

**The Transformation of Doubt (*Ŭijŏng* 疑情) in *Kanhwa Sŏn* 看話禪:  
The Testimony of Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238-1295)**

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*Of those past and present spiritual mentors in India [Western Heaven] and China [This Land] who promoted these teachings, there were none who did anything more than just resolve this one doubt. A thousand doubts or a myriad doubts are just this one doubt. One who resolves this doubt will doubt nothing more. And once one has no further doubts, one will be neither more nor less than Śākyamuni, Maitreya, Vimalakīrti, and Elder Pang, nondual and undifferentiated.*

西天此土,古今知識,發揚此段光明,莫不只是一箇決疑而已。千疑萬疑,只是一疑。決此疑者,更無餘疑。既無餘疑,卽與釋迦彌勒淨名龐老,不增不減,無二無別。

*Gaofeng Yuanmiao* 高峰原妙 (1238-1295)

One of the more striking transformations that occurred within Buddhism as it adapted to East Asia was the creation of new, uniquely Chinese systems of meditation practice that had few precise analogs in the imported Indian traditions of the religion. The Sinitic system that has attracted the most attention in the West is that of Chan or Sŏn 禪, a school that had always presumed itself to be the repository of contemplative expertise in Chinese Buddhism, as its adoption of the name "Meditation" (*Sŏn* 禪) suggests. From virtually its inception, Sŏn sought to create forms of meditation that it could claim exclusively as its own. This process involved both critiquing the practices common to other Sino-Indian schools as being 'gradual,' while claiming exclusively for itself putatively 'subitist' forms of religious training. Sŏn also experimented with forms of rhetoric it considered proleptic and transformative, in order to demonstrate the autonomy of Sŏn from the rest of the Buddhist tradition. To simplify a complex process of development, we may say that this parallel evolution in both practice and rhetoric led to the creation of *kanhua* Chan/Kor. *kanhwa* Sŏn 看話禪 (lit. the "Sŏn of observing the topic of inquiry") during the Song dynasty (960-1279). In this form of meditation, stories about earlier masters - termed "public cases" (Ch. *gong'an*/ Kor. *kongan*/ Jpn. *kōan* 公案) - were used by Sŏn masters for instructing their students and testing the depth of their understanding. Some teachers even began to assign such exchanges as topics to mull over during meditation.

By the middle of the Song, these "public cases" came to be seen as significant not because they were the repository of Chan's pedagogical lore, but instead because they expressed the enlightened state of mind of the Sŏn master involved in the exchange. Students then were taught to use these cases as "topics of inquiry" (Ch. *huatou*/Kor. *hwadu* 話頭)—a term sometimes translated as "critical phrase" or "keyword" in Western language sources—so that they too would come to realize, and in turn be able to express,

their own enlightened state of mind. Single-minded attention to the *hwadu* was claimed to create an introspective focus that would eventually lead the student back to the enlightened source of his own mind—a process referred to as "tracing back the radiance" (Ch. *huiguang fanzhao*/Kor. *hoegwang panjo* 迴光返照) emanating from the mind, or, in the translation John McRae has suggested, "counter-illumination." Once the student had rediscovered the source of his own mind through such counter-illumination, he would come to know the enlightened intent of the Sōn master involved in the public case, and in turn consummate in himself the same state of enlightenment. Through this technique, then, the student patterns his mind after that of the eminent Sōn masters of old until they think—and ultimately act—as one.

One of the most crucial dimensions of *kanhwa* Sōn practice is the emphasis on the need for 'doubt' (Ch. *yiqing*/Kor. *ũijong* 疑情), which is viewed as the motive force that propels this meditation forward. The notion of doubt appears in Indian meditative literature, but almost exclusively as one of the five principal hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*; Ch. *gai*/Kor. *kae* 蓋) to concentration or mental absorption (*dhyāna*; Ch. *ding*/Kor. *chǒng* 定). Doubt thus plays no constructive role in Indian Buddhist spiritual culture, but was instead an obstacle that must be overcome if progress were to proceed. By the time doubt has been fully appraised and considered in East Asia by Sōn Buddhist adepts, however, this debilitating mental concomitant has been transformed into the principal force driving one toward enlightenment. This paper seeks to tell the story of this transformation.<sup>1</sup>

### Early Indian Notions of Doubt

In Indian materials, doubt (Sanskrit, *vicikitsā*; Ch. *yi*/Kor. *ũi* 疑) most often appears as the fifth of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*; Ch. *gai*/Kor. *kae* 蓋) to mental absorption, along with sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*styānamiddha*), and restless and worry (*auddhatya-kaukr̥tya*). It does not have an affective dimension in Indian materials, but is generally viewed as a debilitation of the intellect: as Buddhaghosa explains in the *Visuddhimagga* (*Path of Purification*): "Doubt (P. *vicikicchā*)... has the characteristic of uncertainty. Its function is to waver. It is manifested as indecisiveness, or it is manifested as taking various sides. Its proximate cause is unwise attention (P. *ayonisomanasikāra*). It should be regarded as obstructive of theory (P. *paṭipatti*)" (*Visuddhimagga*, XIV.177).<sup>2</sup> Doubt is always associated with unwholesome states of consciousness in the sensual sphere of existence (i.e., it does not exist in the realms of subtle materiality or immateriality) that are rooted in delusion (*Visuddhimagga*, XIV.89-93). It involves skepticism about various intellectual propositions concerning the state of one's existence in past, present, and future: viz., Did I exist, or not, in the past? What and how did I exist in the past? Having been something previously, how did I come to exist in the past? (And so, too, for the future and, with slight alterations, the present.) (*Visuddhimagga*, XIX.6). Because of the uncertainty created by doubt, the mind becomes agitated, thus obstructing sustained thought (*vicāra*;

<sup>1</sup> This paper is adapted from material that first appeared in my article "The Transformation of Doubt (*Yiqing*) into a Positive Emotion in Chinese Buddhist Meditation," in *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. Halvor Eifring (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 225-236.

<sup>2</sup> Translations from the *Visuddhimagga* are taken from the rendering by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, *The Path of Purification* (5<sup>th</sup> edition, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1991), with slight changes (here switching "uncertainty" and "doubt").

guan/Kor. *kwan* 觀, Ch. *si*/Kor. *sa* 伺), and full mental absorption (*dhyāna*).<sup>3</sup> Because of its intellectual dimension, doubt will not be fully removed from consciousness until all wrong views (*mithyādr̥ṣṭi*; Ch. *wangjian*/Kor. *manggyōn* 妄見) are resolved in awakening; the moment one becomes a “stream-enterer” (*srotaāpanna*; Ch. *yuliu*/Kor. *yeryu* 預流) on the path of vision (*darśanamārga*; Ch. *jiandao*/Kor. *kyōndo* 見道), the meditator achieves a direct insight into the reality of nirvāṇa, which forever vanquishes all mistaken beliefs about the true nature of one’s self and one’s world.

For our subsequent discussion, however, it is important to note that doubt was always viewed by Indian Buddhists in association with sustained meditative practice. This is because the five hindrances, doubt among them, were specifically presumed to stand in opposition to the five constituents that were present in meditative absorption (*dhyānāṅga*): sensual desire obstructs one-pointedness of mind (*ekāgratā*), ill-will obstructs rapture (*prīti*), sloth and torpor obstructs applied thought (*vitarka*), restless and worry obstruct ease (*sukha*), and doubt obstructs sustained thought (*vicāra*) (*Visuddhimagga*, IV.86). Only by removing these five hindrances would the meditator be able to access the profound meditative state of the first absorption of the realm of subtle materiality (*rūpāvacaradhyāna*).

In order to remove this hindrance, various types of counteragents are taught in Indian scripture. Perhaps the most fundamental way of counteracting this hindrance is outlined in the various recensions of the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*/*Smṛtyupasthānasūtra* (Foundations of Mindfulness Sūtra). There, the meditator is taught simply to note mindfully and with full attention the presence or absence of doubt or the other hindrances in the mind: “Herein, monks, when doubt is present in him, the monk knows, ‘There is doubt in me,’ or when doubt is absent, he knows, ‘There is no doubt in me.’ He knows how the arising of non-arisen doubt comes to be; he knows how the rejection of arisen doubt comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the rejected doubt comes to be.”<sup>4</sup> Two purposes of this basic awareness are noted: the operation of the presently appearing hindrance is temporarily suspended; and as the awareness of the hindrance becomes stronger, it will be more difficult for it to arise unrecognized in the future. As Nyanaponika states, “This method is based on a simple psychological fact, which is expressed by the commentators as follows: ‘A good and an evil thought cannot occur in combination. Therefore, at the time of *knowing* the [doubt that arose in the preceding moment, that negative sense of doubt] no longer exists [but only the positive act of knowing].”<sup>5</sup>

Given, however, that the proximate cause of doubt is presumed to be unwise, or unsystematic, attention (*ayonisomanaskāra*; Ch. *buzheng siwei*/Kor. *pulchōng sawi* 不正思維, Ch. *feili zuoyi*/Kor. *piri chagūi* 非理作意), Buddhist texts teach specific practices and contemplations that are considered to be conducive to abandoning doubt. These techniques specifically include systematic attention to such dichotomies as the distinction between wholesome and unwholesome, noble and vile, good and evil, etc., so that meditators would train their minds in correct doctrinal knowledge, viz., wisdom (*prajñā*; *zhihui*/Kor. *chihye* 智慧). Continued study and memorization of Buddhist scriptures

<sup>3</sup> The *Visuddhimagga* states that these five hindrances are “specifically obstructive” of mental absorption; IV.104.

<sup>4</sup> The *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, as translated in Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1962), p. 123-4.

<sup>5</sup> Nyanaponika Thera, *The Five Mental Hindrances and Their Conquest*, Wheel Series no. 26 (1947; reprint ed., Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1961), p. 4.

would also develop wisdom into a spiritual faculty that would further help to control doubt. One of the earliest systematic presentations of Buddhist meditation written in China, Kumārajāva's (344-413) *Zuochan sanmei jing* 坐禪三昧經 (Book on Sitting Meditation), a compilation of teachings on dhyāna practice deriving from a number of masters in the Sarvāstivāda school of Indian mainstream Buddhism, mentions doubt in this same context, as a product of delusion, which is to be overcome through one of the five "inhibitory" or "counteractive" (Ch. *zhi*/Kor. *chi* 治) meditations, in this case the meditation on dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*).<sup>6</sup>

Even throughout this almost exclusively negative treatment of doubt as an unwholesome mental state, there are a few tantalizing hints in Indian religious texts of the more positive connotations that the term acquires later in East Asian Buddhism. Indian scriptures, such as the *Brāhmaṇa-s*, for example, recognize the role that doubt can play in prompting religious inquiry. This salutary role of doubt is mentioned, for example, in a few passages where doubt (*vicikitsā*) leads to questioning about eschatological issues, such as whether there is an afterlife.<sup>7</sup> These kinds of doubts promote religious questioning and even genuinely philosophical inquiry.

Doubt, therefore, always stands in direct distinction to the more intellectual faculty of wisdom, not the affective faculty of faith. In Indian Buddhism, faith was regarded as one of the five faculties (*indriya*; Ch. *gen*/Kor. *kūn* 根) crucial to spiritual progress, along with diligence (*vīrya*), mindfulness (*smṛti*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). The faculty of faith, in fact, is usually considered to be the direct counteragent of ill-will, not of doubt, clearly demonstrating its affective dimension. Faith produces the affective aspect of bliss (*prāpti*), which brings about serenity of mind and thought; in addition, faith also produces self-confidence, engendering the conative characteristic of diligence (*vārya*).<sup>8</sup> Faith and wisdom, which were at equal poles from the faculty of mindfulness, were to be kept constantly counterpoised. By balancing them, faith would guard against excessive wisdom, which could lead to skepticism, while wisdom would protect against excessive faith, which could lead to blind, uncritical acceptance. The result was a "rational faith" (Pali: *ākārāvati saddhā*)<sup>9</sup> that was prompted more by investigation than acquiescence. Preliminary examination of the Buddhist teachings would encourage the student to take up religious practice and, after cultivating those teachings, his initial tacit faith would be confirmed through direct experience. The arrangement itself speaks to the subordinate place faith occupied in Indian Buddhist praxis: faith may serve as the basis of practice, but it had always to be carefully counterbalanced by intellectual understanding. Faith and doubt are therefore part of a continuum of religious practice, doubt promoting critical examination of the teachings, faith resulting from the conviction that comes through understanding and prompting, in turn, further conative energy. Faith is thus the "‘mental appreciation’ or ‘intellectual joy’ resulting from intelligent study and a clarification of one's thought"<sup>10</sup> and is a direct result of the resolution of doubt.

<sup>6</sup> *Zuochan sanmei jing*, *T[aishō shinshū daizōkyō]* 614:15.272c-273a.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., "Pratardana . . . questions about his doubt" (*Pratardanaḥ vicikitsam papraccha*); *Kauśātakā Brāhmaṇa* 26.5, quoted in K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> N. Dutt, "Place of Faith in Buddhism," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 16, p. 639; see the discussion and critique of Dutt's putative third dimension of faith—as an antidote to doubt—in Jayatilleke, *Knowledge*, p. 387.

<sup>9</sup> "The faith of him, which is thus fixed, rooted and established on these reasons, grounds, and features is said to be a rational faith, rooted in insight, firm and irremovable by a recluse or brahmin, a god, Māra or Brahmā, or anyone else in the world." *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta* (M.i.320); quoted in Jayatilleke, *Knowledge*, p. 393.

<sup>10</sup> Jayatilleke, *Knowledge*, p. 386.

## The New Conception of Doubt in Sōn Meditation

Doubt plays a crucial role in the technique of Ch. *kanhua* Chan/Kor. *kanhwa* Sōn (the Sōn of examining the “topic of inquiry,” keyword,” or “critical phrase”), a style of Buddhist meditation unique to East Asia, which becomes emblematic especially of the Linji 臨濟 school of the classical and post-classical Sōn periods. In Sōn treatments, doubt is typically called the *yiqing/üijong* 疑情: the emotion, feeling, or perhaps best the “sensation” of doubt. Even though the *-qing* in *yiqing* is never, so far as I am aware, glossed in the literature, its connotation is clear: *qing* is a palpable, conative sensation that ultimately serves to pervade all of one’s thoughts, feelings, emotions, and eventually even one’s physical body, with the doubt generated through *kanhwa* practice.

Modern scholars have often asserted that the evolution of this form of meditation was the product of an internal crisis in Song dynasty Chan, brought about by the degeneration of the tradition after the demise of the charismatic Sōn masters of the preceding Tang dynasty. As I have detailed in an earlier article,<sup>11</sup> however, I prefer instead to view *kanhwa* Sōn as one of several products of the Sinicization of Buddhism. To my mind, *kanhwa* practice may be viewed as the culmination of an internal dynamic within Chan, beginning in the Tang dynasty and climaxing in the Song, whereby subitist<sup>12</sup> rhetoric came to be extended to pedagogy and finally to practice. *Kanhwa* meditation thus emerges as a practical application of the “sudden teachings” (Ch. *dunjiao*/Kor. *ton’gyo* 頓教) that had been the clarion call of Sōn since early in its history. Since I have treated the evolution of this uniquely Chinese style of meditation previously, I won’t repeat that discussion now. Let me instead focus here on the sensation of doubt itself.

Early discussions about the place of doubt in proto-*kanhwa* practice still hone closely to earlier Indian notions of doubt as a hindrance to meditative development. For example, Yuanwu Keqin (Kor. Wōno Kūkkūn) 圓悟克勤 (1063-1135), an important figure in the transformation of the literary study of *gong’an* into a meditative system, still treats the sensation of doubt as something harmful to faith, which should be diligently avoided at all times—but especially so in the course of *gong’an* investigation.<sup>13</sup> When Keqin talks about “cutting through the sensation of doubt with an adamant sword”<sup>14</sup> 以金剛劍. 截斷疑情, he explains that doubt must be vanquished because it is an obstacle to faith and thus to understanding.

It is Keqin’s famous disciple Dahui Zonggao (Kor. Taehye Chonggo) 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163) who turns Keqin’s view toward doubt on its head, re-conceiving it instead as the principal force driving one toward enlightenment. Since I have discussed Zonggao’s

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<sup>11</sup> Robert E. Buswell, Jr., “The ‘Short-cut’ Approach of *K’an-hua* Meditation; The Evolution of a Practical Subitism in Chinese Sōn Buddhism,” in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 5 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, A Kuroda Institute Book, 1987), 321-77.

<sup>12</sup> **Editor’s footnote:** some people may not know what this is. “The position that awakening or enlightenment is instantaneous, sudden and direct, not attained by practice through a period of time and not the fruit of a gradual accretion or realization.” – see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subitism> - accessed on 20 November 2011.

<sup>13</sup> The most thorough treatment to date of Yuanwu Keqin’s approach to *kanhwa* practice appears in Ding-hwa Evelyn Hsieh’s “Yüan-wu K’o-ch’in’s (1063-1135) Teaching of Sōn *Kung-an* Practice: A Transition from the Literary Study of Sōn *Kung-an* to the Practice of *K’an-hua* Chan,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17-1 (Nov., 1994): 66-95. For a selection of Keqin’s writings, see also J. C. Cleary and Thomas Cleary, translators, *Zen Letters: Teachings of Yuanwu* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1994).

<sup>14</sup> *Yuanwu yulu* 3, T 1997:47.723c12.

treatment in detail elsewhere,<sup>15</sup> I will here focus instead on what I believe is the most systematic, and at times even eloquent, presentation of the role of doubt in mature *kanhwa* Sōn meditation found anywhere in the literature: the *Essentials of Chan* (Ch. *Chanyao*/Kor. *Sōnyo* 禪要), by the important Yuan-dynasty Linji figure Gaofeng Yuanmiao (Kor. Kobong Wōnmyo) 高峰原妙 (1239-1295). Yuanmiao's own contribution to *kanhwa* Sōn comes not so much from his innovations as instead the clarity with which he explains and systematizes the thought of others. Most of the concepts treated in Yuanmiao's work derive from his predecessors in the Chinese Linji school. Even so, few other teachers have explored this topic with such perspicuity and insight. Yuanmiao's descriptions help to remove much of the veil of mystery in which Sōn practice is often enveloped in Western portrayals of the school. The clarity of his presentation also must account at least partially for the *Essential of Chan*'s inclusion in the Korean *Sa chip* 四集 (Fourfold Collection), the core of the monastic curriculum in Korea since at least the middle of the Chosōn dynasty.

One of the most influential feature of Yuanmiao's presentation of *kanhwa* Sōn praxis was to systematize its principal constituents into what he termed the "three essentials" (Ch. *sanyao*/Kor. *samyō* 三要): 1) the faculty of great faith (Ch. *daxin'gen*/Kor. *taesin'gūn* 大信根); 2) great fury, or perhaps "great passionate intent" (Ch. *dafenzhi*/Kor. *taebunji* 大憤志); and 3) the great sensation of doubt (Ch. *da yiqing*/Kor. *taeūijōng* 大疑情). Yuanmiao's typology will subsequently be followed in the independent Sōn traditions of China, Korea, and Japan. In one of the most celebrated passages in post-classical Sōn literature, Yuanmiao defines each constituent as follows:

If we're speaking about authentic Sōn contemplation, there have to be three essentials. The first essential is to have the faculty of great faith: This Matter should be so patently obvious that it is just as if you are leaning against Mt. Sumeru. The second essential is to have great fury, which is just as if you've come across the villain who murdered your father and right then and there you want to cut him in half with a single strike of your sword. The third essential is to have the sensation of great doubt, which is just as if you've done a heinous act in secret and are about to be exposed.<sup>16</sup>

若謂着實參禪.決須具足三要.第一要有大信根.明知此事.如靠一座須彌山.第二要有大憤志.如遇殺父冤讎.直欲便與一刀兩段.第三要有大疑情.如暗地做了一件極事.正在欲露未露之時.

I have discussed above the Indian notion of faith as a precursor to insight. Faith in the Sōn tradition was conceived rather differently. The doctrinal foundation of much

<sup>15</sup> Buswell, "K'an-hua Meditation," especially pp. 343-56.

<sup>16</sup> Gaofeng *Chanyao*, sect. 16, *Xuzangjing (Supplement to the Canon)*, vol. 122: 257a ff. Since there is no standard edition of this text, I will henceforth cite it only by section number. These three essentials may have been modeled on a similar list of "three states of mind" (*sanxin* 三心) found in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經 (*Contemplating the Buddha of Infinite Life*). That scripture mentions that "rebirth in the pure land occurs through generating three states of mind" (344c11): perfect sincerity (*zhicheng xin* 至誠心); profound resolve (*shenxin* 深心), resolving to transmit merit to others (*huixiang fayuan xin* 迴向法願心). See *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, T 365:12.344c11-12. The term *sanyao* is also used, though without clarification, in the *Linji lu*, T 1985:47.497a15-20.

of Sinitic Buddhism, and especially the Sōn tradition, was its claim that enlightenment was immanent in all people, an idea expressed in the term “buddha-nature” (Ch. *foxing*/Kor. *pulsōng* 佛性). As Yuanmiao explains, ultimately all that needed to be done in order to achieve enlightenment was simply to accept that fact—have “faith” in it wholeheartedly—and thereby let go of the mistaken notion that one was not enlightened. Faith was the catalyst for this change of heart. It was seen as a beneficial influence constantly emanating from the enlightened nature, prompting all conscious beings toward enlightenment. The confidence that would be generated by this kind of faith would make it seem that “it is just as if you are leaning against Mt. Sumeru,” the axis mundi of the world itself. Once his faith were sufficient, the student would immediately acquiesce to his original state of mind and “re-cognize” his innate enlightenment. Hence, faith was upgraded in Sōn Buddhism from a necessary, but decidedly subsidiary, component of praxis, to a principal catalyst of awakening.

But Yuanmiao, like many Linji teachers before him, also had a realistic view of the human condition. While people may in truth be enlightened, they have had years—in fact lifetimes, in the Buddhist view—to convince themselves that they were deluded. Therefore, it was perfectly natural to expect that the sincere adept would also have doubts concerning the truth of his innate enlightenment, his capacity to rediscover that truth, and the ability of his teacher to guide him toward that rediscovery. In a striking accommodation to the frailty of human nature, rather than making the perfection of faith alone the prerequisite to enlightenment, the Linji school of Sōn developed an approach to practice that drew on the very doubts that most religious adherents would inevitably experience.

Yuanmiao seeks to use this natural tension between faith (that promise that I am innately enlightened) and doubt (the reality that I am an ordinary, ignorant person) as the catalyst for the experience of awakening (Ch. *wu*/Kor. *o* 悟). In Section 11 of his *Essentials of Chan*, Yüanmiao treats both factors as being in symbiotic relationship (“It is certain that the more faith you have, the more doubt you will have” 決能便恁麼信去,便恁麼疑去). He treats faith as the “essence” Ch. *ti* /Kor. *che* 體) of doubt, while awakening is the “function” (*yong* 用) of doubt, drawing upon a rubric popularized in the *Awakening of Faith according to the Mahāyāna* 大乘起心論 (Ch. *Dasheng qixin lun*/Kor. *Taesūng kisillon*), an important Sinitic apocryphal treatise that was extremely influential in the evolution of Sōn ideology and praxis. Religious doubt arises from the deepest recesses of one's faith. The tension between them creates an existential quandary that ultimately leads to the experience of awakening. All three factors are inextricably interconnected, so that “when faith is a hundred percent, so too will be doubt. When doubt is a hundred percent, so too will be awakening” 信有十分,疑得十分,疑得十分,悟得十分 (*Chanyao*, sect. 11).

Yuanmiao describes the pervasive effect of this sensation of doubt in an evocative passage of his *Essentials of Chan*:

Unexpectedly in my sleep I began to doubt [the *huatou/hwadu*] “the thousand dharmas return to one; to what does the one return?”<sup>17</sup> At that point, the sensation

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<sup>17</sup> This phrase appears in a famous *gong'an* involving Zhaozhou Congshen (Kor. Choju Chongsim) 趙州從諗 (778-897): “A monk asked Zhaozhou, ‘The myriad dharmas return to one; to what does the one return?’ Zhaozhou replied,

of doubt suddenly erupted. I stopped sleeping and forgot about eating. I couldn't distinguish east from west and couldn't tell day from night. Whether spreading out my sitting mat or laying out my bowls, whether defecating or urinating—finally whether active or still, whether speaking or silent, everything was just this “to what does the one return?” There wasn't the slightest extraneous thought. And even if I had wanted to think of something else, I was utterly incapable of doing it. [My mind] was exactly like something nailed or glued: no matter how hard you shook it, it would not move. Even if I was in a dense crowd of people, it was like no one was there. From dawn till dusk, from dusk till dawn, [my mind was] lucid and profound, lofty and imposing, pristine and flawless. One thought seemed to last for ten-thousand years. The sense realms were tranquil and all persons were forgotten. It was as if I were stupid or senseless. (*Chanyao*, sect. 1.)

忽於睡中. 疑着萬法歸一. 一歸何處. 自此疑情頓發. 廢寢忘餐. 東西不辨. 晝夜不分. 開單展鉢. 屙屎放尿. 至於一動一靜. 一語一默. 總只是箇一歸何處. 更無絲毫異念. 亦要起絲毫異念. 了不可得. 正如釘釘膠粘. 撼搖不動. 雖在稠人廣座中. 如無一人相似. 從朝至暮. 從暮至朝. 澄澄湛湛. 卓卓巍巍. 純清絕點. 一念萬年. 境寂人忘. 如痴如兀.

The existential doubt created through investigating the *hwadu* becomes the locus around which all the other doubts experienced in life coalesce. This overwhelming sense of doubt creates intense pressure on the meditator's intellectual processes and on his own sense of self-identity and self-worth. The coalescence of all the meditator's thoughts and actions around that doubt produces the courage necessary to abandon himself seemingly to ultimate disaster: his own personal destruction. This courage is what Yuanmiao means by the second of his three essentials, great fury. This fury creates a strong urgency about religious praxis, urgency that is so intense that “is just as if you've come across the villain who murdered your father...” This passion sustains the student through the existential crises created by the doubt. Through this fury's sustaining power, the doubt will not dissipate, but will become increasingly intense. Then, just as a filial son would avenge his father's death without concern for his own life, so too would the meditator continue to investigate the *hwadu* until he no longer could resist the mental pressure created by the doubt. At that point the doubt explodes (Ch. *po*/Kor. *p'a* 破), annihilating the student's identification with body and mind. The bifurcating tendencies of thought are brought to an end and the limiting “point of view” that is the ego is eliminated. One's awareness now has no fixed locus and the distinctions between oneself and others vanish. Consciousness expands infinitely, encompassing the entire universe both spatially and temporally. This is the meaning of enlightenment in the Linji soteriological system. Hence, as in the epigraph to this paper, Yuanmiao can claim that enlightenment means simply to “resolve this one doubt. A thousand doubts or a myriad doubts are just this one doubt. One who resolves this doubt will doubt nothing more. And once one has no

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“When I was in Qingzhou, I made a cloth shirt that weighted seven-jin.” See *Biyān lu* 5, case no. 45, *T* 2003:48.181c17-20; Thomas and J.C. Cleary, *Blue Cliff Record* (Boulder: Shambhala Press, 1978), vol. 2, p. 318. The phrase appears also in the apocryphal *Baozang lun* 寶藏論 [Precious storehouse treatise]; *T* 1857:45.143b-150a; cf. p. 150a2], wrongly attributed to Sengzhao (Kor. Sūngjo) 僧肇 (374-414), and written sometime between 700 and 815; see Kamata Shigeo, *Chūgoku Kegon shisōshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1965), pp. 375-401. This *gong'an* is discussed in detail in section eleven of the *Essentials of Chan*.

further doubts, one will be neither more nor less than Śākyamuni, Maitreya, Vimalakīrti, and Elder Pang...” (*Chanyao*, sect. 11). 莫不只是一箇決疑而已。千疑萬疑。只是一疑。決此疑者。更無餘疑。既無餘疑。即與釋迦彌勒。淨名龐老。不增不減。

Yuanmiao is particularly adept at describing clearly the principal constituents of *kanhwa* Sōn, providing detailed instructions on how the technique is to be cultivated in practice, and encouraging lay people who are trying to maintain their religious cultivation amid the distracting secular world. Indeed, the majority of Yuanmiao's directives are delivered to lay people and his instructions to them illustrate the Chinese penchant to see the ordinary world as the ground of enlightenment. *Kanhwa* Sōn sought to foster mental stress, existential quandary, and even emotional anxiety—all states suggested in Yuanmiao's description of the sensation of doubt as being like “you've done a heinous act in secret and are about to be exposed.” It is therefore perhaps no surprise that Yuanmiao considered the laity to be the ideal audience for his directives on Sōn meditation. The emphasis on doubt in *kanhwa* meditation encouraged the student to foster all the confusion and perplexity he could muster. For this reason, secular life was the ideal training ground for religious practice because it provided a plethora of situations in which frustration, doubting, and insecurity would appear—all weapons in the arsenal of *kanhwa* meditation. Moreover the obstacles facing the householder were so ubiquitous and seductive (sex, wealth, fame, and so on, ad infinitum) that a person who was able to withstand them developed a tremendous “dynamism” (Ch. *li*/ Kor. *yŏk* 力) that was claimed to be superior to that of the sequestered monk. This dynamism would shake students loose from their attachments and the things with which they identified, and thus help to consummate the radical nonattachment to both body and mind that was the goal of Sōn practice. But it is the peculiarly East Asian Sōn notion of doubt—so radically different from Indian Buddhist interpretations of the term—that plays the pivotal role in transforming the meditator from a deluded ordinary person (*pṛthagjana*; Ch. *fanfu*/Kor. *pŏmbu* 凡夫) into an enlightened sage.