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Guishan jingce (Guishan's Admonitions) and the Ethical Foundations of Chan Practice

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The historical relationship between Chan and Buddhist monasticism is typically discussed in reference to the putative establishment of a unique system of “Chan monastic rules” during the Tang period (618–907). The creation of such new monastic structures and regulations—commonly identified as the Chan “Pure Rules” or “Rules of Purity” (C. *Chan jinggui*; J. *Zen shingi*)—is traditionally ascribed to Baizhang (749–814), chief disciple of the renowned Mazu (709–788) and a leading figure in the Hongzhou school, which was at the forefront of the transition from early to classical Chan. The story about the emergence of distinctive Chan institutions and models of monastic practice is part of a sectarian narrative that depicts the development of the classical Chan tradition, especially the Hongzhou school, as an unambiguous shift away from the established norms, teachings, and institutional structures of earlier Indian and Chinese Buddhism. Supposedly an integral part of that process was the repudiation of long-established monastic mores and institutions.

Recent Chan scholarship has increasingly challenged this interpretation of Tang Chan's attitudes toward received monastic traditions by showing that it is based on tenuous and unreliable evidence, and by gradually unmasking its uncritical reliance on interpretative schemata that reflect the ideologies of later (i.e., post-Tang) Chan/Zen traditions in both China and Japan. This chapter focuses on a key record from the Tang period that undermines the idea that late Tang Chan rejected established ethical norms and monastic ideals. The text in question is *Guishan jingce* (Guishan's Admonitions), a significant part of the Hongzhou school's limited literary output

that, so far, has been ignored by Chan/Zen scholarship. It was composed by Guishan Lingyou (771–853), Baizhang’s foremost disciple and leading representative of the Hongzhou school’s third generation. With its primary focus on monastic discipline and the place of morality in the Chan path to spiritual awakening, this text is unique among Tang-period Chan documents. It sheds unique light on Tang Chan’s rather conventional attitudes toward monastic ideals and mores and brings into question the prevalent view about the iconoclastic turn that Chan supposedly took under the Hongzhou school. By extension, the chapter also serves as a preliminary study of the attitudes toward monasticism and conventional morality within the classical Chan tradition.

The chapter first introduces the text and its author and places them in the broader historical context of ninth-century China. A brief discussion of *Guishan jingce*’s provenance and structure is followed with basic biographical data about its author and an overview of the historical circumstances that shaped the views and sentiments expressed in the text. It then presents an analysis of the text’s central ideas about the ideals of monastic life. The chapter ends with preliminary reflections on the Chan tradition’s attitudes toward received monastic mores and institutions, and on the relationship between Chan practice and ethical observances.

Text and Author in Historical Context

Provenance of the Manuscript

The oldest manuscript of *Guishan jingce* was recovered from among the Dunhuang documents that were discovered during the early twentieth century. Its title is *Dagui jingce* and it is part of a manuscript kept in Paris in the Peliot collection of Dunhuang materials (catalogue no. 4638). As such, it is the only text associated with the Hongzhou school found among the Dunhuang documents. The text is incorporated into a larger collection entitled *Yan heshang ji* (*Reverend Yan’s Collection*).¹ The text of *Dagui jingce* is immediately followed by *Xinxin ming* (*Inscription on Faith in Mind*), the famous poem traditionally attributed to Sengcan (d. 606?), the putative third Chan patriarch.² *Xinxin ming*’s verses follow *Guishan jingce*’s final verse section without any interruption or any explicit marker that separates the two texts. The poem’s title is altered to *Xinxin xinming* (by adding the character *xin*, “faith”), so that its beginning appears as another four-character line in the final verse section of *Guishan jingce*. As was pointed out in Tanaka Ryōshō’s study of the text, the quality of the handwritten manuscript is not very good and it contains numerous copying errors.³

The dating of the Dunhuang manuscript can be established from a document on the back of the manuscript, which is dated 936 (third year of the Qingtai era of the Latter Tang dynasty).⁴ We can presume that *Yan heshang ji*

was copied on the back of this document at about that time, probably because of a scarcity of paper. The identity of Reverend Yan, the compiler of the collection, is not entirely clear. Tanaka identifies five monks as possible candidates and concludes that the most likely choice is Chan teacher Yan of Guishan, a disciple of Guishan whose name is listed in the table of contents of fascicle 11 of *Jingde chuandeng lu* (*Record of the Transmission of the Lamp from the Jingde [Era]*).⁵ Considering the great distance between Guishan's monastery in Hunan and Dunhuang, and in light of the political developments during the Tang-Five Dynasties transition, a copy of *Guishan jingce* probably reached Dunhuang before the fall of the Tang in 907, perhaps even before the start of Huang Chao's (d. 884) rebellion in 878, which is within a couple of decades of Guishan's death.⁶

In addition to the Dunhuang manuscript, there are three other versions of *Guishan jingce* in the following collections: *Quan tang wen*, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, and *Xu zang jing*.⁷ The *Taishō* version is part of *Zimen jingxun*, a collection of mostly Chan texts compiled during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). The *Xu zang jing* version, entitled *Zhu guishan jingce* (*Commentary on the Guishan jingce*), includes a commentary written by Shousui (1072–1147), a monk associated with the Caodong school.⁸ Published in 1139, this is the earliest commentary. Subsequently, *Guishan jingce* and Shousui's commentary were incorporated into *Fozu sanjing chu* (*Commentaries on Three Scriptures of the Buddhas and Patriarchs*), a collection comprised of three texts used as manuals in the training of novices.⁹ Another commentary of *Guishan jingce* is Daopei's (1615–1702) *Guishan jingce zhinan*, which forms a part of his *Fozu sanjing zhinan* (*Primer of Three Scriptures of the Buddha and the Patriarchs*) written during the early Qing dynasty (1644–1912).¹⁰

Guishan and the Text

Guishan was born in the Zhao family, whose ancestral home was in Zhangqi, Fuzhou prefecture (present-day Fujian Province).¹¹ He became a novice at the age of fifteen at Jianshan monastery in his native province. Sometime during his late teens he traveled north to Hangzhou (Zhejiang Province), where he was ordained at Longxing monastery. During his stay there, Guishan studied the Buddhist scriptures and the *vinaya*.¹² In 793, at the age of twenty-two, he traveled to northern Jiangxi, an area that was a stronghold of the Hongzhou school. During a visit to Letan monastery on Shimen mountain, where Mazu was buried six years earlier, he met Baizhang, who at that time was residing close to his teacher's memorial pagoda. Guishan became Baizhang's disciple and later followed him to Baizhang mountain.¹³ He ended up staying with Baizhang for well over a decade.

In about 810, Guishan moved to Dagui mountain (also known as Gui mountain, in Hunan Province), where he spent the rest of his life; its name is

commonly used to refer to him.¹⁴ Gradually a number of monks came to study with him and his Tongqing monastery became one of the main centers of the Chan school. During Guishan's long and successful teaching career his monastic disciples included famous Chan teachers such as Yangshan Huiji (807–833) and Xiangyan Zhixian (n.d.). He also attracted a number of noted lay supporters, including the prominent official and lay Buddhist Pei Xiu (787?–860).¹⁵

During the anti-Buddhist persecution instigated by emperor Wuzong (r. 840–846), Guishan had to flee his monastery, which was seriously damaged, and disguised himself as a layman. During the early stage of the restoration of Buddhism, initiated after the next emperor, Xuanzong (r. 846–859), ascended the throne, Pei Xiu (a civil governor of Hunan at the time) offered support to Tongqing monastery. At the time he also received religious instructions from Guishan.¹⁶ Other noted officials who were Guishan's supporters included Li Jingrang (n.d.), who probably met Guishan while serving as a civil governor of Shannan-dao during the Dazhong era (847–860),¹⁷ and Cui Shenyou (n.d.), who was a civil governor of Hunan.¹⁸ The author of Guishan's first stele inscription—which was subsequently lost—was Lu Jianqiu (789–846),¹⁹ and the calligraphy for the inscription was done by the famous poet Li Shangyin (812–858).²⁰ By the tenth century, Guishan and Yangshan were acknowledged as the putative “founders” of the Guiyang school of Chan, the earliest of the so-called five Chan schools that were recognized in post-Tang Chan.²¹

Guishan jingce is the only text that is directly attributed to Guishan. Other records that are traditionally regarded as representing his teachings are a few transcripts of excerpts from his sermons and a larger selection of dialogues which were included in his record of sayings compiled during the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644).²² Some of these materials are also incorporated in his hagiographies in various collections in the transmission of the lamp genre. Although there is no conclusive evidence that Guishan wrote *Guishan jingce*, there is little to suggest that the traditional attribution is problematic. It is true that Guishan's stele inscription makes no mention of it, but such omission is not uncommon in records of that type.²³ Moreover, Guishan's authorship is suggested by internal evidence. As will be seen, the depiction of Chan practice presented in the text's fourth section closely resembles other Hongzhou texts written during the same period and includes passages that can be found in Guishan's sermons. Furthermore, the tone of urgency and the self-critical attitude evidenced in the text suggest that it was written around the time of the Huichang era's persecution of Buddhism, when Guishan and his contemporaries faced Wuzong's far-reaching purge of the monastic order and when there was a sense that Buddhism faced the threat of obliteration.

Structure and Contents

Guishan jingce consists of two parts: a prose section, which is the main part of the treatise, followed by verses that recapitulate the principal ideas expressed in the prose portion. This kind of literary format, in which a longer expository prose section is followed by a shorter verse summary, is often found in translations of Buddhist scriptures and it also appears in the writings of medieval Chinese monks. The original text lacks any explicit division into separate parts, although in Daobei's commentary the main body of the text is subdivided into five sections.²⁴ According to him, the five sections deal with these topics:

1. Discussion of the perils and problems associated with physical existence.
2. Reprimands about various abuses of monastic life.
3. Clarification of the correct reasons for "leaving home" (i.e., becoming a monk).
4. Discussion of the shortcut for "entering the Way" (i.e., the practice of Chan).
5. Concluding advice and exhortations.

This division of the text is quite useful and I will allude to it in the following pages. Nonetheless, such division also tends to impute to the original text greater structural coherence than is really merited. The whole text is quite repetitive and lacks a clearly articulated thematic structure and carefully developed line of argument. For example, recurring injunctions about varied abuses of monastic life not only are found in the second section but are dispersed throughout the text. In fact, critiques of monks' wayward ways, juxtaposed with implorations/encouragements to live according to hallowed monastic ideals, are principal themes. The final verse section consists of thirty-six four-character lines and constitutes less than ten percent of the entire work. It does not contain anything new but merely recapitulates key points made in the previous sections.

The tone of Guishan's treatise is direct, and often quite personal. This approach indicates that its contents were intended for the monks at his monastery. On the other hand, the issues of monastic discipline and practice discussed in the text have broad relevance beyond the confines of a particular monastic community. In fact, they touch upon key issues pertinent to the whole monastic order in ninth-century China. Guishan probably was concerned about both the quality of monastic life in his own monastery and the overall state of the Buddhist clergy at the time.

Guishan's stated agenda is to expose and rebuke prevalent abuses of monastic life and articulate a set of guidelines for following a purposeful religious vocation. These twin objectives—to critique monastic transgressions and to evoke the lofty ideals of Buddhist monasticism—are interwoven and reinforce

each other. These kinds of critiques of monastic vice and praises of exemplary conduct are common tropes in Buddhist literature. In that sense, Guishan's text is on familiar ground and accords with established models, even if it has a distinctive tenor and occasionally adopts elements of the Chan school's peculiar idiom. The text is also unique for its brief discussion of Chan soteriology, which is integrated into its overall argument about the importance of ethical observances and monastic discipline.

Historical Context

Guishan's comments about monastic life deal with perennial issues and ideals, but they are also related to the state of Buddhism during the middle part of the ninth century. That was a period of flourishing religiosity, during which Buddhism attracted large followings among all segments of the population and received broad support and imperial patronage. Nevertheless, the large Buddhist establishment also faced serious internal and external problems. According to its detractors, the Buddhist church's amassing of vast economic resources and its far-reaching influence on Tang society were accompanied by a sense of complacency, moral decay, and institutional corruption. As Buddhist institutions grew in size and wealth, they attracted increasing numbers of individuals who entered the monastic order for reasons other than religious piety. The result was the overall downgrading of the quality of the clergy, a situation that was by no means unique in the long history of Buddhism.

Under the Tang, in order to become a proper monk one had to receive ordination in accord with the *vinaya*. The ordinations were sanctioned and controlled by the state, which appropriated the right to decide who could join the monastic order. In theory, in addition to receiving ordination, monks were also expected to possess proper religious motivation and lead pious lives governed by monastic rules and customs. In actual practice, as Guishan's texts make clear, the system that regulated entry into the clergy was not effective in making sure that only people with proper religious motivation entered the order. Many people received ordination certificates without strong religious commitment and willingness to submit themselves to the rigors of monastic practice and discipline.

Accounts about monastic abuses recounted in historical documents—including Emperor Wuzong's edicts concerning Buddhism and the anti-Buddhist memorials presented to the throne by literati-officials—gave a picture of the Buddhist church beset with dereliction and corruption.²⁵ Notwithstanding the evident bias of such records, they do reflect real problems in terms of both reality and perception, and they shed light on strains in the relationship between the state and the church. Moreover, similar criticism can be found in the writings of Buddhist authors. For example, critiques of corrupt Buddhist clergy appear in the poems of the eighth-century Buddhist recluse and poet

Hanshan (n.d.). In one of his poems Hanshan mocks monastic greed and hypocrisy, evoking images similar to those found in Guishan's text. In another poem Hanshan contrasts virtuous monks with brazen impostors who enter the order without religious aspirations, and whose greed, ignorance, and evil acts will surely lead to rebirth in hell, a description that also parallels some of Guishan's critiques.²⁶

Even though the problem of monastic corruption was a perennial issue and not unique to the ninth century, there was a sense of a steady worsening of the quality of the clergy that was related to the increase in its size. Part of the problem can be traced back to government's policy of selling ordination certificates in order to raise cash for its treasury.²⁷ Although the policy was introduced in 755 as an expedient measure after the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion in order to raise revenue for military expenditures, the practice became widespread and had long-lasting ramifications. In the long run, the policy had serious adverse effects for both the state's finances and the well-being of the Buddhist church. Until the end of the dynasty, subsequent governments were unable to resist the lure of quick money, even though the release of large numbers of able-bodied adults from tax obligations had disastrous long-term effects on the economy and the state treasury. To make matters worse, unscrupulous local officials, who expanded their power and independence during the post-rebellion period, joined in the lucrative business of selling ordination certificates to anyone who could afford them.

The harsh realities that governed the lives of most people and the lack of opportunities for social advancement, coupled with the privileged status of the Buddhist clergy, caused many to enter the monastic order for reasons that had little to do with religious piety. A huge influx of people joined the Buddhist order simply to avoid paying taxes and being subjected to corvée labor.²⁸ The presence of large numbers of such fraudulent "monks" reinforced existing perceptions about monastic laxity and corruption. They posed a serious problem in terms of public perceptions of Buddhism, especially evident during the Huichang-era (841–846) persecution, when Wuzong was able to implement his harsh anti-Buddhist policies without strong opposition from the bureaucracy or the general public.

The contents of *Guishan jingce* reflect the gravity of such predicaments. The text acknowledges problems in the condition of the monastic order and draws attention to the need for serious reform, offering prescriptions and corrective measures that would lead to the improved quality of the clergy. Its somber and urgent tone reflects the quandary Buddhism found itself in during the Huichang-era persecution and its aftermath. The text acknowledges the pervasive problem of monastic laxity and corruption, but it also tries to make a case for the ultimate worth of monastic life and its value for society. These themes suggest that the text was probably created either during the early buildup to the persecution after Emperor Wu's ascent to the throne, when the

monastic community was facing increased criticism, or during the persecution's aftermath, when Buddhist leaders were reflecting on the reasons for the maltreatment their religion was subjected to and were trying to make sure that key problems within the monastic community were properly addressed.

Ideas and Ideals

Critiques of Monastic Delinquency

Guishan's critiques of monastic abuses and wayward behavior are expressed against a backdrop of basic Buddhist teachings about karma, rebirth, and spiritual cultivation, even as they reflect the socioreligious peculiarities of Tang China. The text starts by evoking a basic Buddhist idea: the impermanence (C. *wuchang*; Skt. *anitya*) of physical existence. The first paragraph underscores the compounded nature of the physical body and the fact that change is the only permanent feature of human life. The same theme reappears in a number of later passages:

Having received a body because of being bound by karma, one is not yet [able to] escape the troubles associated with physical existence. The body received from one's parents is formed by a multitude of causes. Although it is sustained by the four elements, they are constantly out of harmony with each other.²⁹ The impermanence of old age and illness does not await anyone. What has existed in morning is gone by evening. The world changes in an instant. [Physical existence] is like spring frost or morning dew, disappearing all of a sudden. Like a tree planted on a [river] bank or rattan growing in a well, how can it last for a long time?³⁰ Thoughts are flashing by quickly, within an instant, and with the passing of [each] breath there is new life.³¹ How can you then peacefully and comfortably pass [your time] in vain?³²

According to traditional Buddhist teachings, in order to break away from the cycle of mundane existence or *samsara* (*shengsi*), one needs to experience spiritual awakening and attain liberation. Customarily monastic life is regarded as the best venue for the cultivation of the spiritual virtues, experiences, and insights that bring about that realization. The text highlights the monastic distinction, pointing to the renunciation of normal family ties and social obligations as key markers of entry into the religious order:

[Monks] do not supply their parents with tasty foods, and they steadfastly leave behind the six relations.³³ They cannot pacify their country and govern the state. They promptly give up their family's prop-

erty and do not continue the family line [by their failure to produce a male heir]. They leave far behind their local communities, and they shave their hair and follow their [religious] teachers. Inwardly they strive to conquer their thoughts, while outwardly they spread the virtue of noncontention. Abandoning the defiled world, they endeavor to transcend [the mundane realm of birth and death].³⁴

Reflecting the socioreligious milieu of late medieval China, the text acknowledges that a monk's choice to leave secular life and practice religion is a "privilege" granted by the ruler and the wider society, not an undeniable right to which individuals are automatically entitled. Monastic life is a viable vocation for those with spiritual aspirations only because the government and the general public offer support to the monastic order. Aware of the hackneyed criticism that monks eschew traditional Confucian-inspired duties toward the family and the country—which was leveled ad nauseam throughout the history of Buddhism in China—the text resorts to an equally conventional response by arguing that the monks' rejection of social conventions is justified by the lofty religious purpose of their renunciation. Even as monks turn their backs to time-honored social norms and values, by leading authentic religious lives they bring spiritual benefits to their families and the wider society. In light of those considerations, Guishan reminds his monastic audience of its indebtedness to others, and he strongly criticizes monks who abuse the privileges bestowed on them by failing to approach their religious vocation conscientiously:

How can you declare "I am a monk" [C. *biqiu*; Skt. *bhīṣṣu*] as soon as you receive the monastic precepts? The lay donors [C. *tanyue*; Skt. *dānapati*] provide the daily necessities and the monastery's permanent property [*changzhu*]. Without understanding or properly considering where they come from, you [mistakenly] assume they are supplied in a natural way, as a matter of fact. Having finished your meal, you gather in groups and noisily engage in rambling talk about worldly things. However, as you experience ephemeral pleasures, you do not know that pleasure is the cause of suffering. For a very long time you have been following defilements and have not yet tried to reflect inwardly. Time is passing in vain; months and years are wasted to no avail. You are receiving abundant offerings and sumptuous donations. In this way, years pass by without your intending to abandon [this way of life]. The [defilements] you accumulate grow more and more as you maintain the illusory body.³⁵ The Guide [i.e., the Buddha] issued an injunction in which he admonished and encouraged the *bhikṣus* to progress along the way, be strict with their bodies, and [not be too concerned about] not having enough of the three requisites [of robes, food, and shelter]. Here, a

lot of people are addicted to favors without any repose. As days and months pass by, like the sound of the passing wind, they become white-haired [without noticing it].³⁶

In a society where Buddhist institutions are entrenched and receive wide public support, entry into the monastic order automatically guarantees a certain level of economic security and removes the uncertainties of daily survival that characterize the existence of common people. In principle, such arrangements enable monks to lead pious lives dedicated to the pursuit of spiritual perfection. Nonetheless, that position can easily be abused and exploited for personal advantage. A number of passages in Guishan's treatise depict individuals who misuse monastic life by straying from the proper pursuit of their religious vocation and leading an indolent existence. Here is one of the early examples:

Without having yet grasped the meaning of the teachings [of Buddhism], they cannot awaken to the recondite way. As they become old and accumulate monastic seniority, they become pretentious despite their poor abilities. Unwilling to draw near and rely on excellent [spiritual] mentors [lit. "friends"], such persons know of nothing else but being rude and conceited. Without being versed in the Dharma and the *vinaya*, they have no inhibitions whatsoever. Sometimes, with loud voices they engage in [useless] talk without any restraint. They do not respect their seniors, peers, or juniors. They are not different from a gathering of *brahmins*. [During meals] they make noise with their alms bowls, and they rise up first as soon as they have finished eating. As they leave in disorder or return in an inappropriate manner, their appearance is not at all that of monks. Rising from their seats in an agitated manner, they disturb other people's minds.³⁷

According to Guishan, the failure of corrupt monks to learn the Buddhist teachings and acquire proper religious values posed serious structural problems for the monastic order. Under the monastic rules concerning seniority, which were further reinforced by the traditional Chinese respect for old age, such pseudo-monks eventually assumed positions of seniority in the monastic hierarchy, despite their lack of appropriate spiritual qualities. Such situations predisposed them to be even less malleable to positive influences, as they became arrogant and hopelessly set in their undisciplined ways. The text describes such monks as being without self-discipline or a sense of appropriate demeanor. Behaving in ways contrary to proper monastic decorum, the reader is told, such pseudo-monks created discord and problems for the entire monastic community:

Because [such corrupt monks] do not observe the small regulations and the minor rules of deportment, they cannot guide the new generation [of monks, as a result of which] new students have no one to emulate [as a model of proper behavior]. When others reprimand them, they say, "I am a mountain monk." Since they are unfamiliar with the sustained practice of Buddhism, their disposition and actions are constantly unbecoming and crude. When viewed in this way, should beginners become lazy and greedy persons, as time slowly slips by they will eventually become abominable persons. Unaware, they will in due course start staggering and become old and useless. When they encounter various circumstances, they [will not know what to do], like someone facing a wall. When asked [about the teachings of Buddhism] by younger students, they have no words of guidance. Even when they have something to say, their words do not accord with the scriptures. Sometimes, when younger monks speak lightly to them, they reprimand the younger monks for not having good manners. They become angry and rancorous, and they vent their anger on others.³⁸

The situation described here had serious ramifications for the condition of Buddhism and the image of monks in Tang society. Monastic training is a gradual process in which younger monks learn by observing the examples and absorbing the instructions of their seniors. If senior monks are ignorant about the doctrines and practices of Buddhism, the younger generations of monks have nobody to learn from and are left without proper models to follow. Thus the failure to learn and abide by the teachings of Buddhism is not only a personal downfall but also a dereliction of the monks' duty to ensure the transmission of Buddhism to later generations. It is noteworthy that in the passages just cited, as well as in other places, the scriptures and the monastic code of discipline are identified as key sources of religious authority and legitimacy. This concept reflects Guishan's, and by extension the Chan school's, acceptance of a mainstream view prevalent in Tang Buddhism.

In a number of places the text reminds its audience of the dire consequences awaiting those who indulge in the kinds of reprehensible behaviors just described. Here is one example from the second section of the text:

One morning they will wake up lying sick in their beds, bothered and constrained by a multitude of ailments. From dawn until night they will keep on thinking, while in their minds there will be confusion and fear. The road ahead will be unclear, and they will not know where they are going. Even if, at that point, for the first time they become aware and remorseful of their faults, it will be of no avail; [being too late,] that is like digging a well after one becomes

thirsty. They might have self-regret for not having practiced earlier and for having many faults and demerits at their old age. At the point of departure, having squandered [their whole life], they will tremble with fear and will be filled with panic. When someone crosses away from the living, like a sparrow flying away, his consciousness follows its karma. As when a person incurs debts, he will first come under pressure to pay back those who are powerful. In the same way, though there are many kinds of mental states in the mind, one inclines to descend into [a specific rebirth according to] the predominant part [of the defiled mind].³⁹ The murderous demon of impermanence does not stop for an instant. Life cannot be extended and time waits for no one. Nobody among the human beings and the gods living in the three realms of existence can escape this kind of destiny.⁴⁰ In this manner, one [is reborn and] receives a [new] body for untold eons.⁴¹

In a typical manner, the text describes the unfortunate circumstances that surround the end of a life that has been wasted in unworthy pursuits. According to the doctrines of karma and rebirth, an evil person who has led an immoral life while pretending to be a monk cannot expect to be reborn amid happy and favorable circumstances. In the preceding paragraph and elsewhere, Guishan uses popular teachings about the law of karma in a way familiar from Buddhist literature. He is urging rectification of immoral or improper behavior by restating traditional Buddhist views about the dire consequences of unwholesome acts. These are rather basic Buddhist teachings, reminding us that Chan teachers dealt with real people, with all their problems and failings, not just with the spiritual virtuosi whose images populate later writings about Tang Chan.

Exemplary Monastic Ideals

Much of Guishan's text focuses on censure of sundry abuses of monastic life, but its critiques are juxtaposed and contrasted with positive images of lofty monastic ideals. The text valorizes the religious act of "leaving home" and becoming a monk (C. *chujia*; Skt. *pravrajita*) and adopts a traditional image of monks as individuals who have left the mundane life in order to single-mindedly pursue the quest for spiritual perfection. Echoing traditional sentiments, the exemplary monk is depicted as an otherworldly ascetic dedicated to his practice and oblivious to the pull of material things and worldly pleasures. The image of monks presented in the text was familiar in Tang society. Such broadly defined standards of model religious behavior were recognized by both

the monastic order and the general public, even if they were not always followed in actual practice.

In keeping with received traditions and prevailing customs, Guishan contends that monastic identity and practice are intimately related to the observance of the *vinaya* (*lü*), the monastic code of discipline. The text describes the role of monastic discipline as follows:

The Buddha first established the *vinaya* and began to enlighten [his disciples]. The monastic regulations and the rules of dignified deportment are pure like ice and snow. By observing the precepts and ceasing transgressions, [monks] control their initial [spiritual] resolve. The detailed regulations correct all that is crude and unwholesome. When someone has not yet gone to the teaching site of the *vinaya* [*pini faxi*],⁴² how can he evaluate the superior vehicle of the definitive meaning [*liaoyi shangsheng*]? It is such a pity when a whole lifetime is passed in vain. Regretting afterwards about missed opportunities will be of little avail.⁴³

Here the *vinaya* is presented as the foundation of authentic religious life. Following a long-established tradition, the text affirms that observance of the monastic precepts leads to a lifestyle that is conducive to the development and maintenance of proper religious aspiration. Ethical observance is also described as an essential condition for realizing the highest doctrines of Buddhism, including the ultimate teaching of the “superior vehicle.” Guishan having established the importance of monastic discipline, in the third section of the text is found this explanation of the correct reasons for “leaving home” and becoming a monk:

Those who have left home [i.e., monks], having set off toward the transcendental direction, differ from laypeople in both their mind and their external appearance. They cause the seed of sanctity [i.e., the seed of Buddhahood] to continue to flourish and make Mara’s armies tremble with fear.⁴⁴ They repay the four kinds of benevolence and save those living in the three worlds.⁴⁵ If you are not like that, then you falsely pretend to be a member of the monastic order.⁴⁶

The monastic distinction implies a clear line of separation between monks and ordinary people. Monks differ in their external appearance, their values, and the goals to which they dedicate their lives. In the preceding paragraph, the text offers another brief rejoinder to the previously noted criticism that monks are not filial and properly socialized in a conventional (namely Confucian) sense. It does so by adopting a standard Buddhist argument, namely that through their spiritual practice monks repay the depth of gratitude they owe to four key constituencies: their parents, the ruler, the people who sup-

ported them, and the Buddha. By embodying and actively propagating the teachings of Buddhism, they ensure their continued transmission and aid the spiritual salvation of their fellow human beings. Guishan then goes on to offer some practical advice about how to cultivate a genuine monastic disposition:

Having left your relatives, when with a determined [spiritual] resolve you put on the monastic robes,⁴⁷ where are your thoughts and aspirations directed? Think about it from dawn until night—how can you afford to pass your time procrastinating? A person of great ability who has set his mind on the Buddha's teachings becomes an exemplar to the latecomers [to religious life]. [But even if] you are always like that, you will still not be able to [fully] accord [with the truth]. When speaking, your words should accord with the scriptures. In conversation, you should depend on the examination and study of the records of ancient exemplars. Your appearance and conduct should be outstanding, and your spirit should be lofty and peaceful.⁴⁸

The text continues to reiterate familiar monastic themes and ideals. Again, we find monks described as individuals who have left secular life and are concerned solely with the quest for enlightenment. We are also once more reminded that the basic criteria of proper spiritual understanding are the Buddhist scriptures. Individual behavior is to be modeled on the actions and sayings of ancient exemplars of Buddhist perfection, as recorded in Buddhist literature. All of these statements are those of a person with deep respect for tradition, someone who defines the monastic vocation in fairly conventional terms. Here we are far removed from the familiar figure of the Chan iconoclast, who is usually portrayed as someone who flaunts tradition and rejects conventional religious authority. The significance of the monastic tradition, and especially the central role of spiritual teachers, is further described in the following paragraph:

A journey to a distant place should be undertaken with the help of good friends, and one needs to purify one's ears and eyes again and again. When journeying and when stopping, one must select [suitable] companions, always listening to [teachings] he has not heard before. Therefore, it has been said, "I was born by my mother and father, but I was perfected by my [spiritual] friends."⁴⁹ Drawing close to and associating with the virtuous is like walking in mist or dew—though the clothes do not become wet, there is always dampness. Becoming influenced by those who are evil leads to the increase of evil knowledge and views. Performing evil from morning to night, one directly meets retribution, and after death one drowns and perishes [to be reborn in the evil realms]. Once the human body is lost,

it [might be] impossible to regain it for myriad eons. Sincere words are not pleasing to the ear, but how can you fail to inscribe them in your hearts. Then you can cleanse your mind [of defilements] and cultivate your virtue, retire into obscurity and conceal your name, and collect your spirit, so that there is an end to all [mental] noise.⁵⁰

Here the text stresses the importance of spiritual mentors (or friends, C. *shan zhihshi*; Skt. *kalyāṇa-mitra*),⁵¹ which typically refers to monks' spiritual teachers. By extension, the term can also be applied to other monks who provide support and guidance along the path of practice and realization. Such a sense of monastic camaraderie is notably expressed in the text's final exhortations, which include the following passage: "When you deeply know your faults and suffering, then you can encourage each other to persevere with your practice. Make a vow that for the next hundred eons and thousand lives you will everywhere be spiritual companions [*falü*] to each other."⁵²

Echoing comparable passages in the *agamas* and the Mahayāna scriptures, Guishan advises his monks to associate with spiritual mentors and be constantly willing to learn from them. Likewise, he advises them to avoid evil people, lest they are influenced by them and led astray from the path. In case the audience forgets, they are again reminded about the workings of the law of karma and the unfortunate consequences of unwholesome actions. Similar sentiments are reiterated in the text's concluding exhortations. There Guishan yet again implores his monastic audience to engender an ardent determination to practice the teachings of Buddhism, and he urges them to examine and perfect their daily conduct:

I sincerely hope that you will establish a determined [spiritual] aspiration and will engender an exceptional frame of mind. In terms of your conduct, you should emulate those who are superior to you and do not arbitrarily follow those who are mediocre and superficial. You must make a resolution [to achieve liberation] in this lifetime, and you should presume that no other person could do it for you. Putting your mind to rest and forgetting external conditions, do not oppose the various defilements. When the mind is empty and external objects are quiescent, one cannot pass through only because of being stuck for a long time [into deeply ingrained habitual patterns]. You should earnestly read this text and exhort yourself at all times.⁵³

Here monks are once more advised to set their minds on lofty religious goals and model their behavior on suitable exemplars. As they emulate those who embody genuine spiritual virtues, they are also to dissociate themselves from those who lack such attributes. The last quoted passage also offers brief instructions about how to deal with mental defilements that are reminiscent of passages in other Chan texts. Monks are advised that opposing or trying to

obliterate mental defilements is futile, because such effort is based on misapprehension of the nonsubstantial and illusory nature of the defilements. Instead of trying to obliterate essentially nonexistent defilements, which reifies them even more, one is simply to put the mind to rest and let it return to a pristine state of purity, which is the mind's original condition before the bifurcation of dualistic thoughts set in. That notion leads to a key issue: the connection between the ethical norms and monastic ideals described in the text and the practice of Chan.

Chan Practice and Realization

So far there has been hardly anything in the text that is distinctive of the Chan school. Its descriptions of the monastic ideal resonate with those in other Indian and Chinese works on morality and monasticism. Guishan's views about monastic life come across as fairly conventional and are in general agreement with mainstream notions prevalent at the time. It is only in the fourth section that the text introduces ideas and concepts that are characteristic of Chan. The section starts with a brief exposition of Chan practice as a path that leads to direct realization of reality:

If you want to practice Chan and study the Way, then you should suddenly go beyond the expedient teachings. You should harmonize your mind with the arcane path, explore the sublime wonders,⁵⁴ make final resolution of the recondite [meaning], and awaken to the source of truth. You should also extensively ask for instructions from those who have foresight and should get close to virtuous friends. The sublime wonder of this teaching [*zong*] is difficult to grasp—one must pay attention very carefully. If someone can suddenly awaken to the correct cause, then he is at the stage of leaving defilement behind. He then shatters the three worlds and twenty-five forms of existence.⁵⁵ Such a person knows that all phenomena, internal and external, are not real—arising from mind's transformations, they are all provisional designations. There is no need to anchor the mind anywhere. When feelings merely do not attach to things, then how can things hinder anyone? Let the nature of other things flow freely, without [interfering by] trying to break apart or extend anything. The sounds that one hears and the forms that one sees are all ordinary; whether being here or there, one freely responds to circumstances without any fault.⁵⁶

This description of the Chan path accords with formulations found in other texts associated with the Hongzhou school. Its conception of practice and awakening is reminiscent of Guishan's record,⁵⁷ and it also resonates with

passages from the sermons of Mazu, Baizhang, and Huangbo. A number of terms used at the beginning of the paragraph—such as “practice Chan” (*canchan*), “study the Way” (*xuedao*), “harmonize the mind” (*xinqi*), “awaken to the source of truth” (*wu zhenyuan*), “sudden awakening” (*dunwu*)—also appear in the sermons of other Chan teachers. Likewise, key ideas expressed in the paragraph—such as the unreal and mind-created nature of phenomena, and the keeping of an unattached mind that does not interfere with the natural flow of things—are familiar themes to students of Tang Chan. What is more, parts of this paragraph parallel passages from one of Guishan’s sermons.⁵⁸ For example, the expression “feelings do not attach to things” (*jing bufu wu*) appears in both texts, while the sentence, “The sounds that one hears and the forms that one sees are all ordinary” is similar to a sentence from the sermon, which states: “What one sees and hears at any time is ordinary.”⁵⁹

Guishan jingce describes the teachings of Chan as an apex of Buddhist religiosity. In the previous quotation we are told that the practice of Chan leads to sudden awakening, through which one transcends the realm of ignorance and realizes the true nature of reality. The text then goes on to draw connection between the realization of Chan’s soteriological goal and the points about monastic attitudes and aims made in the previous sections:

When someone acts in this manner, he does not put on the monastic robe in vain. Furthermore, such a person repays the four kinds of benevolence and liberates those living in the three worlds. If lifetime after lifetime he can continue [practicing] without giving up, it is definitely plausible to expect that he will reach the stage of Buddhahood. As a guest who keeps on coming and going in the three realms, appearing and disappearing, he serves as a model for others. This one teaching is most sublime and most profound. Just discern the affirmation of your own mind and you will certainly not be deceived.⁶⁰

The monk who perfects the Chan path is presented as a paradigmatic exemplar of authentic religiosity, someone who embodies the monastic ideals described in the previous pages. Having achieved a measure of sanctity, finally he repays the depth of gratitude he owes to others, is able to offer expert spiritual guidance, and serves as a model of religious excellence. It is noteworthy that in contrast to the subitist rhetoric evidenced in the previous paragraph, here we are presented with a more realistic assessment of the human ability to realize spiritual perfection. The text accedes that Buddhahood can be realized if one practices diligently, but it also notes that the realization of that ultimate goal might take a number of lifetimes. Apparently ninth-century monks acknowledged that in reality only a few exceptional individuals were able to achieve the main goals of spiritual practice within a single lifetime. Those who did so were deemed to have joined the ranks of Buddhist saints.

Chan teachers commanded great respect precisely because their spiritual accomplishments were considered to be exceptional, notwithstanding the recurring rhetoric about the accessibility of the experience of enlightenment found in Chan literature.

From such a perspective, sudden awakening is only the beginning of a long and essentially gradual process of spiritual cultivation that culminates with the realization of Buddhahood. This paradigm evokes the theory of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation advocated by Zongmi (780–841).⁶¹ A similar idea also appears in Guishan's record, where he states that a person who has experienced sudden awakening still needs to continue his spiritual cultivation so that he can gradually remove ingrained karmic tendencies and habitual mental patterns:

There was a monk who asked the Master [i.e., Guishan], "Does a person who has had sudden awakening still need to continue with cultivation?" The Master said, "If one has true awakening and attains to the fundamental, then at that time that person knows for himself that cultivation and noncultivation are just dualistic opposites. Like now, though the initial inspiration is dependent on conditions, if within a single thought one awakens to one's own reality, there are still certain habitual tendencies that have accumulated over numberless *kalpas* which cannot be purified in a single instant. That person should certainly be taught how to gradually remove the karmic tendencies and mental habits: this is cultivation. There is no other method of cultivation that needs to be taught to that person."⁶²

In contrast to other Chan texts, in which lofty subitist rhetoric is dissociated from actual everyday behavior and experience, Guishan's treatise displays sensitivity to the realities of religious life. Its main concern is not to present an idealized vision of a spiritual path for the religious virtuosi—in Chan parlance referred to as those of "highest abilities"—in which there is sole emphasis on immediate insight into the nature of reality. Rather, the text shows concern for all those who do not belong to that exalted category, namely the actual monks of Guishan's and other monasteries, many of whom had trouble observing even the basic injunctions of religious life. In contrast to the encounter-dialogue stories about sudden and spontaneous experiences of awakening that are the best-known parts of Chan literature, Guishan's text presents a more realistic picture of religious life and offers practical exhortations about the immediate concerns of ordinary monks.

Chan teachings about sudden awakening might serve as inspiring religious ideals and may perhaps animate spiritual practice, but for most people they remain remote ideas that do not necessarily tally with their everyday experiences. Notwithstanding the Chan school's efforts to demystify and bring down to earth the experience of enlightenment, for most that is still an abstract

ideal that offers little practical guidance about actual daily conduct and practice. For monks who do not belong to the highest-ranking category of spiritual virtuosi capable of making the sudden leap into the recondite realm of enlightenment—which is to say, for most monks—the text offers the following advice:

Those of average abilities, who have not been able suddenly to go beyond [the expedient teachings], should pay attention to the doctrinal teachings [*jiaofa*]. They should review and rummage in the palm leaves of the scriptures and thoroughly inquire into their principles. [Furthermore, they should also] hand them down to others from mouth to mouth and should expound and make them known, thus guiding the younger generations and repaying the Buddha's benevolence. They should, moreover, not waste their time in vain, but they must in this manner uphold [the teachings of Buddhism]. When someone has dignified conduct in all postures and activities, then he is a monk who is worthy and able to receive the teachings. Have you not seen *dolichos* leaning on a pine tree, rising upward for a thousand *xun*?⁶³ When someone depends and relies on superior causes, then he can obtain extensive benefits.⁶⁴

Ordinary monks are advised that the expedient teachings of traditional Buddhism provide the best approach to religious cultivation. Monks unable to “suddenly transcend the expedient teachings” are encouraged to study and reflect on the doctrines of Buddhism, as presented in the scriptures. They are also advised to become involved in the propagation and transmission of Buddhism and are reminded that they should lead exemplary lives worthy of respect. Although all practices are forsaken at the moment of awakening, those who had not attained such a level of spiritual attainment are urged to cultivate traditional practices such as those noted earlier. At the end of its brief discussion of Chan practice in the fourth section, the text returns to its main theme, the importance of morality and monastic discipline:

Earnestly practice the pure precepts, without deception, deficiency, and transgression. From lifetime to lifetime there are outstanding and sublime causes and effects. You cannot afford to pass your days aimlessly, letting time go by in a haze. It is a pity when time is wasted without seeking [spiritual] progress. Consuming the offerings of the faithful from the ten directions in vain, such people also fail to repay the four kinds of benevolence. They accumulate [evil karma] and [their ignorance] gets progressively deeper, while their minds' impurities are apt to obstruct [their spiritual development]. Whichever way they try to go, they come to a standstill, and they are disparaged and ridiculed by other people. Therefore it has been said, “He is already a man, and so am I; there is no need to belittle one-

self and shrink back.”⁶⁵ If someone is not like that, then he has entered the monastic order in vain; as he lets his whole life to slip by, really he obtains no benefit whatsoever.⁶⁶

At the end of the fourth section, the text again underscores the importance of monastic rules, practices, and observances. It encourages monks not to shrink back from the challenging religious task that awaits them. They are also reminded—with a quotation from Mengzi!—that the Buddha and other great monks of the past were not special or supernatural beings. Ancient sages faced the same obstacles, but they were able to overcome them with wholehearted effort and persistent practice. Only through emulation of their example, declares the text, does a monk’s entry into the monastic order acquire true value and meaning, and can he bring benefit to himself and to others.

Attitudes toward Discipline and Morality

Generally speaking, the rules of monastic discipline fulfill several basic functions. First, they serve as communal precepts that regulate the monks’ daily life and ensure good working order in the monastery. In that sense, they form a communal charter that organizes monastic life by facilitating an environment and institutional setting that reflect received religious values, beliefs, and doctrines. Thereby the rules codify an institutional system that is conducive to monks’ communal pursuit of their vocation. In addition, monastic rules also serve as guidelines for proper individual conduct, molding each monk’s internal and external attitudes and reinforcing his commitment to a religious way of life.⁶⁷ As such, monastic rules provide a broad contextual framework for spiritual life and practice, fostering an appropriate mind-set and nurturing mores conducive to pursuit of hallowed religious goals, as understood and accepted by the whole community.

Besides prescriptions for virtuous behavior, monastic regulations also contain proscriptions and punishments for acts deemed improper and unbecoming for a monk. Punishments for monastic transgressions are a feature common to both *vinaya* literature and the additional systems of rules devised by medieval Chinese monks, which were meant to supplement the *vinaya* regulations. A prominent example is Zhiyi’s (538–597) *Li zhifa* (*Establishing Regulations*), written for his community on Tiantai mountain. Punishments mentioned in the text include ritual bowing for lesser infractions and expulsion from the community for serious offenses.⁶⁸ Similar punishments are also prescribed in Xuefeng Yicun’s (822–908) *Shi guizhi* (*Teacher’s Regulations*), the oldest extant monastic rule composed by a Chan teacher.⁶⁹

As was already noted, *Guishan jingce*’s entreaties and instructions about how to lead a disciplined life dedicated to the study, practice, and realization

of the truths of Buddhism indicate that its author largely conceived of monastic life in traditional, mainstream terms. In the treatise is found concern for both the communal and personal facets of monastic life. There is an emphasis on the harmonious functioning of the whole monastic community, but also a stress on the purity of an individual monk's religious aspiration and his commitment to a disciplined way of life. The communal and personal aspects are not really separable, given that smooth operation of the monastic community depends on an individual monk's espousal of shared religious values and his commitment to a collective pursuit of the tradition's ideals. As Guishan's text makes clear, such unity of purpose was apparently not easy to achieve, especially in light of the large number of people with diverse motives and predilections who entered the monastic order. The text exemplifies some of the difficulties and challenges faced by Guishan and other monastic leaders in ninth-century China as they tried to fashion and guide communities that in both spirit and practice embodied the central values of Buddhist monasticism.

Guishan jingce provides us with valuable information about the relationship between monastic precepts and conventional morality on the one hand and Chan's soteriological program on the other. The text presupposes a two-tiered path of practice and realization. The higher level, associated with the teachings of Chan, is centered on the notion of radical detachment and transcendence of the mundane realm of delusion and defilement. As described in the text's fourth section, at that level the adept perfects complete detachment, which leads to an immediate, nonconceptual realization of reality. The notion of sudden awakening thus plays a pivotal role in Chan's soteriological schema, serving as a guiding principle and denoting a key spiritual experience. Reflecting an outlook prevalent within Chan circles, awakening is understood as a pinnacle of the Path, a high point when diverse spiritual qualities and practices are merged into a holistic whole, which implies a balance between spiritual insight and everyday activity.

Notwithstanding the call for radical transcendence invoked by the Chan ideal, the text repeatedly makes it clear that normative monastic practices and observances are the foundation of authentic spirituality. Together with other traditional practices, such as study and reflection on the scriptures, they form a comprehensive and progressive regimen of spiritual cultivation. As such, they constitute the second, conventional level of the Path. This level is meant for all those who are unable to "suddenly go beyond the expedient teachings" and directly realize the ultimate truth. Monastic observances and traditional practices, according to the text, enable an aspiring monk to develop spiritually and thus validate his existence, perhaps even reaching a point where he can make the final jump into the abstruse realm of awakening.

Guishan jingce presents a religious vision in which monastic discipline is integrated into Chan practice by simultaneously asserting and collapsing two levels of religious discourse: the radical nondualism of Chan doctrine on the

one hand, and conventional teachings about monastic practices and observance on the other. The conception of Chan soteriology implied here revolves around the relationship between these two approaches, which can be termed “sudden” and “conventional,” or perhaps “gradual,” following the terminology popularized by the sudden versus gradual debates. Traditionalist interpretations of Tang Chan, especially of the Hongzhou school, as an iconoclastic tradition presuppose a wide and potentially unbridgeable gap between the two approaches. That is based on the notion that the “sudden” method inevitably implies a rejection of all “expedient means,” including traditional moral observance and spiritual practices.

The contents of *Guishan jingce* make it clear that such interpretation is not tenable. According to the text, these two methods are not diametrically opposed or mutually exclusive. Both of them constitute viable approaches to spiritual cultivation, which complement and reinforce each other. Such outlooks resonate with prior Chan texts, including the earliest records of the Hongzhou school. Its conceptual scheme is also reminiscent of Bodhidharma’s treatise on two entrances and four practices, *Erru sixing lun*, regarded as the first text of proto-Chan. There the sudden-like approach of “entry through principle” (*liru*) and the more conventional approach of “entry through practice” (*xingrui*) are both presented as viable methods of spiritual cultivation.⁷⁰

According to *Guishan jingce*, the realization of awakening is not divorced from the broader context of monastic life. The text concurs that at the moment of awakening the adept transcends all beliefs, doctrines, and practices, but such experience takes place within the context of disciplined monastic life. Chan practice is therefore integrated within the overall religious principles and institutional structures of Buddhist monasticism. Admittedly, there is a seeming sense of incongruity with Chan school’s radical subitist rhetoric, especially its call to transcend conventional practices as well as the injunction to observe monastic discipline. However, such contradictions are more apparent than real. According to the present text and other documents from the Tang period, it was understood in Chan circles that the detachment and transcendence associated with the experience of awakening did not imply an antinomian abandon and rejection of conventional moral norms (although there were exceptions to that rule, such as the Baotang school in Sichuan). With the attainment of spiritual realization, ethical norms are simply internalized and integrated into a state of heightened awareness and insight.

In contrast to a popular view of late Tang Chan as an iconoclastic tradition, *Guishan jingce* shows how the Hongzhou school’s conception of Chan practice was grounded in the religious and institutional milieu of medieval monasticism. The moral basis of practice was constituted by the precepts and mores of Buddhist monasticism. In terms of their attitudes toward ethical observances, Chan teachers and their followers did not depart significantly from time-honored monastic norms and ideals. In that sense, the contents of *Guishan*

han jingce provide evidence in support of a broader argument about the close relationship between Chan monasteries and other forms of Buddhist monasticism in ninth-century China.

We might conclude that monastic discipline and Chan practice were perceived as two complementary aspects of a comprehensive religious system. Each of them addressed a particular facet of religious life, together forming an integrated vision of a progressive path of practice and realization. On a communal level, monastic discipline provided an institutional context for the quest for spiritual awakening. On a personal level, ethical observances instilled attitudes that reinforced religious commitments and sustained spiritual cultivation. In a sense, the sudden awakening paradigm was complementary to the monastic regimen, providing a soteriological framework that imbued everyday life with a higher sense of purpose. That implied the integration of Chan's particular soteriological scheme with the values and practices of the broader monastic tradition.

For Guishan and his contemporaries, adherence to monastic mores and observances was an essential part of their tradition. Far from rejecting traditional monasticism, late-Tang Chan was very much an integral part of it. Therefore, in order to make sense of Chan doctrine and practice, we must take into account the institutional and religious contexts that produced and sustained them, which point to no other than the medieval world of Chinese Buddhist monasticism.

ABBREVIATIONS

- CDL *Jingde chuandeng lu*. 30 *chüan*, in T 51, 2076.
 JTS *Jiu tangshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975).
 QTW *Quan tangwen* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990).
 SGSZ *Song gaoseng zhuan*, in T 50, 2061
 XTS *Xin tangshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975).

NOTES

1. For a photographic reproduction of the original manuscript, see *Dunhuang baozang*, no. 134:91–92 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1981–1986).
2. This rendition of *Xinxin ming* is also the oldest extant version of this popular text. For the standard version, see T no. 48:376–377. For more information about the Dunhuang version of *Xinxin ming*, see Tanaka Ryōshō, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1983), pp. 297–300.
3. Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, pp. 337–338 (see also idem, “*Genoshoshu to sareru Tonko hon Daii kyosaku ni tsuite*,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 22/2 [1974], pp. 630–635, which is the original article on which that chapter is based). The other two versions of the text—in QTW and XZJ—are quite similar. Noting a large number of different characters in the Dunhuang manuscript when compared with the later versions, Tanaka suggests two explanations for those discrepancies: copying er-

rors in the Dunhuang manuscript, or the possibility that the editors of the later versions changed the text at certain places in light of their own views about Chan doctrine.

4. Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, pp. 300, 339–340.

5. See CDL II, T no. 51:281c, and Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, p. 341. Unfortunately, virtually nothing is known about this monk. The other four monks identified by Tanaka are: (1) Chan teacher Xuanquan Yen of Huaizhou, (2) Ruiyan Shiyan of Taizhou, (3) Yaoshan Zhongyan, and (4) Pengyan of Anguo Zhangshou temple in Suzhou.

6. This scenario is postulated in view of the warfare and strife that surrounded the gradual collapse of the Tang dynasty, and the ensuing political divisions during the early decades of the tenth century.

7. QTW no. 919:4243b–44b; T no.48:1042b–43c, and XZJ no. 111:142c–48d. A Japanese translation of *Guishan jingce* can be found in Kajitani Sōnin, “Isan kyōsaku,” in Nishitani Keiji and Yanagida Seizan, eds., *Zenka goroku*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1974), pp. 141–151. Kajitani has another Japanese rendition with the same title in Nishitani Keiji, ed., *Zen no koten: Chūgoku* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1968), pp. 151–174. There is also an earlier rendition in Tomitani Tyūkei, trans., “Butsuso sankyō kōgi,” in *Sōtō-shū kōgi*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975; orig. ed. published in 1928), pp. 175–243. Kajitani and Tomitani both do not offer proper Japanese translations of the text. Instead, they present *yomikudashi* readings of the original, followed by notes and running commentaries, both of which are much more extensive in Tomitani’s work. There are also English translations in Mario Poceski, “The Hongzhou School During the Mid-Tang Period” (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 2000), pp. 456–485, and Melvin M. Takemoto, “The Kuei-shan ching-ts’è: Morality in the Hung-chou School of Ch’an” (M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1983), pp. 79–90.

8. For the text of Shousui’s *stupa* inscription (accompanied with a Japanese translation), see Ishii Shūdō, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1987), pp. 479–490. Shousui’s commentary is rather brief and not particularly helpful.

9. The other two texts included in the collection are two popular scriptures, *Fo yijiao jing* (*Scripture concerning the Buddha’s Bequeathed Teaching*) and *Sishier zhang jing* (*Scripture in Forty-two Sections*), which are also accompanied by Shousui’s commentaries.

10. XZJ no. 59:185c–91c. This text contains the same three texts found in Shousui compilation. Daopei is also known as the compiler of *Huayanjing shulun*, which includes the eighty fascicles translation of the *Huayan* scripture together with the two famous commentaries written during the Tang dynasty, by Li Tongxuan (635–730) and Chengguan (738–839).

11. The main source for Guishan’s life is Zheng Yu’s (n.d.) stele inscription, *Tanzhou Daguishan Tongqingzi Dayuan chanshi beiming bingxu*, in QTW no. 820:3832c, and *Tang wencui* no. 63:6b–8b (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1986; vol. 2). The inscription was composed in 866, thirteen years after Guishan’s death, following the bestowal of imperial title to him in 863 and the construction of his memorial pagoda in 865. Other sources are his biographies in SGSZ II, T no. 50:777a–b, CDL 9, T no. 51:264b–66a, and *Zutang ji* 16 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1996), pp. 359–363.

12. CDL 9, T no. 51:264b.

13. According to the *Zutang ji* biography, before his journey to Jiangxi, Guishan briefly visited Tiantai mountain and Guoqing monastery, the center of the Tiantai school. There he met with Hanshan and Shide, the two famous recluses and poets. *Zutang ji* 16, p. 360. The same story is also recorded in Guishan's biography in SGSZ 11, T no. 50:777b.

14. Following the CDL biography. However, according to the SGSZ biography, he resided in Changsha until about 820, when he moved to the nearby Gui mountain (also located in Changsha prefecture).

15. Guishan's stele inscription states that Pei Xiu and Guishan met in 846. For Pei's official biographies, see JTS no. 177:4592–4593, and XTS no. 182:5371–5372. For a study of his life that places substantial emphasis on his Buddhist activities, see Yoshikawa Tadao, "Hai Kyū den: Tōdai no ichi shidaifu to bukkō," *Tōhō gaku* 64 (1992): 115–277.

16. According to *Tanzhou daguishan zhongxing ji*, included in *Shimen weizi chan, Zenshū zensho* 95, p. 282a, Pei Xiu donated a landed estate to Guishan's monastic community to supply the monks with food provisions. Relevant passages from this text are also quoted in Yoshikawa, "Hai Kyū den," p. 165. See also *Tangwen cui* no. 63: 7a (vol. 2); QTW no. 820:3832c; CTL 9, T no. 51:264c, and Jeffrey Broughton, "Kueifeng Tsung-mi: Convergence of Ch'an and the Teaching" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1975), p. 35.

17. See SGSZ 11, T no. 50:777c. It was in response to Li's petition that the court granted the name Tongqing to Guishan's monastery. See SGSZ 11, T no. 50:777c, and Yoshikawa, "Hai Kyū den," p. 164. For Li's biographies, see JTS no. 187b:4891–4892, and XTS no. 177:5290–5291.

18. For Cui, see JTS no. 177:4577–4580.

19. Biographies in JTS no. 163:4271–4273 and XTS no. 177:5284–5285. Lu was also the author of the stele inscription for Mazu's disciple Yanguan Jian; see QTW no. 733:3354b–c, and *Wenyuan yinghua* no. 868:4578a–4579a (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966).

20. Li's biographies are in JTS no. 190c:5077–5078 and XTS no. 203:5792–5793. He was also the author of an inscription that commemorates Mazu, Xitang, Wuxiang, and Wuzhu; see QTW no. 780:3608b–3609c. Lu's composition of Guishan's inscription and Li's writing of the calligraphy are also noted in Guishan's biography in SGSZ 11, T no. 50:777c.

21. The earliest mention of Guiyang as a separate Chan lineage (*pai*) is in Fayuan Wenyi's (885–958) *Zongmen shigui lun*, XZJ no. 110:439d, where it is mentioned along with the Deshan, Linji, Caodong, Xuefeng, and Yunmen lineages.

22. For Guishan's record of sayings, see *Tanzhou Guishan Lingyou chanshi yulu*, T no. 47:577–582, and XZJ no. 119:425c–430c. It is part of *Wujia yulu*, a collection of the records of sayings of the putative "founders" of the five schools of Chan that were recognized during the early Song period.

23. For example, Huangbo's hagiographies contain no mention of his *Chuanxin fayao*, even though the text was compiled by Pei Xiu soon after Huangbo's death and was subsequently circulated within Chan circles.

24. See XZJ no. 59:185d. Kajitani and Tomitani also follow this division of the text.

25. The following passage from a decree issued in 731 is typical of the criticisms aimed against the monastic order: “[Monks] benefit from the privileges of their class and, thus shielded, enrich themselves. It is to no avail that they are exempted from taxes and *covrée* services. They pile up deception. They are roaming laymen who go about the business of magicians, straining their discourse and thinking” (*Cefu yuan-gui* no. 159: 17a). Translation adapted from Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, trans., Franciscus Verellen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 198. For Wuzong’s anti-Buddhist edicts, see Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T’ang* (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 126–129.

26. Iritani Sensuke and Matsumura Takashi, trans., *Kanzan shi* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1970), pp. 370–375. See also Robert G. Henricks, trans., *The Poetry of Hanshan: A Complete, Annotated Translation of Cold Mountain* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 372–373.

27. For a discussion of the sale of ordination certificates during the Tang period, see Chikusa Masaaki, *Chūgoku bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Dōhōsha, 1982), pp. 19–27.

28. See Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T’ang*, pp. 59–69. For Buddhist clergy’s exemption from taxes and *corvée* labor, see Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, pp. 30–36.

29. The four elements are water, air, fire, and earth.

30. The simile of a tree precariously standing on a riverbank comes from the “Shouming” chapter of the *Nirvāṇa Scripture* (reference comes from Tomitani, trans., “Butsuso sankyō kōgi,” p. 174). The simile of the rattan growing in a well comes from *Bintoulu wei wang shuofa jing*, T no. 32:787a.

31. An alternative translation of the final clause reads, “With the last breath a new life begins.”

32. T no. 48:1042b; XZJ no. III:142d–143b.

33. The six relations are mother, father, elder brothers (siblings), younger brothers (siblings), wife, and children.

34. T no. 48:1042b–c; XZJ no. III:143b.

35. The first part of the sentence can also be interpreted to mean “the [material possessions] you accumulate grow more and more.”

36. T no. 48:1042c; XZJ no. III:143–144a.

37. T no. 48:1042c; XZJ no. III:144b–c.

38. T no. 48:1042c; XZJ no. III:144c–d.

39. The translation is tentative. The literal translation of the original text is, “they have a tendency to sink into the heavy part.”

40. The three realms of existence (also referred to as the “three worlds”) are the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm. According to Buddhist beliefs, everyone is reborn in one of the three realms in circumstances that are dictated by his or her previous karma.

41. T no. 48:1042c; XZJ no. III:144d–145b.

42. Meaning he has not yet learned the *vinaya* and put it into practice.

43. T no. 48:1042c; XZJ no. III:144a–b.

44. Mara is the Buddhist personification of evil. He is usually depicted as trying to interrupt or prevent the spiritual progress of Buddhist practitioners.

45. The four kinds of benevolence are directed toward the Buddha, the ruler of the country, one's parents, and one's donors. Sometimes they are also defined as benevolence toward one's parents, all living beings, the rulers of the country, and the three treasures of Buddhism (the Buddha, the Dharma, and the *Sangha*).
46. T no. 48:1043a; XZJ no. III:145c.
47. Literally "puts on black," the color of the robes Chan monks wore at that time.
48. T no. 48:1043a; XZJ no. III:146a.
49. The quotation is based on a passage from the biography of Guan Zhong in *Shiji* no. 62:2136. Guan Zhong and Yan Ying, whose biographies form fascicle 62 of *Shiji*, were the two famous ministers of the state of Ji during the Warning States period (c. 403–221 B.C.). The same quote also appears in Yaoshan's biography in *Zutang ji* 4, p. 106, where it is attributed to Baizhang.
50. T no. 48:1043a; XZJ no. III:146a–c.
51. The importance of spiritual mentors is strongly stressed throughout the various Buddhist traditions. For examples from the Pali canon, see the *Anguttara Nikaya* (*Pali Text Society edition*), vol. 1, pp. 8, 15, and vol. 2, p. 9. In China, the best-known description of the role of spiritual mentors is the story of the pilgrimage of Sudhana, told in the last chapter of the *Huayan Scripture*, "Ru fajie pin" (Entering the Realm of Reality), T no. 9:676a–788b and T no. 10:319a–444c.
52. T no. 48:1042b; XZJ no. III:147d–148b.
53. T no. 48:1043b; XZJ no. III:147d.
54. The three Japanese versions of the text read *jingyao* (essentials) instead of *jingmiao* (sublime wonders). See Kajitani's renderings in *Zen no koten*, p. 166, and *Zenka goroku*, p. 147, and Tomitani's in "Butsuso sankyō kōgi," p. 214.
55. The twenty-five forms of existence represent the totality of all forms of existence in the three realms, from the deepest hells to the highest heavens.
56. T no. 48:1043a–b; XZJ no. III:146c–147a.
57. See CDL 9, T no. 51:264c–265a.
58. It should be pointed out that the earliest version of the sermon is in the CDL, compiled some 150 years after Guishan's death.
59. CDL 9, T no. 51:264c.
60. T no. 48:1043b; XZJ no. III:146c–147b.
61. See Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 192–196.
62. CDL 9, T no. 51:264c. Translation from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha: The Teachings of Ma-tsu and the Hung-chou School of Ch'an* (Berkeley, Cal.: Asian Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 24–25.
63. *Xun* is an ancient measure of length, roughly equivalent to 182 cm.
64. T no. 48:1043b; XZJ no. III:147b.
65. The quotation is a paraphrase from a passage in the "Duke Wen of Teng" (Teng wen gong) chapter of *Mengzi*. The original passage reads, "He is a man, and I am a man. Why should I stand in awe of him?" See Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983), p. 251. The same quotation also appears in other Chan text, such as *Zongjing lu* 76, T no. 48:839a (where it is part of a verse attributed to the Buddha); CDL 26, T no. 51:429a (in Guizong Huicheng's biography); and Dahui's *Zheng fayan zang*, XZJ no. 118:20b.

66. T no. 48:1043b; XZJ no. III:147c.

67. For parallels in medieval Christian monasticism, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasoning Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 137.

68. See T no. 46:794a and Ikeda Rosan, *Makashikan kenkyū josetsu* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1986), pp. 274–277.

69. See XJZ no. 119:486d–487b, and Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Zengaku sōsho*, vol. 3, pp. 278–279; for a free Japanese translation, see Ishii Shūdō, *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa* (Kyoto: Zen bunka kenkyūjō, 1988), pp. 480–482.

70. For the text of *Erru sixing lun*, with a Japanese translation, see Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Daruma no goroku: Ninyū shigyō ron* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1969), pp. 31–47. For English translations, see John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 103–105, and Jeffrey L. Broughton, trans., *The Bodhidharma Anthology: The Earliest Records of Zen* (Berkeley, Cal: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 9–12.