, into the indomitable iconoclast and patron saint of Chan monasticism that became dominant in later Chan lore, starting with the early Song period. As the later images of Baizhang took hold and captured the popular imagination, the learned monk of the Tang era, along with his recondite yet refreshingly direct and perennially relevant teachings, were all but ignored by generations of Chan scholars and practitioners.

Astute analysis of the hagiographic transformations of Baizhang and other Chan monks from the Tang era points to the malleability and fallibility of religiously inflected memories, both individual and communal. It aptly illustrates the prevalence of mythologizing tendencies, historical distortions, pious embellishments, or (dis)ingenuous fabrications in the collective recollections and representations of various Chan groups—as well as their parallels among other religious traditions—as preserved in diverse oral and written narratives. Understanding of these historical and literary processes helps us go beyond traditionalist and homogenizing discourses that highlight the mythos of Chan's uniqueness. Instead, the various sources reveal great diversity and historical

complexity, a mélange of elements that span the popular and the elitist, the court-oriented and the localized. By tracing the inventive reimaginings of Tang Chan in light of changing religious predilections, institutional predicaments, and cultural suppositions, we also add nuance to our knowledge of the larger historical trajectories and gradual paradigm shifts that shaped East Asian Buddhism.

The constituting of Chan as a distinct community of memory within Chinese Buddhism involved the development of particular historical patterns of remembering, recording, and reconfiguring the past. That was part of a larger tradition of Buddhist historiography, which reflected the great importance of chronicling and evoking the past in Chinese culture as a whole. Buddhist writers and adherents imaginatively fashioned essential quasi-historical narratives by selectively evoking or reimagining their tradition's past, especially at key junctures in the historical growth of their tradition. That was part of a continuing process that unfolded within the confines of a particular religious tradition, which reflected the inner dynamics of its growth and transformation. At the same time, it was also a response to specific institutional developments and changing socioreligious predicaments that were very broad in scope, going well beyond the confines of Chan or even Buddhism as a whole. For instance, during the early Song period there was a reconfiguration of the social and religious landscapes in the aftermath of the establishment of the new dynasty. That contributed to the institutional and ideological transformations of the Chan school, which amid such circumstances was able to secure its preeminent status as the main tradition of elite Buddhism. It also set in motion far-reaching changes in other key areas, most notably the prevalent forms of literary expression and contemplative practice.

Although I have primarily focused on the key hagiographic transformations of Baizhang that were created during the Tang and Song eras, the same type of analysis can also be extended to subsequent periods and applied to the reception and growth of Chan or Zen in other cultures. To a large extent, subsequent Chan/Zen history can be seen as a series of interpretative distortions, shaped by distinct ideological agendas and centered on creative remembrances or imaginings of Mazu, Baizhang, and the other great sages of yore. That is evident when we look at the revival of Chan that took place in the seventeenth century, during the Ming-Qing transition.[54] The same is largely true of the Kamakura period (1192–1333), when Chan was transmitted into Japan by pioneering figures such as Dōgen Kigen (1200–1253) and Myōan Eisai (1141–1215), as well as of the Tokugawa era (1603–1868), when both the Rinzai and Sōtō sects experienced important revivals and reformations under the dynamic leadership of influential priests such as Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769) and Manzan

Sōhaku (1636–1715). Similar tropes and hagiographic processes continue to shape the various contemporary manifestations of Chan/Zen across East Asia, for instance, within the Buddhist traditions that presently flourish in Korea and Taiwan.

Key elements of the hagiographic representations of Baizhang continue to crop up not only in East and Southeast Asian contexts but also everywhere else where traditional Chan stories are read, discussed, and reflected upon. We are thus witnessing the continued addition of peculiar new wrinkles to long-standing historical processes, especially in the context of the ongoing globalization of Zen (along with other forms of Buddhism) that increasingly implicates America and Europe into intricate cultural flows that contravene traditional cultural categories and ingrained religious boundaries. In the present age, which is marked by increased connectivity, complexity, and fluidity, we can observe how emerging transcultural frameworks shape current reinterpretations of traditional Chan/Zen teachings and related imagery.[55] For instance, nowadays we might come across a lecture on *kōan* that features Baizhang given at a Zen center in California, or perhaps witness an evoking of the "a day without work is a day without food" adage within the context of a Zen retreat in France.

Consequently, the stories and imagery about the spiritual exploits of Baizhang and other Tang figures continue to be given new meanings in the course of Zen's participation in variable flows of religious ideas, symbols, and practices. Amidst changing personal and communal identities, which are increasingly shaped by global networks that foster cosmopolitan hybridity, the hagiographic transmutations of Baizhang continue to be subjected to new interpretations, but perhaps that is a good topic for another publication.

NOTES

1. This section is based on my previous study of Baizhang's life, included in chapter 2 of my comprehensive study of the history and teachings of the Hongzhou school of Chan; for more details and fuller annotation, see Mario Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 49–52.

2. The earliest extant source with reliable information about Baizhang's life is the inscription for his memorial stupa, which was composed by the official Chen Xu soon after Baizhang's passing away; see "Tang hongzhou baizhangshan gu huaihai chanshi taming," in *Quan tang wen* 446 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), p. 2014a–b, and *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 8, T. 48.1156b–57a.

3. For Yaoshan's biographies, see *Song gaoseng zhuan* 17, T. 50.816a–c; *Zutang ji* 4 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1996), pp. 102–110; and *Jingde chuandeng lu* 14, T. 51.311b–12c.

4. For Mazu's life, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, pp. 21–43. The earliest source about his life is his stele inscription, composed in 791 by the famous official and literatus Quan Deyu (759–818); see "Tang gu hongzhou kaiyuansi shimen daoyi chanshi beiming bingxu," preserved in *Quan tang wen* 501, pp. 5106a–07a, and *Tang wenzui* 64 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1986), pp. 1058–1059. Another helpful source that contains early data is his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* 10; see T. 50.766a–c.

5. See Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, pp. 234–236.

6. *Quan tang wen* 446, p. 2014a; translation adapted from Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, p. 50.

7. For Xitang, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, pp. 47–49; Ishii Shūdō, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 40/1 (1991), pp. 280–284; and Ishii Shūdō, *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa* (Kyoto: Zen bunka kenkyūjō, 1988), pp. 199–211.

8. Zhang is a traditional Chinese unit of length; it is roughly equivalent to 3.6 meters or 11 feet 9 inches.

9. See *Jiangxi mazu daoyi chanshi yulu*, XZJ 119.813a; *Jingde chuandeng lu* 6, T. 51.249b–c; and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, p. 59.

10. Notable texts from the Tang era that exemplify this trend include *Lengqie shizi ji* (Record of the Teachers and Disciples of the Lankavatara, compiled in the early part of the eighth century), *Lidai fabao ji* (Record of the Dharma Jewel through Successive Generations, compiled c. 774), and *Baolin zhuan* (Record of the Precious Grove, compiled in 801).

11. For the records of sayings, see Mario Poceski, "Mazu yulu and the Creation of the Chan Records of Sayings," in Steven Heine and Dale Wright, eds., *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 53–79; and Albert Welter, *The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy: The Development of Chan's Records of Sayings Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

12. For the main texts that belong to the rules of purity genre, see Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the "Chanyuan Qinggui"* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002); Ishii Shūdō, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," *Komazawa daigaku zenkenkyūjo nenpō* 6 (1995): 15–53; and Theodore Griffith Foulk, "*Chanyuan qinggui* and Other 'Rules of Purity' in Chinese Buddhism," in Heine and Wright, eds., *The Zen Canon*, pp. 275–312.

13. For the biographies of eminent monks, see John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).

14. See *Jingde chuandeng lu* 6, T. 51.249b–50c.

15. Each of these distinctive images of Baizhang is described in more detail in the following three sections.

16. *Song gaoseng zhuan* 10, T. 50.766a–b.

17. *Zutang ji* 14, pp. 304–305.

18. See Mario Poceski, “Lay Models of Engagement with Chan Teachings and Practices among the Literati in Mid-Tang China,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 35 (2007): 63–97 (esp. pp. 87–92).

19. *Gu zunsu yulu* 1, XZJ 118.161b; translation adapted from Cheng Chien Bhikshu (Mario Poceski), trans., *Sun-Face Buddha: The Teachings of Ma-tsu and the Hung-chou School of Ch'an* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1992), pp. 100–101. See also *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 8, XZJ 135.655a.

20. For examples of scholarly articles that present the encounter dialogues format as a distinctive pedagogical technique or path of spiritual practice, see John R. McRae, “Encounter Dialogue and the Transformation of the Spiritual Path in Chinese Ch'an,” in Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Robert M. Gimello, eds., *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), pp. 339–369; and Robert E. Buswell Jr., “The ‘Short-cut’ Approach of *K'an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism,” in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 321–377 (esp. pp. 334–338). This kind of viewpoint also resonates with the views of Yanagida and other contemporary Japanese scholars.

21. See *Gu zunsu yulu* 1, XZJ 118.161b–62a, and Cheng Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 101–102. See also the similar version of the story in *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 8, XZJ 135.655a.

22. See Yanagida Seizan, “Goroku no rekishi: Zen bunken no seiritsu shiteki kenkyū,” *Tōhō Gakuhō* 57 (1985): 570–571; and Mario Poceski, “The Hongzhou School during the Mid-Tang Period,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2000), pp. 108–110.

23. *Guzunsu yulu* 1, XZJ 118.161b–62a; translation adapted from Cheng Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 102. For different versions of this exchange, see *Baizhang huaihai chanshi yulu* (in *Sijia yulu* 2), XZJ 119.817b, and *Jingde chuandeng lu* 6, T. 51.249c.

24. For traditional accounts of Guishan's life and teachings, see *Jingde chuandeng lu* 9, T. 51.264b–66a; *Zutang ji* 16, pp. 359–363; and *Song gaoseng zhuan* 11, T. 50.777b–c. For a study of the Guiyang school, see the series of articles by Ishii Shūdō: “Igyōshū no seisui (1–6),” *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu ronshū* 18–22, 24 (1985–1991, 1993).

25. *Baizhang huaihai chanshi yulu*, XZJ 119.819b–20a; *Zutang ji* 14, p. 317; and *Jingde chuandeng lu* 6, T. 51.249c–50a.

26. *Baizhang huaihai chanshi yulu* (in *Sijia yulu* 2), XZJ 119.818b. See also *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 8, XZJ 135.655b; and *Biyan lu* 3, T. 48.166c. The last one is translated in Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary, trans., *The Blue Cliff Record* (Boston: Shambala, 1992), pp. 172–175.

27. *Biyan lu* 3, T. 48.167a; translation adapted from Cleary and Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*, p. 174.

28. Poceski, “Mazu yulu and the Creation of the Chan Records of Sayings.”

29. *Baizhang huaihai chanshi yulu*, XZJ 119.820b. See also *Zutang ji* 14, p. 317; *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 8, XZJ 135.658a; *Wudeng huiyan* 3, XZJ 138.91a; and *Chixiu*

baizhang qinggui 2, T. 48.1119b. The same quote appears in many other classical Chan texts, and the "a day without work is a day without food" dictum is also often mentioned in modern Chan/Zen literature.

30. *Song gaoseng zhuan* 10, T. 50.770c. See also Zanning's brief remark about the same event in his historical survey of Chinese Buddhist monasticism, *Da song sengshi lüe*, T. 54.240a–b.

31. "Vinaya monasteries" is a literal translation of *lüsi*. Here it is used in the sense of monasteries regulated by the Vinaya, that is, conventional Buddhist monasteries. This is sometimes misinterpreted to mean monasteries that belonged to a separate Vinaya school or sect.

32. The text refers to Hinayana by the alternative term Agama, which is usually used to denote the various collections of "Hīnayāna" scriptures.

33. *Jingde chuandeng lu* 6, T. 51.250c–51a. For a complete English translation of "Chanmen guishi," see Martin Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule: *Ch'ing kuei* and the shaping of Ch'an Community Life," in Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), pp. 165–184. The account of the same event that is included in Baizhang's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* adds the following remark: "Everywhere the Chan school was like grass bending under the blowing of [strong] wind. The independent practice of the Chan school started with Huaihai [i.e., Baizhang]." T. 50.270c.

34. For an English translation of the first seven fascicles of this text, see Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*.

35. For an English translation, see Shohei Ichimura, trans., *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2006).

36. For instance, see the comparison with Bodhidharma in *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 8, T. 48.1157b–c.

37. See *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 2, T. 48.1117c; Ichimura, *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*, p. 50; and Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), pp.172–173.

38. *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 2, T. 48.1118b; Ichimura, *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*, pp. 56–57.

39. *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 2, T. 48.1118b–c; the translation is adapted from Ichimura, *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*, pp. 57–58.

40. The scholarly works that presume the existence of Baizhang's code are too numerous to list all of them. Here are some of the more notable examples: Ui Hakuju, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1941), pp. 375–395; Kagamishima Genryū, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," (Aichi Gakuin Daigaku) *Zen kenkyūjo kiyō* 6 and 7 (1976): 117–134; Kagamishima Genryū et al., trans., *Yakuchū: Zennen shingi* (Tokyo: Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1972), pp. 1–3; Yanagida Seizan, "Chūgoku zenshū shi," in Nishitani Keiji, ed., *Zen no rekishi: Chūgoku* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 1967), pp. 58–60; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai no zenshū: Konan, kōsei hen* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1984),

pp. 142–143; Sato Tatsugen, *Chūgoku bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Mokujisha, 1986), pp. 479–489; Tanaka Ryōshō, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1983), pp. 469–476; Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 148–151; and Shohei Ichimura, *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations*, pp. xiii–xix.

41. For instance, see Kondō Ryōichi, "Hyakujō shingi seiritsu no yōin," *Indo tetsugaku bukkyōgaku* 2 (1987): 231–246; Ishii Shūdō, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," pp. 15–53; Theodore Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," pp. 147–208 (esp. pp. 156–159); and Mario Poceski, "Xuefeng's Code and the Chan School's Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations," *Asia Major, Third Series* 16/2 (2003): 33–56 (esp. pp. 35–41).

42. There is a set of five rules that were allegedly inscribed next to Baizhang's stūpa inscription, which appear in a post-Tang source. See *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 8, T. 48.1157a, and Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*, 34. The five items are narrow in scope, and they consist of fairly conventional regulations that are not in any way unique to Chan.

43. For an analysis of this text, see Mario Poceski, "*Guishan jingce* (Guishan's Admonitions) and the Ethical Foundations of Chan Practice," in Steven Heine and Dale Wright, eds., *Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 15–42. For the original Chinese text, see XZJ 114.928a–39b, and XZJ 111.284a–296b.

44. For a study and translation of this text, see Poceski, "Xuefeng's Code and the Chan School's Participation in the Development of Monastic Regulations." For the original Chinese text, see XZJ 119.972b–73a, and Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Zengaku sōsho*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1973), pp. 278–279. A modern Japanese translation can be found in Ishii, *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa*, pp. 480–482.

45. See Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*, pp. 53–98.

46. For example, see Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 110–135. Echoes of some of the same ideas can also be found in John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Genealogy, and Transformation in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), esp. pp. 1–15, 24–28.

47. An example of that is the brief biographical reconstruction of Baizhang's life presented at the beginning of this chapter.

48. For the Chinese text of Baizhang's *Extensive Record*, see *Baizhang guang lu*, in *Guzunsu yulu* 1, XZJ 118.164b–71b, and XZJ 119.821a–22b; it is translated into English in Thomas Cleary, trans., *Sayings and Doings of Pai-chang* (Los Angeles: Center Publications, 1978). For more on the provenance and history of this text, see Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, pp. 241–242.

49. For a study of the *shangtang* rituals that covers the Tang as well as later periods of Chan/Zen history, see Mario Poceski, "Chan Rituals of Abbots' Ascending the Dharma Hall to Preach," in Steven Heine and Dale Wright, eds., *Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Theory in Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 83–111, 299–304.

50. See Mario Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, pp. 131–132, 162–168, 203–219. In the book, the discussion of Baizhang's teachings is integrated into a large study of the Hongzhou school's doctrines and practices.

51. *Baizhang guang lu*, XZJ 118.166a; quoted in Poceski, *Ordinary Minds as the Way*, p. 182. See also Cleary, *Sayings and Doings of Pai-chang*, pp. 34–35.

52. *Baizhang guang lu*, XZJ 118.165a; quoted in Poceski, *Ordinary Minds as the Way*, p. 209. See also Cleary, *Sayings and Doings of Pai-chang*, p. 31.

53. See *Dafang guangfo huayan jing* 51, translated by Śikśānanda (652–710), T. 10.272c; and Cheng Chien Bhikshu (Mario Poceski), *Manifestation of the Tathāgata: Buddhahood According to the Avatamsaka Sūtra* (Boston: Wisdom, 1993), pp. 105–106.

54. For a comprehensive study of Chan during this period, see Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

55. For an insightful theoretical discussion of the study of contemporary mobile religion in terms of networks, see Manuel A. Vásquez, "Studying Religion in Motion: A Networks Approach," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 20 (2008):151–184.