

4

Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163): The Image Created by His Stories about Himself and by His Teaching Style

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In 1101, at age thirteen by Chinese reckoning, the future Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163) started and abandoned a classical education and decided to become a Buddhist monk.¹ Three years later he was ordained. By the time he died in 1163, he had become one of the two or three preeminent Chan abbots and teachers of the empire, and the one of his generation who had the greatest impact on future generations. He had attracted many patrons and students from the educated elite, including Zhang Jiucheng (1092–1159), a scholar and official; Fu Zhirou (?–1156); Zhang Xiaoxiang (c. 1129–1170); Tang Situi (?–1164); Liu Zuhui (1107–1147); Lu Benzhong (1084–1145); Zhang Jun (1096–1164), a military governor of Shu (present-day Szechwan) who became chief minister and prosecuted the war against the Jin; and Wang Yingchen (1118–1176).² He had found a new method for making Linji Chan teaching and practice more effective, and thereby changed the way teaching and practice were done in the Linji house. Within the Song dynasty Chan Buddhist school, Dahui Zonggao formulated and popularized the form of *gongan* study called “looking into and observing a saying,” the saying being a word, sentence, or phrase that crystallizes a specifically chosen *gongan* problem. This method of *gongan* study is sometimes called “inspecting the critical phrase,” or in Chinese, *kan huatou*. This method of *gongan* study remained at the heart of most Chinese Chan training not only for the rest of the Song

dynasty but also for all the succeeding centuries in China, Korea, and Japan. His Dharma-heirs and others from the Linji house who were inspired by him occupied many of the abbacies at major Song dynasty Chan temples. At the end of his life he presided over two of the empire's most prominent monasteries, Mount Ashoka (Ayuwangshan) and Mount Jing (Jingshan). He enjoyed the patronage of the Emperor Xiaozong (r. 1163–1190), who gave him the name Dahui, meaning Great Wisdom.³

In the generations of Chan teachers in China after Dahui Zonggao, most used a version of his method. Influential Song dynasty monks who owe a debt to Dahui include Wumen Huikai (1183–1260), the author of the *gongan* commentary collection called “The Gateless Gate.” In the Yuan dynasty, Gaofeng Yuanmiao (1238–1295) and Zhongfeng Mingben (1263–1323) wrote important essays on *huatou* practice that closely followed Dahui's understanding. Ming dynasty and later Buddhist masters took Dahui Zonggao's Chan as a model, including Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615), Hanshan Deqing (1546–1623), and Miyun Yuanwu (1566–1642).

In the modern era, the importance of Dahui Zonggao and the meditation method he clarified and popularized has continued. Master Hsu Yun (1840–1959) led meditation retreats in China in which he lectured to the participants on the *huatou* method.⁴ Garma C. C. Chang (Chang Chen Chi; 1920–1988)—who in the 1950s wrote what was until recent times the best introduction to Chan Buddhism for the West, *The Practice of Zen*—translated into English excerpts from *Dahui's Letters* so that Western students could learn properly how to do *huatou* practice.⁵ The Venerable Sheng Yen, an outstanding contemporary Chinese writer about Chan in English, taught the *huatou* method to his students in Taiwan, the United States, and elsewhere by lecturing on excerpts from Dahui's letters and individual Dharma-instructions (*fayü*).⁶

In Japan and Korea, important teachers who particularly valued and taught Dahui's approach to practice include Chinul (1158–1210), Musō Soseki (1275–1351), and Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769), the founder of today's Rinzai Zen. Chinul, the founder of Korean Sōn Buddhism, commissioned a text of *Dahui's Letters* to be brought to Korea from China. Reading it enabled him to awaken. *Dahui's Letters* has been a very important part of almost all Korean Buddhist monastic education since Chinul and remains so today. Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhists such as Hakuin adopted Dahui's *kan huatou* teaching method and lectured on *Dahui's Letters* in monasteries. Hakuin also cited Dahui's emphasis on integrating Chan practice with secular activity when he addressed his lay community. In his *Orategama I*, for example, Hakuin writes that “The Zen Master Dahui has said that meditation in the midst of activity is immeasurably superior to the quietistic approach.”⁷

There is no question that in his own time and for many generations up to the present, Dahui has gained a mostly positive, but in some instances sharply negative, image. In future studies scholars may examine in more detail the image that his contemporaries and later masters had of him as reflected in Song dynasty Chan and secular anecdote collections, as well as in later sources. Here we will undertake a more fundamental inquiry: what image of Dahui is offered in the *yulu* collections that present his own sermons and writings, and in the chronological or “annalistic” (year-by-year) biography (*nianpu*) for Dahui that was compiled shortly after his death?

Because Dahui’s image has many dimensions, his *yulu* collections are vast, and his chronological biography is long and detailed, not every aspect of his image can be touched on here. We will focus only on some of the more important dimensions of Dahui’s image.

The main sources for this chapter are the *Recorded Sayings (Yulu) of Chan Master Dahui Pujue* (*Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu*) in thirty fascicles,⁸ and the *General Sermons (Pushuo) of Chan Master Dahui Pujue* (*Dahui Pujue chanshi pushuo*) in five fascicles.⁹ These two will be the texts that will govern the topics selected in relation to Dahui’s image. I will often refer to the first as “Dahui’s *yulu* collection.”¹⁰ There are no critical editions of these texts; I have selected the closest to the original, most readily available and most widely used, as the sources for this essay. *Dahui’s Letters* (*Dahui Pujue chanshi shu*), to which I will occasionally refer, circulated separately in the Song dynasty and thereafter, but now is most easily found in the *Recorded Sayings (Yulu) of Chan Master Dahui Pujue*, which is based on an early text. In addition, I will draw on the *Chronological Biography of Chan Master Dahui Pujue* (*Dahui Pujue chanshi nianpu*) completed in 1183, twenty years after Dahui’s death, and revised in 1205.¹¹ The *Chronological Biography* (*nianpu*) is largely based on information from Dahui himself from extant and nonextant sources. A full study of Dahui’s image as presented in that text and in the *Chan Arsenal of Master Dahui Pujue* (*Dahui Pujue chanshi zongmen wuku*), on which I will occasionally draw, must be deferred to another occasion.¹²

Dahui as Autobiographer

Dahui’s image as found in these texts is primarily created by his own words about himself, as well as by his other words and deeds. The whole is edited, no doubt, by his followers and in some cases by himself. One would expect a Chan master’s image to be conveyed in his teachings and his teaching style; it is, indeed, standard for a reader in early modern China or elsewhere to derive the

image of a master from his or her words and actions as he interacts with those he would enlighten. His contemporaries and later readers certainly formed an image of Dahui Zonggao through his recorded teachings and actions. But Dahui's image was to an even greater extent created by his own stories about himself as found in his *yulu* collections and his *Chronological Biography*. Dahui tells stories about himself in his scheduled, formal sermons (*shangtang*, *xiaocan*, etc.) and in his unscheduled, informal sermons (*pushuo*) to the assembly of monks, nuns and their lay guests, as well as in his written Dharma instructions (*fayu*) and his letters (*shu*) addressed to individuals. These stories provide a very distinct image of the man as Chan student and teacher, one that no reader of his works can ignore.

Whether this is unusual for a Song dynasty Chan master, we cannot know. Most other masters of the Song left much shorter *yulu*; or there were *yulu* compilations in which, perhaps, stories about themselves were left out by editors. At the very least, it is highly unusual to find such stories in the edited *yulu* compilations of Song Chan masters. Let us begin with those stories, and then turn to Dahui's teachings and his teaching style. From Dahui's point of view, his stories about himself were part of his teachings, thus both can be called his "Chan." Taken together, they form Dahui's image.

Dahui's Image as Seen in Stories about Himself

Dahui was not a fully educated literatus, although he received a literary education through the age of thirteen. In his extant discourse records Dahui tells his listeners and readers virtually nothing about his secular background. Dahui was born to the Xi family in Xuanzhou in Ningguo district (present-day Xuancheng county), in present-day Anhui province. His family does not appear to have been a prominent one. Neither Dahui himself nor his *Annalistic Biography* tells us anything about family or recent ancestors who served in government positions. I have searched the extant lists of exam graduates in gazetteers for his unusual surname, Xi, in his family's home region and found only one name. That name could not have fit Dahui's family.

Dahui's autobiographical stories do make it clear that he was not a full member of the literati class by education, if by literati we mean the class of people who had a literati education and either served or did not serve in government. We can draw no conclusions about his family.

Dahui's *Annalistic Biography* (*nianpu*) gives an account of his youth that combines a few facts with hagiographic tales. Two elements of that account are worth mentioning here. First, a no longer extant source quotes Dahui as saying that from his birth the family's financial fortunes steadily declined,

even more so after a devastating fire when he was ten.¹³ Second, the *Nianpu* describes Dahui being forced to pay a fine and leave the local school at the age of thirteen after only thirteen days because he threw an inkwell that accidentally hit the teacher's hat.¹⁴ An extant sermon confirms at least part of this. In it Dahui says, "I started school at thirteen, and had only thirteen days of school."¹⁵

According to the *Nianpu*, Dahui turned down an opportunity to study for the civil service examinations. Under the heading for his sixteenth year, the *Nianpu* says that although his family rented space for him to study for the government examinations, Dahui did not like the project and soon left, taking in that same year his first religious vows with a Buddhist teacher.¹⁶ The *Nianpu*'s entries convey an impression that Dahui as a young man neither received nor wanted to receive a secular classical and literary education. Later in life Dahui was befriended by poets and scholars, and formed teaching relationships with distinguished literati; this fact forms another important part of his image. However, he was not trained in the classical tradition himself.

One might think that a Song dynasty hagiographer would see it as an advantage in a future monk that he had no interest in secular education. However, Song dynasty hagiographers typically included secular educational achievements in the biographies of eminent monks, seeing those as a mark of eminence. Likewise, contemporary historians might suppose that without more secular education a monk would be ill prepared for a career at the highest levels of Song Chan. The Buddhist world of the Song dynasty was very much dependent on and a part of literati culture.¹⁷ But Dahui makes clear in his *yulu* collection that it is awakening that opens the door to success in all aspects of Chan, in his own case as in others. Awakening itself results in the command of expression in words that a Chan master needs, whether or not he has literary training.

AFTER ORDINATION DAHUI SHOWED AN EARLY AND CONSISTENT INTEREST IN CHAN, STUDYING GONGAN AND COMMENTARIES ON GONGAN WITH TEACHERS AND THROUGH BOOKS. In a general sermon, Dahui says, "From the time I left home at age nineteen I sought out teachers, asked for instruction, and looked at Chan stories (*kan huatou*)."¹⁸ Dahui tells many stories of his early teachers and Chan studies. From these, one can see that Dahui was a talented young man who had an interest in and a gift for Chan, and also see what Chan study consisted of in his day. At eighteen, he began formally studying Chan in his native Xuanzhou with a teacher in the Yunmen lineage. Prior to this, he obtained a copy of and fell in love with Yunmen's *yulu* collection. In a general sermon (*pushuo*) Dahui tells the story:

Soon after my head was shaved I knew that there was This Matter. Although I was in a village temple, I often wanted to buy the discourse records of various masters. Even though I did not yet understand them I loved the conversations of Yunmen and Muzhou [Yunmen's teacher].¹⁹ [Muzhou said,] "All of you! Those who do not yet have insight into Chan [literally, "who have not yet reached an entry"]²⁰ must attain entry. Those who have already attained an entry should not be ungrateful to your old teacher afterward."²¹

At the age of nineteen, Dahui left Xuanzhou and went to Taipingzhou, where he studied with Ruizhu Shaocheng, also called Baoyin Dashi, a teacher of the Linji school.²² A story that Dahui tells from this period gives his listeners a good idea of the kind of study he was doing and its results. He attained "a place of joy" and thought he understood Chan when reading in Xuansha Shibe's (835–908) discourse record the story of Ruiyan Shiyan (dates unknown; his teacher Yantou died in 887), who every day sat in his abbot's quarters calling out "Master of the house!" and then answering himself, "Yes." He would then call out, "Are you wide awake?" and answer, "Yes." He would call out again, "Later on don't let yourself be fooled by anyone." And again answer, "Yes, yes."²³

Dahui says that he sought out Shaocheng to ask about his understanding.²⁴ He told Shaocheng that had he been there in the monk's place, he would have said "Yes" to Xuansha's last question. When Xuansha replied, as Dahui thought he must, "See if you can call out," Dahui would have repeated the whole of Ruiyan's calling and answering. "After all, everyone has a 'master of the house.' There is no reason why he could call out but I cannot call out." Dahui says that when he understood this he was considerably freed and enlivened, and Shaocheng approved his understanding (*kenke*). Dahui says, "At the time I also thought I was right. I was happy for a long time."²⁵

According to Dahui's *Arsenal* (*Wuku*), Dahui asked Shaocheng for instruction on Xuedou Mingjue's (980–1052) *Niangu* and *Songgu*.²⁶ According to Dahui's account in one sermon Shaocheng had personally studied with Xuedou.²⁷ When Shaocheng turned the request around and asked Dahui to explicate these texts, he was so impressed with Dahui's understanding that he suggested that Dahui was the reincarnation of Xuedou.²⁸ Perhaps this story shows a young Dahui who believed, in keeping with the literati-influenced nature of Song dynasty Chan, that Chan was best approached through stories about Tang and Five Dynasties masters as mediated through Song dynasty poetic commentaries. Dahui tells his audience that he served as an attendant to Shaocheng for two years, discussing *gongan* with him every day.²⁹

DAHUI STUDIED FROM TEACHERS AND TEXTS OF ALL CHAN LINEAGES, INCLUDING ESPECIALLY LINJI AND CAODONG LINEAGES. Dahui often emphasizes in his sermons and mentions in his letters that he studied with teachers of all of the various schools of Chan before his final awakening under Yuanwu Keqin (1063–1135) in 1125: “I went forth and traveled everywhere visiting teachers. Yunmen, Caodong, Guiyang, Linji, even ‘The three worlds are only mind, the ten thousand dharmas are only consciousness’—I mastered all of these various schools of Chan. When I got to a place, I only had to enter the interview room of the teacher twice before I understood the teaching. But always in the end my feeling of doubt was not broken through.”

This broad experience is an important part of the image of himself Dahui wants to create: someone who has worked with all of the different teaching methods of the various Chan schools, and who is thus able to evaluate them from firsthand experience. Dahui especially emphasized this point after he began his long campaign of criticizing some forms of practice encouraged by Caodong teachers.

The key to his creation of this image is the emphasis that he places on his studies at the Taiyang Monastery in Hubei, a major center for the Caodong lineage. As Morten Schlütter and Ishii Shūdō have demonstrated, the Caodong lineage was at that time in the midst of a major revival with new teachings and modes of expression.³⁰ The chief Song dynasty reviver of the Caodong tradition, Furong Daokai (1043–1118), had spent thirteen years as abbot at Taiyang Monastery before leaving in 1095.³¹ Here, in 1108–1109, Dahui studied with the current abbot, a Caodong teacher named Dongshan Daowei (n.d.), whom Dahui identifies as an eminent disciple of Furong Daokai.³² Dahui also mentions having studied with two of his assistants, “First Seat” Yuan and “First Seat” Jian.³³ Dahui says, “Within two years [at Taiyang Monastery] I mastered the cardinal instructions of the Caodong house.”³⁴ Dahui does say that Daowei did teach awakening, unlike some teachers of whom Dahui was critical.³⁵

From Dahui’s autobiographical stories it is clear that thereafter most of his teachers and associates until the beginning of his study with Yuanwu belonged to the Huanglong branch of the Linji lineage. Dahui tells many stories of his time studying with Zhantang Wenjun (1061–1115) at Jewel Peak Monastery (Baofeng si) in the Stone Gate Mountains in the northern part of present-day Jiangxi Province.³⁶ Some of Dahui’s stories mention an unexpected benefit of studying with Zhantang at Jewel Peak, namely, that a second opportunity to learn Caodong teachings presented itself.³⁷ In the assembly was a relative of Zhantang’s whom Dahui refers to as Attendant Jian. Dahui tells his hearers that Jian had been an attendant of Furong Daokai for more than ten years,

and obtained Daokai's Way, including all of the important instructions of the Caodong house. Perhaps this is the same Jian as the First Seat Jian mentioned above. Dahui relates that he took this opportunity of being with Attendant Jian to understand these teachings more thoroughly.³⁸

DAHUI WAS NOT AN ICONOCLAST OR A NONCONFORMIST. Stories about his time with Zhantang serve the creation of Dahui's image in one particularly interesting way. Instead of describing himself as a free spirit, an iconoclast, a spontaneous inventor of startling actions and striking modes of communication during this time of maturing practice, Dahui described himself as the "parfait knight," the perfect Chan monk.

Through a close study of the various versions of the records of Tang master Linji and the developing versions of the *Linji lu* in which these records were brought together in the Song dynasty, Albert Welter has shown that from the late Five Dynasties through the early Song dynasty the changes made are in the direction of making Linji's language and gestures in his interactions with students more dramatic and action-filled. The later versions of the stories about Linji represent him as a dynamic, enigmatic, and iconoclastic action figure, rather than a conventional Buddhist abbot who gives sermons to audiences of monks and lay people.³⁹ Welter suggests that the implausible, even grotesque physical descriptions of figures such as Mazu and Huangbo, and the novel behavior that Chan masters such as Linji exhibited in the later texts, with such antics as shouting, slapping, hitting, nose-tweaking and the like, are deployed by Song dynasty writers as caricatures. These images imply that Chan masters are "new kinds of champions who expose the boundaries of previous limitations and suggest ways to break through to a new kind of existence, a new way of living."⁴⁰ Such images of new champions were responding to cultural needs brought on by the breakdown of the Tang order, as well as the political need of the new Song dynasty to establish a new order. The visual representations of some Chan masters have the same convention-breaking aspect; the artist plays with physical proportions and depicts bulging eyes and mirthful dispositions, "to exhibit [through expressive representations of Chan figures] the unique style of Chan through an unconventional appearance."⁴¹

All of this vanishes, Welter argues, when Song masters themselves are described or depicted. Little time passes between the lifetime of a well-known master and the public circulation of his *yulu*, a circumstance that promotes a more fact-based representation. Song dynasty masters are generally described as possessing the refined manner and sophistication to which their literati contemporaries aspired.

Certainly his *yulu* collections and his *Nianpu* do not represent Dahui as a dynamic action hero of grotesque appearance who breaks the bounds of convention. Nor does Dahui in his autobiographical stories describe himself in that manner; quite the opposite. How does Dahui depict himself as the perfect Chan monk? He says in a sermon, “Everything that the Buddha praised—precepts, samadhi, wisdom, liberation, correct views—each one I did according to what he said, right down to the three thousand rules of deportment and the eighty thousand small karmic acts, every one I was perfectly clear and precise about. And everything the Buddha forbade I did not do, I did not dare disobey.”⁴² Dahui never describes himself as a nonconformist, one who uses the freedom produced by his training to startle or surprise anyone. The exception, and this is an important exception, is the way he describes his attacks on teachers who teach “quiet sitting” or “silent illumination Chan.”

Zhantang also thought Dahui was perfect in his performance of all aspects of his teaching role as First Seat. As Dahui tells it, Zhantang called the younger monk to him and made the following comment:

“Senior monk Gao [i.e., Dahui], you understood my Chan at once. When I ask you to explain it, you explain it well. When I ask you to hold up stories of the ancients (*niangu*), or make up poems praising the masters of old (*songgu*), to give instructions to the monks, or to give general sermons (*pushuo*), you also do all these things well.⁴³ There is only one thing that is not right. Do you know what it is?”

Dahui replied, “What is it that I do not know?”

Zhantang said, “Ho! You lack this one liberation.”⁴⁴

IT IS NOT SITTING, IT IS PRACTICING UNINTERRUPTEDLY AND DOUBTING, THAT BRINGS AWAKENING. Later in his life, when telling of events during this period of study with many teachers, Dahui says that he was not as enthusiastic about the practice of sitting meditation as some others. When others wanted to do sitting meditation all night, Dahui wanted to stretch out his legs and sleep. Dahui tells this story about himself to make a positive point: it was not special devotion to sitting meditation that eventually got him to awakening, but never letting his doubt-filled investigation drop.⁴⁵ Dahui makes the same point when he says in another sermon, “I studied Chan for seventeen years. In my tea, in my rice, when I was happy, when I was angry, when I was still and quiet, when I was disturbed (*luan*), I never once let myself be interrupted.”⁴⁶

THE IMPACT OF ZHANG SHANGYING ON DAHUI'S IMAGE. In 1115, when Dahui was twenty-seven years old by Chinese reckoning, Zhantang died, and Dahui, still without the full certification he needed to be an abbot and an independent teacher, was left without a mentor. Zhantang's death resulted in Dahui's seeking out the prominent lay Buddhist scholar Zhang Shangying (T. Tianjue) (1043–1122), also called in Buddhist circles “the Inexhaustible Layman” (Wujin), to ask him to write a biographical epitaph (*taming*, literally, “stupa inscription”) for his teacher. When Dahui met Zhang at his home in Jingzhou in 1115, and visited him again five years later, Zhang was a former chief minister, a Dharma-heir of the Linji Huanglong branch Chan master Doushuai Congyue (1044–1091), a scholar of Huayan Buddhism, and a prominent defender of Buddhism against its critics and political enemies. In 1120, in his thirty-second year by Chinese reckoning, Dahui visited Zhang Shangying again and stayed with him for eight months. It was on this second visit that Zhang Shangying recommended to Dahui that he study with Yuanwu Keqin. In the former Chief Minister Zhang Jun's stupa inscription for Dahui he mentions that Zhang Shangying offered to give Dahui money to travel to study with Yuanwu.

Why and in what contexts does Dahui bring up the special attention given to him by Zhang Shangying? One illuminating fact is that Dahui describes his visits to and conversations with Zhang Shangying in a sermon with particular significance.⁴⁷

Although the image that Southern Song dynasty Chan masters present of themselves and their successful students is that they are as free from all worldly concerns, it is probable that they were also aware of the desirability of sustaining claims to authority and transformative power. Chan had been strongly supported by the court in the Northern Song period, but found itself under somewhat serious restriction in the early Southern Song. As the Southern Song court left more regional affairs to local gentry and officials, Chan needed support from local literati and their families more than before. Chan was still well supported and popular among parts of the elite, but had been coming under intellectual and cultural attack since the Confucian (or Classical) revival of the Northern Song. Chan masters no doubt were aware of this need to mount successful claims to authority on behalf of their tradition of teaching and training. In addition, Chan masters may have felt this need for their own lineages and for themselves individually.⁴⁸

The sermon in the *Pushuo*⁴⁹ in which Dahui tells of his friendship with Zhang Shangying and about Zhang's recommendation of Yuanwu took place in a heightened social and institutional context. It was given in the evening of the day of his formal installation as abbot of the large, public, imperially supported monastery at Mount Ashoka. This was a gathering at which many monastic and lay Buddhists as well as more than a few literati and officials

would have been present. It occurred on the twenty-third day of the twelfth month of the Chinese lunar calendar of 1157.⁵⁰

At that time Dahui was returning to monastic life near the capital after a long period spent in exile among the “southern barbarians.” In 1137 he had been given the abbacy of the major temple on Mount Jing, which he then expanded into a major center. There he taught two thousand monks in residence, more during summer retreats, and received visits from laywomen, nuns, and literati as well as monks. Four years later he had been accused of the unmonkly behavior of talking politics with Zhang Jiucheng (1092–1159), a scholar, imperial teacher, and high official whose faction opposed the policies of the current chief minister, Qin Gui (1090–1155).⁵¹ He had been defrocked, his ordination taken away, and like Zhang sent into exile. A few years later a court document reviewing Dahui’s exile alleged that Dahui’s scurrilous political behavior had only gotten worse, and he was banished deeper into the hinterlands of the malarial south. In 1156, following Qin Gui’s death in 1155, he had been given his freedom to return and allowed to become a monk again.

Career patterns among Song dynasty Chan monks culminated in abbeys; it was as abbot that a master taught and produced Dharma-heirs. For the imperially regulated temples, which included of course all of the wealthy ones that could accommodate many students, abbots were chosen by the court on the recommendation of local officials. The local officials in turn usually took the recommendation of the other abbots in the surrounding area.⁵² Dahui had been highly esteemed in the capital region seventeen years previously, but while he had been in exile his lineage brothers and cousins seem to have been in retreat. Qin Gui favored Tiantai Buddhism over Chan. Major Chan centers such as Dahui’s old Dharma seat at Mount Jing were occupied by Caodong Chan teachers, not by members of Dahui’s Linji lineage.

Even though his ordination had been rescinded, during his exile Dahui had not cut off all contact with Chan students and literati. On returning from exile, he was given the abbacy at Mount Ashoka at the recommendation of his age-mate, the Caodong school abbot Hongzhi Zhengjue of the large monastery on Mount Tiantong, also in present-day Zhejiang province, whose teachings he had verbally attacked, although mostly indirectly. Mount Ashoka was both a Chan training center and a major pilgrimage center, for it housed the most sacred Buddhist relic in China, the Buddha’s finger bone. As one of the most prominent imperially sanctioned Chan monasteries, it merited the leadership of a first-rate abbot.

On the evening of his installation as abbot, Dahui needed to reintroduce himself and his philosophy, as well as set forth his claim to suitability for high monastic office. His association with Zhang, the late Northern Sung high

official who was briefly chief minister and was much admired in Buddhist circles as a distinguished scholar of Buddhism and as a prominent defender of Buddhism, could only help polish his reputation for excellence, scholarship, and Chan insight.

DAHUI'S AWAKENING: ONE OR MANY? Over many centuries in Asia and in the West, no one who has written about Dahui has been unaware of the story of his great awakening under Yuanwu. Dahui himself told the story in shorter and longer versions many times in his sermons and letters. Not least because Dahui was an untiring proponent of the necessity of an awakening if one wanted to break through *samsara* to Buddhahood, as well as a relentless critic of those who he said thought it unnecessary, Dahui's account of his awakening is a very large contributor to his image as a truly awakened teacher.⁵³

Dahui's accounts of his own awakening shatter an image of accomplished Tang and Five Dynasties Chan adepts that Song dynasty genealogical lamp histories and edited discourse records (*yulu*) encourage: the image of the attainment of enlightenment as a sudden, once-and-for-all thing. Dahui's account of his first real, authentic, thoroughgoing awakening is not a description of an enlightenment that took place on one day through one encounter with one teacher on one occasion. Instead, it involved three awakenings: one upon hearing words in a sermon by Yuanwu Keqin; one after working on a different *gongan* with Yuanwu for six months; and the third two years later when reading the *Huayan* sutra.

The Context of Dahui's Awakening

According to Dahui, his teacher Zhantang did not give Dahui a certification of awakening. There ensued a ten-year period during which, according to his own account, Dahui was plagued by doubt. He doubted himself and he doubted Chan. He doubted his own attainment, as he seemed to be an awakened person in the daytime, but had frightful dreams at night. And after so many years of study without attaining what the ancients had attained, that is, becoming a person of seamless awakening, he doubted that Chan had been successfully transmitted to his own day. Zhang Shangying had shared with him his own view that the Huanglong branch of the Linji school, in which Dahui had spent many years, had had but two recent teachers of high quality; both were dead now. Perhaps he did not urgently pursue a teacher-student relationship with Yuanwu because he did not sufficiently believe that studying with Yuanwu would be different. He says that in fact he actually doubted Yuanwu more than the other available teachers.⁵⁴ In a sermon he says:

If it turned out [with Yuanwu Keqin] as it had with all those previous teachers who gave me approval (*yinke*, J. *inka*), I was going to write an essay saying that there was no Chan—I would not believe that there was a Chan school [anymore]. I thought it would be better to teach scriptures and commentaries so as not to lose out on being a person of the Buddhadharmā [in my next life].⁵⁵

Dahui's account of his awakening under Yuanwu is well known. Dahui narrated his awakening story from this point several times in sermons in various degrees of detail. Through connections he enrolled in Yuanwu's assembly at the Tianshan Monastery in the capital. One day, when Yuanwu had "ascended the hall" to give a sermon to a large assembly at the invitation of a female lay donor, Dahui heard Yuanwu raise for the assembly's inspection the *gongan*. "A monk asked Yunmen: 'what is the place where all the Buddhas are emancipated?'"⁵⁶ Yunmen replied, "[Where] the East Mountains walk on the river." Yuanwu continued: "If someone were to ask me today what the place is like where all the Buddhas are emancipated, I would reply, 'The *shun* wind comes from the south, and produces a slight coolness in the palace.'" ⁵⁷

Dahui suddenly felt that "before and behind were cut off. It was like bringing a ball of tangled silk up against a knife—in one stroke it was sliced through. At that moment perspiration covered my whole body. Although no moving images arose, yet I was sitting in a place of total nakedness."⁵⁸ In another sermon, Dahui describes his experience differently:

Suddenly at this point I broke through the lacquer bucket. All of my various views and bits of knowledge from the past [years of study] melted like snow in hot soup—they vanished without a trace. I was so lively. . . . When the following year [Yuanwu] elevated me to First Seat, I made a great vow to take this Matter that is our original allotment and give it to monks and nuns so they would understand.⁵⁹

He continues:

One day I went to enter Yuanwu's chamber. Yuanwu said, "For you to reach this state was not easy, it is a pity that you have died and cannot come to life. Not doubting words is a great malady. Don't you know that it is said, 'You must let go your hands while hanging from a cliff, then you become master of your own fate. When afterwards you return to life again, no one can deceive you.'⁶⁰ You must believe that there is this principle." I said to myself, based on what I attained today I am already very lively. I cannot understand [what he is talking about?].⁶¹

Yuanwu assigned me to the “Selecting Leaders Hut” as an attendant without duties.⁶² Every day I entered Yuanwu’s chamber several times with literati for individual instruction. Yuanwu raised only, “The word ‘being’ and the word ‘nonbeing’ are like a wisteria vine clinging to a tree.” As soon as someone opened his mouth, Yuanwu would say, “Wrong!” It was like that for half a year. I just concentrated on investigating [this one *gongan*].

One day when I was in the abbot’s quarters with some officials partaking of the evening meal, I just held the chopsticks in my hand and completely forgot to eat. Yuanwu said “This fellow is investigating ‘boxwood Chan.’”⁶³ I offered an analogy. I said, “Teacher, it is the same principle as a dog staring at a pot of hot oil; he cannot lick it, but he cannot leave it alone, either.” Yuanwu said, “You have hit on a wonderful analogy. This is what is called the diamond cage [so hard you cannot get out of it], the prickly chestnut ball [that cannot be swallowed].”⁶⁴

Finally, Dahui asked Yuanwu what his teacher Wuzu Fayan had said when Yuanwu asked him about this same statement (*hua*). Yuanwu was not willing to talk about it. Dahui said:

“When you asked [Wuzu], you were not just by yourself. You asked in front of the whole assembly. What could prevent you from telling about it now?” Yuanwu said, “Once I asked him, ‘What about “being” words and “nonbeing” words which are like a wisteria vine clinging to a tree?’ Wuzu said, ‘You cannot describe it, you cannot depict it.’ I asked further, ‘Suppose the tree falls and the vines die—what then?’ Wuzu said, ‘How important their companionship is to them.’”⁶⁵ The minute I heard him raise this, I understood. I said, “I got it!” Yuanwu said, “I am only afraid that you have not yet become able to pass through the *gongans*.” I said, “Please raise them.” Yuanwu then raised a series of *gongans*. I cut through them in two or three revolutions. It was like setting out on a trip in a time of great peace—when you get on the road you encounter nothing to stop you. Yuanwu said, “Now you know that I have not deceived you.”⁶⁶

Multiple Awakenings

The Ming dynasty Buddhist teacher Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615) had great respect for Dahui. In his *Zhuchuang ribi* (Jottings at the Bamboo Window,

second series) published in the mid-seventeenth century, Zhuhong told a story about Dahui to illustrate his own comments on “great awakening” and “small awakening.” “According to the lore, the venerable Dahui [Zong]gao [underwent] great awakening eighteen times, [his] small awakenings being countless.”⁶⁷ Hakuin Ekaku, who revived Rinzaï Zen in Japan, quoted Yunqi Zhuhong’s report many times, writing that this was his own experience as well.⁶⁸ At least from Zhuhong’s time this transmitted tradition became part of Dahui’s image. Do Dahui’s *yulu* collections and the *Nianpu* support the idea that Dahui experienced eighteen major awakenings?

First, in these collections, does Dahui say anything of the sort? It is possible to go through Dahui’s autobiographical stories and find stories about moments prior to his large enlightenment under Yuanwu in which he reports glimpses, moments of happiness, and the like. For example, Dahui summarizes his experience prior to meeting Yuanwu as follows: “I started studying Chan when I was seventeen, and I was thirty-four years old when I shattered the lacquer cask [of deluded mind].⁶⁹ Before that I had passed *gongans*. I had understood when confronted with ‘a blow, a shout’ [the teaching technique associated with the Linji school]. I had gone [up against] ‘flint-struck sparks and lightning flashes’ and understood.”⁷⁰ Dahui actually tells us of several of these moments in which he understood, seemed to understand, or received approval from his teacher. For example, in one sermon Dahui tells that he himself, before he met Yuanwu, had already been challenged with the “East Mountain walks on the water” *gongan* by a First Seat named Fang.⁷¹ After working on it constantly for a couple of weeks, when the First Seat brought it up to him again, he understood part of it. After that he made up hundreds of turning words for it, but he could not get one that fit definitively. Finally, when he was reading the “Record of Words (*yulu*)” from when Donglin Zhaojue had been living at Letan [that is, Jewel Peak] in Jiangsi, he came upon an exchange (*wenda*, J. *mondo*) in which the answer was “his heels do not touch the ground.” He was overjoyed, and went to the First Seat to say that he had understood.⁷² When the First Seat asked once more the meaning of “The East Mountain walks on water,” Dahui replied, “His heels have not touched the ground.” Dahui then reports that not only did he think that he had passed the *gongan* this time, but he wrote a eulogy (*song*) about the *gongan*, and also raised it as an instruction topic.⁷³

Several meanings of “awakening” or “enlightenment” were accepted in Chan by the time of Dahui. As Kenneth Kraft writes, the concept of enlightenment was flexible enough to embrace specific insight experiences and advanced states of awareness. Awakening could refer to the full range of awakening experiences, from a tip-of-the-tongue taste to a profound realization, as well as to a full awakening or full buddhahood.⁷⁴ Certainly in considering the accuracy of

Zhuhong's report it would be appropriate to count all the insight experiences Dahui recounts. But in his *yulu* collections and the stories of his quoted in the *Nianpu*, Dahui usually dismisses the importance of these glimpses and moments of joy as compared with his awakening under Yuanwu. Looking back on this period of his study of Chan prior to meeting Yuanwu, he said: "I studied for seventeen years. I did have fragmentary awakenings. Under Yunmen house teachers I understood some things. Under Caodong teachers I understood some things. The only thing was that I could not attain front and rear being cut off."⁷⁵ Furthermore, he creates the impression that sometimes what seemed to be understandings were only episodes of verbal facility or mental cleverness. Reflecting Dahui's own perspective, the Japanese Rinzai monk Musō Soseki writes:

Dahui was a wandering monk in his youth, and he learned "lip-Zen." He flattered himself that he had attained complete satori, but he realized at last that that was not true. He visited Yuanwu, and finally had his lumps of illusion smashed to pieces. After that he always spoke of his mistake as a way of warning his disciples. Today's students, too, must keep this teaching in mind.⁷⁶

Since Dahui tends in his *yulu* collections to downplay these earlier partial glimpses as based on mistaken ways of investigating *gongan*, stories about them do not strongly support the image of Dahui created by Zhuhong. Dahui's lack of investment in these small awakenings after his great one is particularly striking if one compares Hakuin's reports about his many large and small awakenings with Dahui's self-reports in his *yulu* collections and *Nianpu*. Here is one of Hakuin's accounts:

Alone in the hut, I thrust my spine up stiff and straight and sat through the night until dawn. . . . After a month of this life, I still hadn't experienced a single pang of hunger. On the contrary, my body and mind were fired with a great surge of spirit and resolve. My nights were zazen. My days were sutra-recitation. I never let up. During this period, I experienced small satoris and large satoris in numbers beyond count. How many times did I jump up and jubilantly dance around, oblivious to all else! I no longer had any doubts at all about Dahui's talk of eighteen great satoris and countless small ones. How grievously sad that people today have discarded this way of kensho as if it were dirt!

As for sitting, sitting is something that should include fits of ecstatic laughter—brayings that make you slump to the ground

clutching your belly. And when you struggle to your feet after the first spasm passes, it should send you kneeling to earth in yet further contortions of joy.⁷⁷

Although Dahui sometimes says that he had a moment of joy, or a happiness that lasted a long time, his reader gets no encouragement to imagine Dahui dancing around jubilantly or experiencing contortions of joy or fits of ecstatic laughter. Ecstasy is not a part of the image of Dahui.

On the other hand, after his initial awakening with Yuanwu, there were at least two more large awakenings. As we have seen above, Dahui's enlightenment process did not end on the first day on which the bottom of the lacquer bucket fell out and he rushed to Yuanwu's chamber. Six months later, now as an attendant of Yuanwu, he was still working on the next *gongan*. His insight triggered by that *gongan* was perhaps his first large awakening. It enabled him to pass a long series of *gongans*, and presumably Yuanwu sanctioned his attainment.

But Dahui was still to have another large experience of awakening. In the sermon given at Mount Ashoka after his return from exile, Dahui continued his narration of the story of his awakening beyond the moment of his successful answering of *gongans* at Tianting Monastery in the capital. He relates a conversation that took place a few days later about someone else's Chan verse (*song*) in which he told Yuanwu that he wanted to compose an excellent Chan verse of his own. He had the idea for it, but he could not think of the words. Just then he heard the words of a servant boy walking past outside the window, Dahui turned to Yuanwu and said, "Just this is the song I wanted to offer to you." Yuanwu was very pleased.

From that point on, Dahui said, he talked fluently about a lot of things, and had no doubts about the words of the various Chan teachers in the empire: "But I still had not attained the great freedom. [This occurred] later [in the summer of 1128]⁷⁸ when I was at [Cloud-cliff Chan Temple] on Tiger Hill [near the town of Suzhou in present-day Jiangsu Province] and read the *Avatamsaka Sutra* [the *Huayan sutra*], and got to the passage about the Bodhisattva's entering into the eighth *bhumi* or stage, called 'Immovable.'"⁷⁹

The scripture says that when a bodhisattva attains complete acceptance of the nonorigination of things, the attainment appropriate to stage seven, one obtains entry into this eighth stage, where one is a bodhisattva of profound conduct, difficult to know and without any distinctions. The bodhisattva's conduct leaves behind all forms, all thoughts, all attachments, and is measureless. This profound conduct is impossible for the followers of the Buddha who have not chosen to be bodhisattvas (that is, the *sravakas* and the *pratyeka buddhas*)

to attain. He or she leaves behind all noisy striving, and complete stillness [nirvana] appears.⁸⁰

The scriptural passage in question says that in that stage the bodhisattva abandons all effortful, active practices (*gongyong xing*) and obtains the effortless dharmas (*wu gongyong fa*). Thoughts of the karma of body, speech, and mind all cease, and he dwells in reward-conduct.⁸¹ Take the example of a person who in a dream sees his body fall into a great river. Because he wants to cross the river, he puts forth a courageous determination and uses great skill-in-means. Because of his great courage and his employing great skill-in-means, he wakes up. As soon as he wakes up, everything that he is doing ceases. The bodhisattva is also like this: he or she sees that the bodies of sentient beings are in the four currents [that carry the unthinking along].⁸² In order to save them, he or she gives rise to a great courage and vigorous effort to advance. Therefore he or she attains the Immovable Stage. On attaining it, all activities (*gongyong*) cease.⁸³ When I reached this point [in the text], for the first time nirvana appeared, and I attained the Great Freedom. . . . My being able to trust my mouth to preach began at this time.⁸⁴

In a second sermon, Dahui ends the story with a different comment; he says:

At this, I suddenly lost the cloth bag and I entered the realm of realization (*jingjie*) of the Flower Garland (*Huayan*, *Avatamsaka*). From this point on my words flowed; I could talk up, down and sideways without having to rely on a single word of text. When students came into my presence I did not wait for them to reveal themselves, I knew immediately whether or not they were correct.⁸⁵

Clearly this experience was significant for Dahui in giving him perfect nirvana and great freedom, including especially freedom in the employment of words.

This is the last “large awakening” of which Dahui speaks in his sermons or writes in his letters and Dharma-instructions contained in his *yulu* collections or recorded in his *Nianpu*. If Dahui did in fact experience eighteen great awakenings in his lifetime, that exact number does not form part of his image in his public, published, and widely circulated records.

Teachings and Teaching Style

Dahui's teachings and teaching style are the source of the most positive dimensions of his image, particularly among those who attained awakening in Linji, Rinzai or Sōn contexts. Dahui's teachings and teaching style center on *huatou* practice and the central importance of awakening. Dahui's teachings about *huatou* practice and successful experiences with using *huatou* with his own students have been thoroughly explored by scholars.⁸⁶ Here we are interested in the effect of Dahui's teaching style and teaching emphases, as represented in his own words and records, on his image. As a teacher, Dahui presents himself and his methods as lively, effective, intimately concerned, and what the Chan tradition calls "steep," while at the same time making a path forward abundantly clear. The image Dahui presents is of a man intent on, and succeeding in, defining and establishing an orthodoxy and orthopraxy within Chan.

Ishii Shūdō suggested and Morten Schlütter has made a brilliant case for the argument that Dahui's development and promotion of the *huatou* method was a result of his deep desire to counter the interest literati were taking in "silent illumination practice."⁸⁷ In tandem with his promotion of *huatou* practice, particularly among lay people, Dahui attacked what he called "heretical teachers" with "false teachings" who were ruining the chances of sincere Chan practitioners to attain awakening. These attacks, which have attracted the attention of scholars, were harsh and derogatory. Not only that, his campaign continued throughout Dahui's career. All of this is pervasively reflected in Dahui's *yulu* collections and the *Nianpu*: these are indeed almost the only sources from which scholars study this dimension of Dahui's teachings.

Although previous Linji school teachers, beginning with Linji himself in the *Linji lu*, are depicted as scolding heretics and deluded practitioners, as well as repeatedly defining true or orthodox Chan teachings and practice, nothing can be found in Song Chan literature to compare with Dahui's unrelenting attacks on "silent illumination." The texts that present these attacks also present Dahui as well aware of what he is doing: he says, "I am called [Zong]gao who scolds (*ma*) Heaven."

According to his *yulu* compilation and the *Nianpu*, Dahui began criticizing "silent illumination Chan" in 1134. In 1137, he was appointed to the abbacy of the Nengren Monastery on Mount Jing, where his attacks continued with great regularity. He had accomplished a lot at Mount Jing by the time he was fifty-three, including raising money and building a dormitory for an additional thousand monks. In 1141 the official Li Hanlao, a longtime friend, wrote about

the impression Dahui made on those who knew him in an inscription (*ji*) for Mount Jing to commemorate the opening of the new dormitory:

The master is the twentieth generation grandson of Linji. His Way is broad, and those whom it attracts are myriad. His gate is steep, and those who climb it find it difficult [to live up to his strict standards]. His instructions hit the mark, and those who are enlightened under him feel close to him. His discussions are lofty, and those who listen are amazed. But, there are also people who become frightened and disconcerted by his lofty talk. Among his contemporaries, those who doubt him criticize and slander him. I know that there is gossip, defamation, and suspicion circulating about the master and cannot but feel enraged by this.⁸⁸

From within Dahui's corpus we cannot know how his contemporaries perceived him in light of his ongoing campaign of attacks. The gossip, defamation, and suspicion circulating about Dahui may well have been because of his polemical rhetoric.

Conclusion

Contemporary scholars are now getting a sense of the full extent to which the handed-down image of Tang Chan masters was crafted by later hands. One would expect that images of Song dynasty Chan masters might have been equally crafted by the editors of the records of their words in *yulu* compilations. The interval between the death of Dahui and the publication of his *yulu* was short; in fact, one of his *yulu* circulated fifteen years before his death. Freedom to shape Dahui's image was thus more limited.

As compared with the teachings of Linji presented in the much shorter *Linji lu*, it is striking how derivative and repetitive Dahui's teachings seem to be. Dahui is involved in very few stories that become *gongan*, much less *huatou*, in the later tradition.⁸⁹ Dahui's language is rarely inventive of new images; rather, it is filled with quotations from sutras and the words of earlier Chan teachers. The highly imagistic discourse of the Linji tradition as familiar to us from Yuanwu's *Blue Cliff Record* permeates Dahui's teachings as well. Dahui repeats himself from letter to letter and sermon to sermon as he returns again to certain themes. It seems that what the market, which was composed of literati and monks who produced and had access to printed texts, demanded was more and more of Dahui's words.

When one thinks of Dahui's records in this way and forgets how crafted the words of the Tang masters as presented to us are, it is not hard to conclude, as

earlier generations of scholars have done, that Chan declined in the Song, that it lacked the freshness and originality of Tang Chan. When one reads Dahui's letters, on the other hand, a different picture emerges. Dahui comes across as a brilliant, clear, inspiring teacher with a deep grasp of Chan practice as lived every day and an extraordinary gift for relating Buddhist philosophy and psychology to ordinary mental and emotional experiences.

NOTES

1. Chinese customarily refer to Dahui Zonggao by his ordination name, Zonggao, and not by Dahui, one of three names given to Zonggao by emperors to honor him. Japanese authors customarily refer to him by one of the honorific names, Dahui, followed by his ordination name, or simply Dahui.
2. On these laymen and their relationship to Dahui, see Miriam Levering, "Ch'an Enlightenment for Laymen: Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089–1163) and the New Religious Culture of the Sung," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1978.
3. For a general account of Dahui's life and teachings, see Miriam Levering, "Ch'an Enlightenment for Laymen," and Chun-fang Yu, "Ta-hui Tsung-kao and Koan Ch'an," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 6 (1979): 211–235.
4. Master Hsu Yun, *Ch'an and Zen Teachings*, series two, translated by Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk) (London: Rider, 1961).
5. Garma C. C. Chang, *The Practice of Zen* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959).
6. Master Sheng Yen's disciple Jimmy Yu told me that in the United States Master Sheng Yen lectured on *huaou* practice using J. C. Cleary's translation, *Swampland Flowers* (New York: Grove, 1977).
7. Philip Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 33. Note that this statement by Hakuin paraphrases a statement in a letter in *Dahui's Letters* [*Dahui shu*], T. 47.918c.
8. T. 47.1998A.881–943. Hereafter I will cite this text as DY (*Dahui yulu*). This text was included in the Song dynasty canons, and the Taishō version is very close to extant Song dynasty editions.
9. Hereafter I will cite this as the DP (*Dahui Pushuo*). I have used the edition in *Nihon kotei daizōkyō* 1.31.5.395a–480d in five fascicles.
10. Here I follow Morten Schlütter's suggestion in "The Record of Hongzhi and the Recorded Sayings Literature of Song Dynasty Chan" in Dale Wright and Steven Heine, eds., *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 181–205. Schlütter suggests that the term "yulu proper" be used for a collection of sermons and talks given by a master, sometimes including encounters and dialogues he had with others, which purport to have been written down by someone who was present at the occasion. He suggests that the term "yulu collections" be used for compilations that always include one or more yulu proper but also include other types of texts, including some that were composed and written down by the master himself. *Dahui Pujue Chanshi yulu* includes texts composed and written down by the master himself, and thus is a "yulu collection."

11. *Dainihon kotei daizōkyō*. 8.1a–16a. This text is of some dubiety. It was published in the Ming dynasty canon together with the Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Dahui Pujue. Ishii Shūdō has published a critical edition of the *Dahui Nianpu*.

12. This text is in T. 47.1998B. I will cite it as *Wuku*.

13. Ishii Shūdō, “Daie Fukaku zenji no nenpu no kenkyū,” *jō, chū, and ge, Komazawa daigaku bukkō gakubu kenkyū kiyō* 37 (1979): 110–143; 38 (1980): 97–133; 40 (1982): 129–175. Hereafter, I will give short references. Here the reference is Ishii, “Nenpu (jō),” pp. 112–113. All ages given for Dahui will be according to Chinese reckoning by which a person is one year old at birth and becomes two years old at the next New Year holiday. I will leave the ages in Chinese reckoning in Dahui’s narratives.

14. Ishii, “Nenpu (jō),” p. 113.

15. DP, p. 418c.

16. Ishii, “Nenpu (jō),” p. 113.

17. Among several important studies, Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) is particularly useful in understanding the close relation of Chan monks, rulers, and literati in the Northern Song dynasty. So are the chapters by Schlütter, Huang, Borrell, Welter, and Levering in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

18. DP, p. 396a.

19. Yunmen’s first teacher was Muzhou Daozong. This is in *Muzhou yulu*, 35b.

20. Urs Erwin App, “Facets of the Life and Teaching of Ch’an Master Yunmen Wenyan (864–949),” Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1989), p. 329.

21. Chang Chung-yuan, trans., *Original Teachings of Ch’an Buddhism* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 107.

22. DP, p. 396a; *Wuku*, T. 47.953ab. According to Dahui, Shaocheng was in the lineage of Langya Huijue through his disciple Xingjiao Tan. Cf. Ishii Shūdō, *Daijō butten* (Chūgoku, Nihon hen), vol. 12, *Zen goroku* (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1992), p. 458; and Ishii, “Nenpu (ge),” p. 132b.

23. This story is included as case twelve in the *Wumenguan*, and in the *Wudeng huiyuan*, juan 7. Cf. Hirata Takashi, *Mumonkan, Zen no Goroku*, vol. 18 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969), pp. 55–58.

24. Dahui says in another general sermon that he served as Shaocheng’s attendant for two years, discussing *gongan* with him every day. DP, p. 430c.

25. DP, p. 446a. The same story is told in DP, p. 424bc and DP, p. 446a. What text Dahui referred to as the *Xuansha Heshang yulu* is unclear.

26. A *songgu*, “eulogy of the ancient,” is a *gongan* commentary in which a story about an ancient Chan master is told, followed by a poetic commentary in the free-form *zi* style in which the meaning of the story is somewhat cryptically restated. A *niangu*, “picking up the ancient,” is a *gongan* commentary in which a story about an ancient Chan master is told, followed by a prose commentary. On these two genres and on Xuedou’s collections, see M. Schlütter, “The Record of Hongzhi.”

27. DP, p. 446a.

28. T. 47.953ab.

29. DP, p. 430c.

30. Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); and Ishii Shūdō, *Sōdai Zenshūshi no kenkyū: Chūgoku Sōtōshū to Dōgen Zen* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1987).

31. Ishii, *Daijō butten*, pp. 458–459.

32. T. 47.953b; DP, p. 428b. See Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 166. Schlütter believes that Daowei during his lifetime was a prominent disciple of Furong Daokai.

33. *Wuku*, T. 47.953b. These two are unknown in other sources.

34. DP, p. 425d.

35. DP, p. 428b.

36. Ishii, “Nenpu (ge),” p. 133a. This monastery is also known as Letan after a local lake.

37. *Wuku*, p. 953b; DP, pp. 425d and 428d.

38. DP, p. 425d.

39. Albert Welter, *The Linji lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 137.

40. Welter, *Linji lu*, p. 138.

41. Welter, *Linji lu*, p. 139.

42. DP, p. 426b.

43. An abbreviated version of this is in DP, p. 426b.

44. T. 47.953b.

45. DP, p. 418.

46. DP, p. 421a.

47. See Miriam Levering, “Dahui Zonggao and Zhang Shangying: The Importance of a Scholar in the Education of a Song Chan Master,” *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 30 (2000): 115–139. DP, p. 418d. Zhang Shangying, like Yuanwu, was from Szechwan.

48. Janet Gyatso discusses the need to establish one’s own lineage as distinct from others as an important factor in the popularity of autobiographical writing by Buddhist monks in Tibet in her *Apparitions of the Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Morten Schlütter pursues this theme in *How Zen Became Zen*, where he connects Dahui Zonggao’s unrelenting verbal attack on the practice and teaching of “silent illumination Chan” to the challenge posed to Linji Chan lineages by the sudden and successful revival of the Caodong Chan lineage during Dahui’s time. See also Schlütter, “Silent Illumination, Kung-an Introspection, and the Competition for Lay Patronage in Sung-Dynasty Ch’an,” in Gregory and Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung*, pp. 109–147.

49. DP, p. 418.

50. This and other biographical detail and historical context discussed in this section are discussed at greater length in Miriam Levering, “Ch’an Enlightenment for Laymen.” See also Ishii Shūdō, *Daijō butten*, pp. 403–499, for a discussion of Song Chan and a biography of Dahui.

51. On Zhang Jiucheng, see Ari Borrell, “Ko-wu or Kung-an? Practice, Realization and Teaching in the Thought of Chang Chiu-ch’eng,” in Gregory and Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung*, pp. 62–108.

52. See Morten Schlütter, "Vinaya Monasteries, Public Abbacies, and State Control of Buddhism under the Northern Song (960–1127)," in William Bodiford, ed., *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 136–160.

53. A good account in English is in Chun-fang Yu's "Ta-hui Tsung-kao and Kung-an Ch'an," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 6 (1979): 221–235. For a more detailed account, see Miriam Levering, "Was There Religious Autobiography in China?" *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30 (2002): 97–122. Many of the quotations from Dahui's *yulu* collections in this section of this essay are also used in a different context and to support a different argument in Levering, "Autobiography."

54. DP, p. 399c.

55. DP, p. 418d.

56. Urs App has: "What is the place from whence all the Buddhas come?" See *Zengojiten*, p. 205b on the meaning of *qushen*, which is more like "come out of bondage"; and App, *Master Yunmen* (New York: Kodansha, 1994), p. 94.

57. This couplet is found in the following story given in the *Tang shi jishi*, *juan* 40, in the section on the Tang poet Liu Gongquan. "On a summer day the emperor Wenzong was making up linked verses (*liananzhu*) with various scholars. He offered, 'Others all suffer from the heat, but I like the long summer days.' Liu Gongquan continued the verse, saying: 'The *hsun* wind comes from the south, and produces a slight coolness in the palace.'"

58. Cf. *Blue Cliff Record*, case 6, which has "Though you be clean and naked, bare and purified, totally without fault or worry, this is still not the ultimate" (Cleary, trans. Shambhala Publications, 1992, p. 44.)

59. DP, pp. 410b–412b.

60. These words appear in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *juan* 20, and also in the *Blue Cliff Record*, case 41, in the commentary on the original case.

61. This is also told at DP, p. 421a.

62. *Zhemu* is an allusion to a sentence: "good birds select the trees on which they roost—one selects the leader whom he would follow."

63. The *huangyang* plant is a plant in the box or boxwood family that allegedly grows only an inch a year. Here it is an image for being stuck in a partial awakening with nothing at work in you to move you further along.

64. *Zengaku daijiten*, p. 145b; *Zengojiten*, p. 473a. Alternately: seat of thorns (Yu).

65. The following two sentences appear in *Zongrong lu*, 87: "Being words and nonbeing words are like wisteria vines climbing on a tree. Suddenly the tree falls and the wisteria dies—where do the words go then?" Cf. T. Cleary, *Book of Serenity: One Hundred Zen Dialogues* (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne, 1990), p. 372.

66. T. 47.883ab. This story is also told at DP, p. 421a. In T. 47.883b–c Dahui tells about further postawakening conversations with Yuanwu.

67. *Jottings under the Bamboo Window* text is in the *Yunqi fahui* (Collected Works of Master Yunqi), ci 25. (Nanjing: Jingling kejing chu, 1897).

68. See Hakuin Ekaku, *Wild Ivy: The Spiritual Autobiography of Zen Master Hakuin*, translated by Norman Waddell (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), p. 63; also p. 109.

69. Actually, if we follow the *Nianpu*, he was thirty-seven.

70. In the *Blue Cliff Record*, Yuanwu says, “You must realize that what is at stake here does not reside in words and phrases: it is like sparks from struck flint, like the brilliance of flashing lightning. However you manage to deal with this, you cannot get around losing your body and life.” T. 48.177c8–10. Translated by App, *Master Yunmen*, p. 79.

71. DP, pp. 410b–412b. In one sermon Dahui says that he passed this *gongan* in a Yunmen school context; DP, p. 396a.

72. Donglin Zhaojue refers to Donglin Changzong, known as Zhaojue Chanshi (1025–1091). Cf. T. 51.573c.

73. *Nianti*; similar to *niangu*?

74. Kenneth Kraft, *Eloquent Zen: Daito and Early Japanese Zen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), pp. 90–91.

75. T. 47.883a.

76. Musō Soseki, trans., “West Mountain Evening Talk,” in W. S. Merwin and Soiku Shigematsu, *The Sun at Midnight* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989), p. 161.

77. Waddell, trans., *Wild Ivy*, pp. 63 and 65. See also p. 109 and p. 122.

78. According to the *Nianpu*, it was 1128.

79. DP, p. 421b. The eighth stage is one in which the bodhisattva has completed all cultivation of the path to Nirvana.

80. I cannot find in any of my dictionaries the compound that I tentatively translate “noisy striving.” This passage, lines 10 to 17 of T. 10.199a, is quoted by Dahui in his telling of the story in a sermon in T. 875bc. In the other two tellings of it he begins quoting with line 17, with which I begin my quotation in the next paragraph. This would lead one to conclude that what struck him in the passage was contained in lines 17 to 24.

81. The version of Dahui’s telling of the story found at p. 459c omits this last phrase.

82. These are views, desires, existence, and ignorance.

83. T. 10.199a, lines 17–24. The quotation in the versions at DP, pp. 459c and 421b end here at line 24 of the sutra text. The quotation in the version at T. 47.875c goes on to line 28 of the sutra text.

84. DP, p. 421b.

85. DP, p. 459c.

86. Foremost among these scholars are Yanagida Seizan, Ishii Shūdō, Robert Buswell, and Morten Schlütter. Important articles and books are: Robert E. Buswell, Jr., “The ‘Short-cut’ Approach of *K’an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of a 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; Miriam Levering, “Miao-tao and Her Teacher Ta-hui,” in Gregory and Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung*, pp. 188–219; and Morten Schlütter, “Silent Illumination, Kung-an Introspection, and the Competition for Lay Patronage in Sung Dynasty Ch’an,” in Gregory and Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung*, pp. 109–147.

87. Morten Schlütter, "Silent Illumination, Kung-an Introspection," and Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 213 n.2. (where Schlütter credits Ishii).

88. *Nianpu* under Shaoxing 11th year, pp. 39b–40a. This translation combines my own with that of Chun-fang Yu in "Ta-hui Zonggao," p. 216.

89. For a positive example, see Ari Borrell's chapter in *Buddhism in the Sung*; for another example, see Hakuin's investigation of a verse by Dahui as a kōan as reported in his autobiography, *Itsumadegusa*.