

# 5

## *Visions, Divisions, Revisions*

### The Encounter between Iconoclasm and Supernaturalism in Kōan Cases about Mount Wu-t'ai

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#### On the Encounter between Iconoclasm and Supernaturalism

This chapter examines the role of popular religiosity expressed in several kōans dealing with the sacred mountain: Mount Wu-t'ai or Wu-t'ai-shan (J. Godai-zan), especially case 35 in the *Pi-yen lu* (J. *Hekiganroku*) collection of 1128,<sup>1</sup> along with an alternative version in the Ch'ing dynasty collection, the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* (J. *Gosen goroku*),<sup>2</sup> in addition to case 31 in the *Wu-men kuan* (J. *Mumonkan*) that is similar to case 10 in the *Ts'ung-jung lu* (J. *Shōyōroku*) as well as *Pi-yen lu* case 24. The *Pi-yen lu* kōan (see appendix to this chapter for a complete translation) focuses on a specific hieratic locale infused with cosmological symbolism. Mount Wu-t'ai, believed to be the earthly abode of Mañjuśrī (C. Wen-shu, J. Monju), was a primary pilgrimage site for popular, especially esoteric, Buddhism, where seekers traveled to attain visions of the bodhisattva of wisdom (*prajñā*), who often revealed himself either in a majestic way as a blazing ball of light or a youthful prince riding astride a flying golden-haired lion amid multicolored clouds, or in covert fashion as a beggar or old man mysteriously wandering the slopes.<sup>3</sup>

The mountain in Shansi province in northern China is sometimes referred to as Mount Clear-and-Cool (Ch'ing-liang-shan, which also refers to the name of the Fourth Patriarch in the Hua-yen sect, with which many of the temples were aligned), or as "snowy mountain" (*hsüeh-shan*) because of both its climate and its spiritual atmosphere. The name actually refers to a cluster of peaks with five main terraces (the literal meaning of *wu-t'ai*, including northern, eastern, western, southern, and central terraces) that once encompassed thousands of monks, including clerics from Mongolia and Tibet, who dwelled

in hundreds of monasteries and temples that were depicted in cave murals at Tun-huang. Many of these continued to flourish throughout the T'ang and Sung eras, even while other forms of Buddhism underwent periods of suppression or deterioration.<sup>4</sup> Mount Wu-t'ai, particularly known for natural anomalies such as winter blossoms and multicolored hazes, was one of four sacred mountains in China where bodhisattvas were said to appear and perform miracles for those who came seeking visions.<sup>5</sup> These mountains were part of a general pattern of the transformation of the Chinese landscape pervaded by indigenous spirits that were assimilated and defined, decoded and reencoded, in terms of Buddhist sacred geography.<sup>6</sup>

Early Ch'an developed in an intellectual climate of competition with popular religion by further redefining, usually in a thoroughgoing demythological way, spaces previously considered to be populated by autochthonic demonic and protector gods or dominated by cosmological principles such as esoteric Buddhist or yin/yang theory.<sup>7</sup> For example in the process of "opening a mountain" to pacify and purify the spirits in order to establish a temple in uncharted territory, Ch'an masters often tamed and converted magical beasts like tigers, snakes, or *nāga*, or outwitted and assimilated local hermits.<sup>8</sup> However, Mount Wu-t'ai was generally considered off limits for iconoplastic Ch'an monastics because of its emphasis on elaborate esoteric ritual performances to invoke the presence of Mañjuśrī, and the practice of pilgrimage was explicitly forbidden by prominent masters including Lin-chi, Yün-men, and Chao-chou. In a scathing critique that echoes Confucian scholar Hsün-tzu's sharp contrast between the common folk who embrace rituals or ceremonies based on superstition and the *chün-tzu* who practice rituals because of their elegant ceremonial quality, Lin-chi directly refutes and forbids Mount Wu-t'ai pilgrimages from the standpoint of an internalization and humanization of the supernatural:<sup>9</sup>

There're a bunch of students who seek Mañjuśrī on Wu-t'ai. Wrong from the start! There's not Mañjuśrī on Wu-t'ai. Do you want to know Mañjuśrī? Your activity right now, never changing, nowhere faltering—*this* is the living Mañjuśrī. Your single thought's non-differentiating light—*this* indeed is the true Samantabhadra.

For Lin-chi, the true place is not outside of human experience but is located within authentically cultivated subjectivity. Yet Mount Wu-t'ai continued to appeal to and attract Ch'an seekers, some of whose pilgrimages are recorded in a large corpus of hagiographical literature about the mountain.

The *Pi-yen lu* collection diverges from Lin-chi's strict iconoclasm by including a kōan based on a passage in a text containing accounts of miraculous visits to Mount Wu-t'ai, the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* (*Extended Record of Mount Clear-and-Cool*, 1060).<sup>10</sup> In the source passage, a late eighth-century

itinerant Ch'an monk, Wu-cho, meets and talks with Mañjuśrī in an apparitional monastery known as the Prajñā Temple, which the bodhisattva conjures to provide comfort during the pilgrim's difficult travels. According to the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan*, Wu-cho was one of several visionary-builders of the period who sought to construct an actual temple on Mount Wu-t'ai based on one envisioned and inspired during a rendezvous with Mañjuśrī. The kōan case seems at first to read like a typical Ch'an "encounter dialogue" (C. *chi-yüan wen-ta*, J. *kien-mondō*) between Mañjuśrī, often referred to as the Great Sage, who plays the role of the enlightened master, and Wu-cho, who is outsmarted in the conversation and ultimately fails to realize his vision of the temple proffered by the deity. But the case's dialogue, which deals with a variety of philosophical issues concerning the significance of Buddhist discipline in the Age of Decline (C. *mo-fa*, J. *mappō*), also expresses the encounter, characterized by a fundamental tension and sense of ambivalence, between two levels of Ch'an discourse, that is, the ideal theory of iconoclasm and antiritualism reflected in Lin-chi's injunction, and the appeal of practices based on supernatural visions and numinous experiences. Thus the case reflects a double sense of encounter: the personal encounter between disciple and master, who in this instance is an otherworldly being, in the story told in the kōan text derived in large part from popular Buddhist literature; and the larger, ideological encounter between Ch'an iconoclasm and supernaturalism in the story behind the story, or the contextual background of the text, which this chapter seeks to recover. The *Pi-yen lu* kōan commentary purposefully cultivates an ironic ambiguity that avoids taking a clear stand on accepting or refuting either the supernatural or antisupernatural quality of sacred space.

### *The Meaning of the "Encounter Dialogue"*

To clarify the twofold nature of the meeting between Mañjuśrī and Wu-cho, it is first necessary to analyze the significance of the encounter dialogue as the basic literary unit of the great majority of kōan cases. Yanagida Seizan, the preeminent Japanese scholar in studies of the formative period of Ch'an Buddhism in China, has pointed out the crucial role played by encounter dialogues in the development of Ch'an/Zen discourse.<sup>11</sup> According to Yanagida, the dialogue is a spontaneous, intuitive repartee between enlightened master and aspiring disciple that formed the basis of the distinctive literary style of the records of Ch'an patriarchs. The dialogues, extracted from voluminous transmission of the lamp hagiographical genealogies, including the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* of 1004 as the first main example of the genre, were contained in the recorded sayings of individual masters as well as in kōan collection texts. Beginning with the records of T'ang era master Ma-tsu and his Hung-chou School lineage, credited by Yanagida with originating the encounter dialogue method of teaching, Ch'an literature's main thrust was not the formal articula-

tion of doctrinal principles but the informal, oral expression of a dynamic, experiential pedagogical encounter. The encounter dialogue, or “oral instructions uttered in different specific situations” by which its participants “could grasp truth,”<sup>12</sup> took place at an intense and most likely foreshadowed meeting that was uniquely conducive to a spiritual breakthrough. The opportunity for the encounter occurred suddenly and unpredictably, yet the exchange was neither accidental nor predetermined by karma or fate but a consequence of a multiplicity of causal and conditioning factors that led the respective parties to participate in the highly charged interactive situation.

John McRae, who worked closely with Yanagida, has argued that the prototypical encounter dialogue associated with Ma-tsu may have had antecedents in pre-Hui-neng Northern school literature that contained rhetorical questions and pithy admonitions referred to as “questions about things” or “pointing at things and asking the meanings” (*chih-shih wen-i*).<sup>13</sup> Despite a relatively minor disagreement about the history of the origins of *chi-yüan wen-ta* as a literary genre capturing a key instructional device, Yanagida and McRae are in accord on the meaning of the dialogues, especially concerning the function of the encounter itself. Both stress that the efficacy of the encounter derives from the charismatic quality of the Ch’an master, who combines innovative pedagogical techniques with an irreverent, tables-turning outlook. McRae suggests that Ch’an came to distinguish its approach from that of other Buddhist schools because the master was by no means an isolated or aloof personage but was “defined almost entirely by the kind of interaction he had with his students.”<sup>14</sup> The encounter dialogue, a genuinely concrete and personal rather than abstract or theoretical form of expression, is designed, according to Yanagida, to liberate “someone paralyzed and religiously impotent by his dependence on some predetermined religious position.”<sup>15</sup> In the encounter, “an enlightened master displays an uncanny knack for exposing and overcoming the conceptual impasse of a disciple, often by using a rhetorical device, such as homophone, punning, paradox, absurdity, or non sequitur, or some nonverbal gesture such as the antiauthoritarian ‘sticks and shouts’ of Te-shan and Lin-chi.”<sup>16</sup> In many cases the demonstrative nonverbal gesture is particularly exaggerated and even violent, such as putting shoes on one’s head, kicking over a bucket of water, twisting a disciple’s nose or ear, holding up a finger or cutting off the finger of a disciple who mimics the master, or jumping off a high pole. The impact of these actions forces a degree of humiliation, ridicule, or hazing that paradoxically enables the disciple to overcome the final psychological obstacle to liberation.

Thus Yanagida and McRae understand the dialogues to be a record of the psychology of the personal encounter between master and disciple engaged in the transition from unenlightenment to enlightenment. Following this line of interpretation, in his studies of the relation between Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō* and the kōan tradition, Kawamura Kōdō has suggested that the encounter records can be referred to as “*satori* dialogues” because they depict an instructional

process culminating in a breakthrough to an awakening experience.<sup>17</sup> However, this approach emphasizing the psychological, internal aspect may overlook another important dimension of encounters documented by the dialogues: the social, external aspect, or the encounter between Ch'an and otherness, or with forms of religiosity that are other than, different from, alien, or foreign, as well as challenging or threatening to the principles of Ch'an iconoclasm.

The standpoints of otherness that Ch'an contends with in the dialogues range from alternative Buddhist meditative disciplines, such as the T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land schools, and non-Buddhist philosophies to diverse forms of popular religiosity absorbing influences from Taoism and folk religions as well as Buddhist asceticism, or the extramonastic practices of *dhūtāṅga* (C. *t'ou-t'o heng*, J. *zudagyō*). The elements of folklore and popular religion that appear in the dialogues include dreams and visions, the worship of gods and the banishing of demons, the use of signs and symbols with talismanic properties, mountain veneration, and the spiritual methods of hermits and eccentric or irregular practitioners, influenced by indigenous shamanism and immortalism, who resemble but are challenged and exposed by authentic masters for the ways that they stray from the orthodox Ch'an path.<sup>18</sup> The dialogues give evidence of Ch'an encountering elements of diversity, division, disparity, or dissension, including the anomalous, strange, and perplexing. On these occasions Ch'an masters are eager to demonstrate that their own supernatural powers derived from meditative discipline (S. *abhijñā*, C. *shen-t'ung*, J. *jinzū*) were superior to those gained through other modalities.

The Yanagida/McRae model of interpretation focuses on the encounter dialogue as a philosophical record of a psychological technique for liberation within the confines of the Ch'an community's view of Buddhist theory and practice. The approach suggested here highlights the process of Ch'an interacting with diverse elements in the socioreligious environment, or of Ch'an testing and contesting with, defining, and defending itself in relation to experiences of the visionary, anomalous, miraculous, and apparitional. In these encounters Ch'an expresses ambiguity in striving for a balance between accepting and embracing or rejecting and refuting rival, supernaturalist standpoints. On the one hand, Ch'an seeks to establish its priority and superiority over local cults that rely on magic and folklore, but at the same time it tries not so much to eliminate but to transform these perspectives. Ch'an acknowledges a degree of validity in the alternative approaches, or at least it refashions their images and idioms to articulate its own stance.

A key example of the intersection of Ch'an philosophy and popular religiosity is case 2 in the *Wu-men kuan*, which absorbs folklore about magical, shape-shifting foxes into a narrative in which Pai-chang, known for creating the earliest code of monastic rules, restores order to his temple by expelling and burying a monk who has been punished by suffering endless reincarnations as a wild fox. Other examples are two *kōans* in the *Wu-men kuan* in which Chao-chou tests his extrasensory mental faculties when investigating or "checking

out” two hermits with whom he enters into dharma-combat (case 11), as well as an elderly laywoman (case 31), perhaps a witch or shamaness or at least a symbol of local, indigenous religious practice, who has been outsmarting monks struggling on their way at the foot of the Mount Wu-t'ai cultic center.

A case cited in Dōgen's *Eihei kōroku juko* no. 9.71<sup>19</sup> extends the theme of a contest between two masters, one a regular high priest or buddha and the other an irregular hermit or solitary practitioner, whose merit is questionable so long as he is not part of the lineal tradition. Here a monk who has not taken the tonsure builds a hermitage at the foot of Mount Hsüeh-feng and lives there for many years practicing meditation on his own outside the monastic system—that is, he is living as a wild fox in intertwined positive (symbolizing freedom) and negative (representing disorderliness) senses. Making a wooden ladle, the solitary monk draws and drinks water from a mountain torrent, his only daily ingestion. One day a monk from the monastery at the top of the mountain visits the hermit and asks the classic question, “What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?” The hermit responds, “A mountain torrent runs deep, so the handle of a wooden ladle must be appropriately long.” The monk reports this to the abbot, who declares, “He sounds like a strange character, perhaps an anomaly. I'd better go at once and check him out for myself,” using the same term uttered by Chao-chou in the two kōans cited earlier. The next day Hsüeh-feng visits the hermit while carrying a razor (i.e., he is prepared to tame the fox and incorporate him into the monastic system). He says, “If you can express the Way, I won't shave your head.”<sup>20</sup> On hearing this, the hermit at first is speechless but then uses the ladle to bring water to have his head washed, and Hsüeh-feng shaves him. Dōgen's four-line verse comment deals with supernaturalism indirectly:

If someone asks the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West,  
It is that the handle of a wooden ladle is long, and the valley torrent  
plunges deep;  
If you want to know the boundless meaning of this,  
Wait for the wind blowing in the pines to drown out the sound of  
koto strings.

The verse steers away from endorsing or disputing the spiritual powers of the irregular hermit, who has been adopted through the master's administration of the tonsure into the legitimate Ch'an lineage.

### *The Mount Wu-t'ai Kōan (Pi-yen lu Case 35)*

*Pi-yen lu* case 35 is another prime example of a kōan recording the process of testing/contesting with the forces of popular religiosity in dealing with the

theme of pilgrimage to the sacred mountain of Mount Wu-t'ai, considered the terrestrial dwelling place of Mañjuśrī, who is revealed to believers in a variety of numinous experiences, especially visions and miracles. In the main part of the kōan known as the "Dialogue between Mañjuśrī and Wu-cho" or "Mañjuśrī's Three in Front, Three in Back," Wu-cho, a Ch'an pilgrim to the mountains, is outwitted by Mañjuśrī in the pattern of an encounter dialogue taking place in atypical fashion on a supernatural level. According to the *Pi-yen lu* commentary, Wu-cho had wandered into rough terrain and Mañjuśrī produced a magical temple for him to stay the night, although this text makes no mention of the physical appearance of Mañjuśrī, whether supernal and majestic or mortal in a way that disguises his identity or deliberately diminishes his status. In the dialogue the bodhisattva first asks the monk where he comes from—a query, found in many Ch'an anecdotes, that inquires about a particular location but actually challenges an itinerant seeker to reveal immediately and fully his true self or level of spiritual attainment. Wu-cho replies rather naively from a literal standpoint, "The South," though this answer can be taken to represent the notion of southern Buddhism or even the Southern school of Ch'an in contrast to northern Buddhism or the Northern school. Mañjuśrī inquires about the state of the Dharma in the South, and Wu-cho admits that in the Age of Decline monks have little regard for ethics (*śīla*) or the monastic rules of discipline (*vinaya*). When asked about the size of the congregations, Wu-cho offers another literal response: "Some are three hundred, some are five hundred."

Then the pilgrim asks Mañjuśrī the same questions. In contrast to Wu-cho's factual reply, Mañjuśrī responds from the standpoint of nonduality that on Mount Wu-t'ai "ordinary people and sages dwell together, and dragons and snakes intermingle." As for Wu-cho's query about whether the congregations on Mount Wu-t'ai are large or small, Mañjuśrī resorts to a Ch'an tautology expressing an overcoming of conceptual polarities that alludes to a passage in the *Hsüan-hsa kuang-lu* (J. *Gensha kōroku*): "In front, three by three; in back, three by three." Mañjuśrī, a supernatural ruler of the sacred mountain, "wins" this round of the dialogue by performing like a Ch'an master rather than a god in uttering an apparently inscrutable tautology. As Hsüeh-tou's verse commentary in the *Pi-yen lu* says of Wu-cho's inquiry, "It is laughable to ask, 'Are the congregations on Mount Ch'ing-liang [another name for Mount Wu-t'ai] large or small?'"—that is, he deserved to get outsmarted.

According to the commentary section of the *Pi-yen lu* as well as the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu*, after the main dialogue Mañjuśrī shows Wu-cho a crystal bowl used for drinking tea, which may refer to an ambrosial medicinal brew as found in Mount Wu-t'ai hagiographies, and the sight of the crystal bowl sends Wu-cho into a state of reverie. When Wu-cho acknowledges that there are no such bowls in the South, Mañjuśrī asks, "What do you use to drink tea?" Wu-cho is speechless and decides to take his leave. When he approaches the gate-

way, Wu-cho asks a servant boy, “When [Mañjuśrī] said, ‘In front three by three, in back three by three,’ does this mean [the congregations] are large or small?” The boy then calls out, “O Virtuous One,” and Wu-cho calls back, “Yes.” The boy asks, “Is this large or small?” Wu-cho inquires, “What are you referring to—this temple?” The boy points to a diamond-shaped opening behind the illusory temple, which is known in Mount Wu-t’ai lore as the miraculous Diamond Grotto (Chin-kang k’u), the primary though secret and secluded (or invisible) dwelling place of Mañjuśrī and his celestial attendants. But when Wu-cho turns his head to see this, suddenly the structure and the boy have completely disappeared. Recalling the *Lotus Sūtra*’s parable of the “illusory city,” all that remains is an empty valley filled with trees and a mountain landscape lying beyond, as Wu-cho apparently realizes that the temple had been conjured by the bodhisattva.

However, in an anecdote also included in the commentary on the main dialogue, Wu-cho seems to turn the tables on Mañjuśrī. Some years later Wu-cho is serving as a cook in a temple in the deep recesses of Mount Wu-t’ai, where he has decided to spend his life, and when the bodhisattva appears in a diminutive form dancing above his cauldron of rice, the monk strikes him with his spoon, although the *Pi-yen lu* remarks that it is regrettable that Wu-cho had not taken such action much sooner, at the time of the original dialogue. In contrast to this remark, in the commentary in the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* version, which differs in a number of key points from the *Pi-yen lu* although the main dialogue is identical, Mañjuśrī appears again as a beggar at the rice pot and the cook makes the bodhisattva an offering for which he receives the praise of master Yang-shan.

There are several crucial questions raised by the failure of Wu-cho as recorded in the kōan, which alters the source narrative contained in the *Kuang Ch’ing-liang chuan*, in which he is successful in realizing a vision of the temple, as well as by the critique of the pilgrim’s act of striking Mañjuśrī in the commentary section. What exactly does the put-down of Wu-cho indicate about the view of popular religiosity expressed by the kōan? Does it represent an ironic endorsement of the superiority of Mount Wu-t’ai practices that the itinerant monk is unable to comprehend or has not been initiated into, or does it reflect an appropriation or reencoding by Ch’an of the symbolism of Mañjuśrī? The kōan expresses an encounter with the problematics of belief or disbelief in the otherness of Mañjuśrī worship. It depicts a complex dialectical process that begins with a basic sense of disbelief grounded on the skeptical outlook of Ch’an and leads to a suspension of disbelief in that Wu-cho understands that he has been overwhelmed by the wit and majesty of Mañjuśrī. What is the basis of his doubt? Does the kōan suggest that his lack of success would have been overcome by a conquering of doubt? In the encounter characterized by the twofold attitudes of approach/avoidance and attraction/distrust, the issue of belief in the supernatural becomes a test for the monk, but it is



not clear whether his downfall is based on succumbing to the temptation to believe or on an unwillingness or inability to give up his disbelief. Perhaps, in contrast to Lin-chi's radical refutation, the testing of belief should not be understood as antithetical to disbelief, which may in fact be deepened by the encounter in a way that marks the overcoming of another level of duality. The kōan's use of irony and playful ambiguity concerning a commitment or noncommitment to the supernatural is employed throughout traditional Ch'an records, including many passages in Lin-chi's text which emphasize the merit of internalizing rather than simply discounting the meaning of supernatural experiences. One of Dōgen's favorite sayings from the *Eihei kōroku* alludes to the episode in which Mañjuśrī appears not as a majestic being but as a diminutive god dancing on a rice pot: "The clouds above Mount Wu-t'ai steam rice."<sup>21</sup>

### Historical and Literary Background of the Kōan Text

The efficacy of ambiguity as a central rhetorical strategy in Ch'an discourse—neither affirming nor denying supernaturalism while at once evoking yet disarming and disdaining it—revolves around the decisive issue in the kōan narrative: Why did Wu-cho not succeed in realizing his vision? According to the *Pi-yen lu* version, Wu-cho was unable to enter into the Diamond Grotto or to build an actual structure based on the design of the vision conjured by Mañjuśrī. This stands in contrast to several notable visionary-builders reported in the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* who either did enter the grotto or were able even without entering to realize their vision through the construction of an actual temple. Indeed, the *Pi-yen lu* has altered the story of Wu-cho in the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan*, in which he does succeed like the others, apparently by conflating it, or perhaps by deliberately blurring the distinction, with the account recorded in the *Sung kao-seng chuan* (988) of another monk named Wu-cho who arrived at Mount Wu-t'ai a few decades later and failed to enter the grotto after it was revealed by a servant boy.<sup>22</sup> The version of the kōan in the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* to some extent more closely follows the *Kuang Ch'in-liang chuan* in explaining that Wu-cho originally met Mañjuśrī in the form of a beggar and recognized that this was the bodhidsattva only after the apparitional temple vanished after the conversation with the servant boy, a common motif in the visionary-builder literature. (The vanishing of the apparition is also found in the *Pi-yen lu*, yet this version stresses the power of Mañjuśrī to conjure, but unlike the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu*, it does not delve into the issue of the initial mystery and subsequent revelation of his true identity.) Borrowing from the *Sung kao-seng chuan* account, in the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* version Wu-cho has a second vision of Mañjuśrī riding off on a lion amid the "five-colored clouds." The differences between the two versions of the case deriving from two different accounts of monks named Wu-cho—one who succeeds and the other who fails as a visionary—indicate that the kōan narrative is situated on the discursive

sive border between Ch'an iconoclastic rhetoric refuting Mount Wu-t'ai and popular Buddhist hagiographical literature extolling its virtues.

### *Ch'an Sayings and Kōans about Mount Wu-tai*

*Pi-yen lu* case 35 is one of a small cluster of kōans, which are in turn part of a much broader body of writings, raising the issue of the appropriateness of experiencing Mount Wu-t'ai popular religiosity known for its emphasis on ecstatic, exotic masked ritual dance processions evoking the presence of the bodhisattva. The kōan commentary could be criticized for coming too close to an endorsement of supernaturalism, which would seem to go against the grain of the antiritual, demythological approach disdainful of otherworldly symbolism, as exemplified by the *Lin-chi lu* passage cited above which is echoed by Yün-men.<sup>23</sup> However, while Lin-chi and Yün-men seem one-sidedly opposed to Mount Wu-t'ai pilgrimages, the understanding of Chao-chou, a contemporary of Lin-chi from a different lineage also known for his highly individualistic approach to Ch'an training, is more complicated, emphasizing ambiguity rather than a one-dimensional negative attitude toward mountain practices.

According to the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu*, during his early career as a priest after attaining enlightenment, Chao-chou spent many years traveling around the countryside. He was particularly fond of visiting remote mountains and encountering the masters or hermits living there. He was very much intrigued and planned a visit to Mount Wu-t'ai but was discouraged by another monk's verse:<sup>24</sup>

What green mountain anywhere is not a place to learn the Way?  
 Why bother to hike with your staff all the way to Mount Ch'ing-liang?  
 Even if the Golden Lion [Mañjuśrī] reveals itself in the clouds,  
 This is not auspicious when looked at with the Dharma-eye.

However, Chao-chou was apparently not dissuaded from making the journey, because his response to the verse was the challenging query, "What is the Dharma-eye?" to which the monk could not reply. Yet the record of Chao-chou makes no further mention of Mount Wu-t'ai in this context, so it is not clear whether or not he completed the trip.

Another Chao-chou anecdote concerning the mountain that seems to have taken place years later, after he was established as the permanent master of Kuan-yin temple near the mountains is the kōan referred to as "Chao-chou Checks Out an Old Woman." Like the Wu-cho dialogue, this case, originally an encounter dialogue extracted from the record of Chao-chou in the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu*, has two main versions; the identical encounter dialogue appears with different commentary in *Wu-men kuan* case 31 and *Ts'ung-jung lu* case 10.<sup>25</sup> According to this case, Chao-chou learns of reports of an elderly

laywoman selling tea who has been giving directions to monks at the foot of the mountain and then ridiculing them behind their backs. When a monk asks how to get to Mount Wu-t'ai and heeds her advice, presumably misleading or simplistic, to "go straight ahead," she says, "Take a look at that monk; he just goes off." Chao-chou promises to test or "check her out" (*C. k'an-p'o, J. kanpa*) in order to determine whether this non-Buddhist is actually more advanced than regular practitioners. This is the phrase also used in *Eihei kōroku* 9.71 as well as in *Wu-men kuan* no. 11 when Chao-chou encounters two mysterious hermits, both of whom hold up a fist in response to his probing query, though he declares one a sage and the other bogus. But when Chao-chou receives the exact same treatment as the other monks from this Ch'an "granny," he still proclaims the encounter a success: "There, I've checked her out!" The *Wu-men kuan* prose commentary begins by praising him as a "skillful rebel who sneaked into the enemy barricades" but then declares that Chao-chou and the old woman "both had faults" and concludes by asking, "Now, tell me, in what way has Chao-chou checked out the old woman?"<sup>26</sup>

There is no direct connection between the old woman selling tea at the foot of the mountain and visionary experiences of Mañjuśrī, but it is likely that she is a representative of a form of local, popular religiosity who, like the bodhisattva, has the capacity to confound Ch'an monks during an encounter dialogical situation. The kōan commentaries argue that the earlier monks were just as successful (or unsuccessful) as Chao-chou, or they suggest that, rather than thinking that Chao-chou was checking out the old woman, it should be considered that the old woman was actually checking out Chao-chou. These comments reflect a rhetorical ambiguity that leaves it unclear who has been the victor in the encounter, or whether Chao-chou's final proclamation suggests a rejection or a begrudging acceptance of Mount Wu-t'ai. Another kōan, *Pi-yen lu* case 24, echoes the ambiguity as well as the association of Mount Wu-t'ai with female practitioners.<sup>27</sup> A nun known as Iron Grinder (or Grindstone) Liu arrives at Mount Kuei Temple, located in south central China very far from Mount Wu-t'ai, and asks the master, "Tomorrow there's a communal feast on Mount Wu-t'ai; will you be going?" Master Kuei-shan responds by lying down for a nap, indicating either that the question does not deserve a verbal reply or that he is incapable of giving one, and the nun immediately leaves, although it is not clear if she will try to travel the vast distance necessary to get to the mountain feast.

### *Literary History of Mount Wu-t'ai Pilgrimages*

*Pi-yen lu* case 35 is distinctive in providing commentary on a complex imaginary conversation between Mañjuśrī and pilgrim Wu-cho which was not culled from Ch'an transmission of the lamp records but from Mount Wu-t'ai hagiographies. The sense of Ch'an confronting a source of spiritual otherness and

mystery is considerably increased when the bodhisattva outsmarts the seeker, who is then denied access to the visionary realm. The visionary imagery is a rhetorical element not found, for example, in the Chao-chou anecdotes, though it clearly forms part of the context by which these are to be understood. Miraculous events at Mount Wu-t'ai were recorded in two main chronicles exclusively devoted to the topic, the *Ku Ch'ing-liang chuan* (*Old Record of Mount Clear-and-Cool*, 667) and the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan*, as well as through references in dozens of other sources including the major monk biography text, the *Sung kao-seng chuan*, and the diaries of the Japanese monk Ennin, who traveled to China in the first half of the ninth century. The kōan plays off twin motifs expressed in these chronicles: (1) pilgrimage to the spiritual heart of Mount Wu-t'ai, the Diamond Grotto, which was completed successfully by the Kashmiri tantric monk, Buddhapāli (C. Fo-t'ō po-li), who remained in Mañjuśrī's secret cave as his acolyte, and by the Pure Land pilgrim, Fa-chao, who was guided in by Buddhapāli and received the teachings but was eventually escorted out at the request of Mañjuśrī; and (2) visionary-builders who experienced an apparition which inspired their architectural planning and commitment to realizing an actual structure. In the case of both motifs, the underlying theme is that the pilgrim's disbelief was tested and overcome by a commitment to a belief in the power of an invisible, though visualizable, reality.

There were a number of temples founded on the basis of visions and revelations from Mañjuśrī, including the Clear-and-Cool Temple (Ch'ing-liang ssu) and the Buddha Light Temple (Fo-kuang ssu, an early temple on the mountain which was rebuilt by Chieh-t'ou based on a vision in the early seventh century), both of which were south of the Western Terrace.<sup>28</sup> The main visionary-builders of Wu-cho's period who designed, and realized as earthly replicas on the material plane, structures they envisioned in the invisible realm of sacred revelation were: Fa-chao, who built the Bamboo Grove Temple (Chu-lin ssu); the T'ien-t'ai monk Shen-ying, who built the Dharma-Blossom Cloister (Fa-hua yüan); and Tao-i, a Ch'an pilgrim who built the Temple of the Golden Pavilion (Chin-ko ssu, the original namesake of Kinkakuji in Kyoto) north of Ch'ing-liang ssu. The record of Wu-cho, who built the Prajñā Temple, is included in the same section of the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* as the three visionary-builders in addition to Buddhapāli. A common theme in these accounts that corresponds to the structure of the Wu-cho kōan narrative is the disappearance of the visionary temple, which becomes a crucial spiritual turning point testing the pilgrims' commitment that coincides with the realization that the appearance of old man or beggar is a manifestation of Mañjuśrī, as recorded in the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* version of the kōan based on the *Sung kao-seng chuan* account. In addition, the Wu-cho narrative in both the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* and the kōan has a special resonance with the records of both Fa-chao, who was shown a crystal bowl by Mañjuśrī in the grotto, and Tao-i,

who had an encounter dialogue with the bodhisattva near the Western Terrace concerning the state of the Dharma in the Age of Decline that was remarkably similar to Wu-cho's dialogue.

Mount Wu-t'ai, as a site of local Taoist cults through the fifth century, was particularly known for anomalies in the natural world, such as blossoms raining down from the heavens, hot springs on mountain peaks, crystal clear deep ponds or rainbow clouds. The strange and inexplicable sights attracted Taoist hermits and immortals who gathered medicinal herbs and communed with ever-present gods. By the middle of the sixth century the mountain became known as the abode of Mañjuśrī, who had been a popular object of worship in the capital in Ch'ang-an for over a century. The veneration of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wu-t'ai was based in part on a chapter in the *Hua-yen Sūtra* that enumerates the mythical dwelling places of bodhisattvas and mentions that Mañjuśrī resides on "Cold Mountain" in the Northeast, as well as passages in several apocryphal tantric texts. Although many of the temples were affiliated with the Hua-yen sect, the mountain practices were increasingly influenced by esoteric (*C. mi-chiao*, *J. mikkyō*) practices imported from Central Asia, including the recitation of the *Hua-yen Sūtra* to invoke the text's miraculous powers. By the eighth century Mount Wu-t'ai hagiographical beliefs and pilgrimage rites, which attracted countless followers from India and Central Asia, were associated with the theory of the Age of Decline and considered an antidote to pernicious conditions of an era tainted by endemic delusion.<sup>29</sup>

The key to Mount Wu-t'ai religiosity that influences the kōan's rhetorical approach to the notion of sacred place is frequent reports of visions of supernatural sites granted by Mañjuśrī. These visions were often associated with caves that were said to be connected by secret passages and energy flows, apparently borrowing from Taoist cosmology. Some caves were known as "grotto heavens" (*tung-t'ien*) or special caverns that opened for selected believers into a glorious radiance of the transcendent. The most prominent example was the famed Diamond Grotto, an invisible cave in Lou-kuan Valley west of the Eastern Terrace. The Diamond Grotto was Mañjuśrī's spacious paradise on earth containing temples, gardens, and a myriad of bodhisattva-attendants all listening intently to the Great Sage's pure teaching. It was also filled with miraculous phenomena bestowed by buddhas of primordial eras, such as supernatural musical instruments, exquisite calligraphic copies of scriptures in gold ink, and an infinitely high pagoda.

According to the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* as well as Ennin's travel diary, there were two pilgrims who entered the Diamond Grotto with varying degrees of success. One was the Kashmiri tantric missionary Buddhapāli, who came from India in 676 "empty-handed," seeking a vision of Mañjuśrī. He was met at the southern approaches to Mount Wu-t'ai by the bodhisattva in the guise of an old man, who sent him back to India to retrieve a copy of an esoteric sūtra believed to provide relief from rebirths in one of the three lesser realms

of samsāra that were destined and deserved on the basis of prior karmic action. When he returned to Mount Wu-t'ai nearly a decade later with the Sanskrit text in hand, he was met again by the old man, who this time revealed his true identity. As reported by both the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* and Ennin, once Buddhapāli was led into the grotto by Mañjuśrī, the gate was closed off never to be opened again.<sup>30</sup> Buddhapāli was the only one of the pilgrims who provided a sacred object the bodhisattva required, which was perhaps a key to his success.

Yet there is another report about a late eighth-century Pure Land pilgrim, named Fa-chao, known for visions of Amitābha early in his career and for popularizing the recitation of the *nien-fo* (*J. nembustu*) later on. Fa-chao came to Mount Wu-t'ai in 770 and saw radiant lights and other auspicious signs, including a golden gate bridge and jeweled pagodas with bodhisattvas preaching the Dharma while seated on lion thrones. Then he approached and was ushered into the Diamond Grotto by Buddhapāli at the request of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra (C. P'u-hsien, J. Fugen) and was given the teachings. In the grotto Fa-chao had a vision of the spectacular Bamboo Grove Temple and he was also shown a precious crystalline medicine *vaidūrya* bowl that was incredibly ambrosial. But he was abruptly escorted out of the grotto by Buddhapāli at the behest of the deities. Although he pleaded to stay, Mañjuśrī told him that staying was impossible because of the defilement of his current corporeal existence.<sup>31</sup> When Fa-chao left, he "found himself back on the threshold at the entrance of the cavern. . . . all Fa-chao saw was a lone divine monk" who spoke a few words and then disappeared.<sup>32</sup> After this extraordinary event Fa-chao harbored reservations about the authenticity and value of his otherworldly experiences, but he continued to have visions of divine presences which reassured him. His faith reinvigorated by the new apparitions, he began a campaign to construct the monastery, which was completed by 805 with six magnificent cloisters, and he was permitted by the imperial court to perform clerical ordinations. Yet Fa-chao spent most of his life after his initial visit to Mount Wu-t'ai in the capital in Chang-an spreading the popularity of intoning the name of Amitābha.

These anecdotes are quite similar to the account of an eighth-century T'ient'ai monk, Shen-ying, who may have once met Shen-hui and, upon consulting with another Ch'an master, traveled from far in the south almost a thousand miles to reach Mount Wu-t'ai. Following a day of ritual abstinence at a grove near the Cloister of the Flower Ornament King, Shen-ying saw a miraculous cloister with marvelous, bright images and a divine and wondrous congregation of monks that included Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. However, like Fa-chao (and Wu-cho), he had doubts and started walking east away from the vision. Once again the motif of the vanishing manifestation is evoked: "After about thirty paces, hearing a sound, he turned his head to look at the cloister. Not even an outline could be seen."<sup>33</sup> However, like Fa-chao and Tao-i, but in

contrast to Wu-cho, Shen-ying was successful in building a magnificent cloister (*yüan*) or subtemple, with a triple-gate (*san-men* or *shan-men*) entranceway just as in the visionary structure. The Dharma-Blossom Cloister was dedicated to the practice of repentance, perhaps based on the *Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i* (*Rite of Repentance Resulting in the Attainment of the Dharma-Blossom Samādhi*).

The case of Tao-i, a Ch'an monk who started his pilgrimage in 736 and ended up founding one of the most impressive monasteries on Mount Wu-t'ai, comes closest to the Wu-cho narrative because of his kōan-like dialogue with Mañjuśrī.<sup>34</sup> Tao-i felt that in the Age of Decline only the bodhisattva's teachings could protect and redeem him. He saw an aged monk riding upon a white elephant attending an array of marvelous golden mansions which could be approached by a golden bridge, who suggested that Tao-i return at dawn the next day to gain a vision of Mañjuśrī. Tao-i then traveled to Ch'ing-liang ssu between the Western and Central Terraces, where he saw numerous additional magical signs and mystical objects, and he went off alone to meet the bodhisattva. He again saw the old monk riding an elephant and also met a youth who pointed out the visionary Golden Pavilion Monastery, which had a triple-gated structure and was filled with gold symbols. He then realized that the aged monk was Mañjuśrī, with whom he sat in the following conversation (*italics indicate passages that are the same as those appearing in Wu-cho's dialogue*):

GREAT SAGE: What is the *Buddha Dharma* like in the area you come from?

TAO-I: It is *the Age of Decline* that is *being upheld* there, so that *monks have little regard for ethics (śīla) or the monastic rules of discipline (vinaya)*. There is the view that if something is not proven by eyewitness it cannot be known with certainty.

GREAT SAGE: That is a good [attitude].

TAO-I (AFTER A PAUSE): What is the *Buddha Dharma*?

GREAT SAGE: *Unenlightened beings and sages dwell together* in a realm that is beyond form yet responds [by means of form] to the realm of causality in order to benefit all beings. This is the Great Vehicle.

TAO-I: The temples and lodgings of the monks here are vast. I have seen with my own eyes that they are made of bright gold. It is beyond the abilities of sentient beings to measure the extent; one can only say that it is inconceivable.

GREAT SAGE: That is so.

After this, Tao-i was served some marvelously fragrant food and then shown the twelve cloisters of the temple. In front of a large refectory he saw dozens of monks following the daily routine by observing the monastic rules

of discipline and practicing sitting and active meditation. After reviewing the magnificent cloisters, Tao-i bid farewell, but after walking a hundred paces he turned around and saw that the temple had disappeared. The place was empty save for the mountains and trees, so he realized that it had been a manifested or apparitional temple all along. As the *Pi-yen lu* commentary notes, “The appearance [of the temple] reflects an opportunity to manifest the ultimate reality in the realm of provisional truth.” Returning to Chang-an, Tao-i led a successful campaign to have an actual Golden Pavilion Temple constructed near the Central Terrace based on his design. Over 30 years later, in 767, the ministry granted approval of the completion of an earthly replica of the visionary temple with the considerable prodding of tantric master Amoghavajra (Puk’ung), a prominent religious and secular scholar and translator, one of three great T’ang tantric thaumaturges and proselytizers, who was apparently appointed the first abbot.<sup>35</sup>

### Two Versions of Wu-cho’s Encounter Dialogue

There are several important affinities between the dialogues with Mañjuśrī held by Tao-i and by Wu-cho: the contrasting of the role of Buddhism in different regions—or between “here” (Mount Wu-t’ai ritualism in the north) and “there” (the South, or Ch’an iconoclastic territory), with the implied superiority of the former and defensiveness of the latter; the question of how well the Dharma is being upheld in the Age of Decline, a condition acknowledged to exist by the Ch’an practitioners who normally deny the validity of this doctrine; the confession by the monks that the rules and codes of monastic discipline and conduct are not being followed in Ch’an monasteries because of the period of degeneration; and the assertion by Mañjuśrī of the unity of sages and dragons in the realm of the true Dharma. Yet a major difference is that Tao-i, even though he is given to skepticism based on an outlook that trusts only what is seen, maintains that he believes in Mount Wu-t’ai because he observes directly with his own eyes, through apparitions that are apparently taken to be real, the magnificence of temples and the upright behavior of monks. Tao-i moves beyond disbelief, but Wu-cho does not get involved, or is not invited by Mañjuśrī to participate, in this level of visionary experience or discussion about its significance. Nevertheless, there is an important affinity in the way that the disappearance of the vision functions as a critical turning point for both Tao-i and Wu-cho, as for Fa-chao and Shen-ying. Yet according to the kōan, Wu-cho is not successful in subsequently actualizing the vision, unlike the other pilgrims. That this was considered a very serious matter is indicated by the tale of a ninth-century pilgrim, Wu-jan, who upon losing his vision proceeded to mutilate and incinerate himself.<sup>36</sup>

The *Pi-yen lu* kōan instead highlights the dissolution as well as the unfulfilled state of the vision by combining elements from two accounts of monks



named Wu-cho. According to the account in the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan*, Wu-cho, like other visionary-builders, saw a vision of the Prajñā Temple conjured by Mañjuśrī appearing before him in the form of an old man.<sup>37</sup> He was able to build an actual structure after an encounter dialogue with the bodhisattva, similar to Tao-i's, that was adapted to form the heart of the kōan narrative. In this text, Wu-cho had a second encounter with Mañjuśrī before actualizing his vision. But according to the *Sung kao-seng chuan* there was another monk named Wu-cho, one of several pilgrims who approached the gate of the Diamond Grotto. Yet unlike some others, notably Buddhapāli and Fa-chao, he was not able to gain admittance.<sup>38</sup> This Wu-cho arrived at Mount Wu-t'ai looking for the Hua-yen Temple (Hua-yen ssu) and was told by an old man to enter the Diamond Grotto. He declined but saw the man go in, never to reappear. Then he saw a group of persons entering the grotto wearing clothes of red and purple. He first hesitated, not trusting what he observed, but then he realized that these figures were assistants to the bodhisattvas who go in and out of the grotto where Mañjuśrī lectures on the *Hua-yen Sūtra*. With his doubts and fears allayed, he steadied himself to try to enter the Diamond Grotto, but the opening narrowed suddenly and he was locked out. This Wu-cho understood that the old man had been Mañjuśrī, whom he saw one more time flying by amid five-colored clouds, an image used in the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* version of the case, but he then retreated to a life of retirement in the mountains and was never to be heard from again.

Despite differences concerning the ultimate success or failure of Wu-cho as a visionary-builder (see table 5.1), both accounts emphasize how the dissolution of the pilgrim's vision is caused in part by his doubt or disbelief.

The two versions of the kōan combine the encounter dialogue taken from the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* with the negative outcome reported in the *Sung kao-seng chuan*. They both focus on the vanishing of the temple without a subsequent actual construction, as well as on the retirement of Wu-cho to an obscure life in the mountains, where he now serves as a monastery cook. In the *Sung kao-seng chuan* version Wu-cho glimpses the Diamond Grotto but hesitates, and in the *Pi-yen lu* he simply does not get in, whereas in the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* his vision leads him to the realization of Mañjuśrī's true identity tinged with a sad awareness that he would never see the bodhisattva again, a sadness that was in turn softened by a vision of the multicolored clouds. In both versions of the kōan, Wu-cho's inability to succeed in the encounter dialogue is to some extent redeemed by an action taken year later at the rice pot he tends in the monastery kitchen. This is achieved either through the striking of Mañjuśrī, who appears as a dancing god, an action that is criticized in the *Pi-yen lu* commentary for coming too late ("Right then and there [at the first dialogue] he should have given Mañjuśrī a shout. He would have hit the mark right off"), or through the giving of an offering to the bodhisattva who appears in the form of a beggar, an act that receives praise in the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* com-

Table 5.1 Differences between the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* (KCLC) and the *Sung kao-seng chuan* (SKSC) Accounts of Two Pilgrims Named Wu-cho

| KCLC                                                             | Common elements                                     | SKSC                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enters into apparitional Prajñā Temple                           |                                                     | Looks for Hua-yen Temple                                    |
|                                                                  | Greeted by bodhisattva appearing in form of old man |                                                             |
| Participates in dialogue with Mañjuśrī                           |                                                     | Servant reveals Diamond Grotto                              |
|                                                                  | “Wu-cho” experiences vanishing of initial visions   |                                                             |
| Has a second important vision of Mañjuśrī                        |                                                     | Visualizes Mañjuśrī in clouds but fails to enter the grotto |
| Builds actual Prajñā Temple like other visionaries of the period |                                                     | Retreats to life of seclusion in mountain hermitage         |

mentary. Yet the evaluations, whether criticizing or praising the monk, are couched in irony and ambiguity so that their intentions vis-a-vis interpreting Wu-cho in relation to Mañjuśrī are either obscured or, more likely, purposefully disguised.

The common elements of the two versions clearly outweigh the disparate factors (see table 5.2). These include the core dialogue, which is similar to Tao-i's conversation with Mañjuśrī, the crystal bowl revelation, recalling Fa-chao's encounter, and the disappearance of the visionary site, which is something that happened to all the visionary-builders as a key turning point. The discursive elements in both versions highlight a sense of loss and failure that is captured in a fundamentally ambiguous manner in the prose and verse commentaries.

### Assessing the Rhetoric of Ambiguity

Seen in light of the various legends of pilgrims successful and unsuccessful, the kōan narrative establishes the Mount Wu-t'ai cultic center as an important symbol in the encounter between two kinds of religion that is played out on several levels in the case commentaries. One kind, represented by the mountain in the north, cultivates esoteric practices based on experiencing a spiritual communion with the strange, extraordinary, anomalous, or Other that gener-

Table 5.2 Differences between the *Pi-yen lu* (PYL) and *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* (YHYL) Versions

| PYL                                                                                           | Common elements                                                                                     | YHYL                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wu-cho in rough terrain<br>[no mention of Mañjuśrī's form<br>of appearance]                   |                                                                                                     | Wu-cho comes to see Hua-yen temple<br>Wu-cho sees old man walking                         |
| Mañjuśrī conjures an unnamed<br>temple                                                        |                                                                                                     | Mañjuśrī displays brilliant golden<br>color                                               |
|                                                                                               | Central dialogue on Age of Decline<br>Mañjuśrī shows crystal bowl<br>Servant reveals Diamond Grotto |                                                                                           |
| Wu-cho hesitates<br><br>[no mention of a second vision]<br>[no mention of Wu-cho's<br>master] | Disappearance of visionary site                                                                     | Wu-cho realizes old man was Mañjuśrī                                                      |
|                                                                                               | Wu-cho becomes monastery cook                                                                       | Wu-cho sees five-colored clouds<br>Wu-cho is enlightened under Yang-<br>shan              |
| Mañjuśrī appears above rice pot<br>Wu-cho hits Mañjuśrī<br>Wu-cho criticized in<br>commentary |                                                                                                     | Mañjuśrī appears as beggar<br>Wu-cho serves Mañjuśrī rice<br>Wu-cho praised in commentary |

ates a *mysterium tremendum* (C. *kuai*, J. *kai*). The second kind of religion, represented by pilgrims such as the two monks named Wu-cho in addition to Shen-ying and Tao-i migrating from the south, expresses a mistrust—a flirting with but finally a sense of the loss—of popular symbols, myths, and rituals in a way that appears close to the traditional Ch’an iconoclastic standpoint. For nearly all the pilgrims, including the one named Wu-cho cited in the *Kuang Ch’ing-liang chuan* though not the one cited in the *Sung kao-seng chuan* or in the kōan, there is a fulfillment of the vision. Yet the narrative of Wu-cho in the kōan culminates in a shunning of popular religiosity—or is it rather a disdaining of the Ch’an monk by Mañjuśrī?—due in part to his refusal or inability to surrender his disbelief.

However, the distinction between two kinds of religion is not so clear-cut, because the failure of the southern pilgrim to enter the Diamond Grotto is to some extent his own responsibility due to a lack of faith and resolve. According to the *Pi-yen lu* commentary, Wu-cho’s inability to attain a supernatural vision of Mañjuśrī is coterminous with his being outwitted by the bodhisattva, who becomes the hero in the encounter dialogue. Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, the patron of the visionary’s quest on northern, lamaist Mount Wu-t’ai, is also associated with the attainment of wisdom in southern, meditative Ch’an training so that his iconography and hagiography are integrated into the Ch’an monastic institution. Portrayed as a meditator wearing monk’s robes, the bodhisattva is often assigned a room and acolyte-attendants in the compound.<sup>39</sup>

The critical question for the kōan is whether its use of Mount Wu-t’ai practices and the apparent encounter dialogue victory of Mañjuśrī come too close to embracing a supernatural belief about a sacred site in the process of refuting it. A skeptic might argue that the *Pi-yen lu* simply wishes to have it both ways: endorsing popular beliefs when doing so is convenient for evangelical purposes while demythologizing them on an abstract level for the sake of a clerical elite. But it is just this ambivalent attitude toward the sacrality of Mount Wu-t’ai as found in numerous recorded sayings texts that triggers the distinctiveness of Ch’an encounter dialogue rhetoric. Even the *Lin-chi lu*’s approach is double-edged with regard to the symbolism of Mañjuśrī. For the most part the message is straightforwardly negative: Mañjuśrī is located within, in one’s own nature, and not actually on Mount Wu-t’ai. Elsewhere (2.3), however, Lin-chi proclaims that Mañjuśrī is irrelevant in a way that seems to acknowledge, at least in an ironic sense, his otherworldly status: “My discourse on Dharma is different from that of every other person on earth. Supposing Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra were to appear before me, manifesting their respective bodily forms for the purpose of questioning me about Dharma. . . . I would have already discerned them through and through.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Lin-chi’s own comment on the kōan supports the standpoints of both Wu-cho and Mañjuśrī, whom he sees expressing skillful means and the ultimate truth of discriminating wisdom, respectively: “How could Mañjuśrī permit Wu-cho’s questioning!

How could expedient means go against the activity that cuts through the stream?"<sup>41</sup> This approach is similar to the commentary in the recorded sayings of Dōgen's mentor, Ju-ching, who maintains that the responses of both Mañ-jūsṛī and Wu-cho should be considered transformative "turning words" (C. *chuan-yüi*, J. *tengo*), or linguistic tools that have the power to bring about realization by turning or transforming ignorance into wisdom.<sup>42</sup>

This sense of ambiguity, which reflects the flexible multiperspectivism of the doctrine of the emptiness of all conceptual categories, is recovered and enhanced by the rich texture and playfully ironic literary style of the *Pi-yen lu*'s multilayered commentary, in which Yüan-wu offers various kinds of prose and capping phrase comments on the cases selected and verses written by Hsüeh-tou. Here the commentary moves in two directions simultaneously: toward an ironic refutation of supernatural beliefs concerning the sacrality of space, but without harsh polemic, which is intertwined with a rhetorical flirtation with those same beliefs. The aim of the discourse is to explore fully yet avoid a commitment to either perspective—to a popular belief in deities or to a philosophical view of causality rejecting supernaturalism—through a construction and deconstruction, or mythologization and demythologization, that continually plays the opposing beliefs off of one another. As Robert Gimello says of another Ch'an commentary dealing with Mount Wu-t'ai visionary experiences that reconciles the "disenchanting, demystifying spirituality of Ch'an with the enchantment and wonder of Wu-t'ai-shan," "There is a repeated pattern of significant alternation in all of this, a continuing movement back and forth between the profane and the hieratic, the ordinary and the stupendous, plain daylight and preternatural radiance."<sup>43</sup> But the *Pi-yen lu* takes this alternation a notch further not only by moving back and forth, but also by stepping away from and negating that very movement with irony and humor.<sup>44</sup>

Like the modern Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarō, who formulates the logic of the place of absolute nothingness (*zettai mu no bashoteki ronri*), the *Pi-yen lu* seeks to capture through metaphor a paradoxical prelinguistic interior state. The instruction or pointer by Yüan-wu indicates that the *kōan* expresses what sounds like Nishida's notion of pure experience in referring to "right here and now your seeing and hearing are not obscured (C. *pu-mei*, J. *fumai*) so that sound and form are perceived without impediment," though he concludes with an ironic remark about this condition. Yüan-wu also writes, "If you can penetrate the meaning of this, then a thousand phrases, or even ten thousand phrases, will be realized through just this one single phrase." Other paradoxical expressions make an ironic reference to supernaturalism, including one in the *kōan*'s dialogue: "ordinary people and sages dwell together, and dragons and snakes intermingle," and several in the commentary passages: "if you do not have an eye on your forehead or an amulet under your arm, you will keep on missing the point that is right in front of you over and over again"; "you will gain a natural ability to stay free from feeling hot

whether you stand in a cauldron of boiling water . . . you will also not feel cold even if you stand on frozen ice"; "you will gain a natural ability to stay free from getting wet even if water is poured all over you, and also the wind will not penetrate you." Unlike Nishida, however, the *Pi-yen lu* makes no attempt at developing a formal logic; its concern is to clarify the quality of the metaphor in evoking subjective experience. The main rhetorical strategy of the kōan commentary is to turn what is literal, or at least what is generally taken as a physical entity, that is, the place (and visions) of Mount Wu-t'ai, into metaphor and simultaneously to deconstruct the metaphor. These are not two separable discursive movements but are interconnected as a single expression which undercuts and negates both sides of a literal view of the metaphorical and a metaphorical view of the literal. The *Pi-yen lu's* approach is exemplified by its commentary on a verse dealing with the encounter dialogue attributed to the One-Eyed Dragon of Ming-ch'ao, a prominent Ch'an master who lived in a mountain hermitage:<sup>45</sup>

Extending through the world is the beautiful monastery:  
The Mañjuśrī that fills the eyes is the one conversing.  
Not knowing to open the Buddha-eye at his words,  
[Wu-cho] turned his head and saw only the green mountain crags.

The final line can be read as a criticism of the pilgrim for not paying attention to the vision and words of the bodhisattva who "fills the eyes" and ears, thereby supporting a literal reading of the supernatural. But the commentary shows that the line can also be interpreted as the negation of the literal standpoint, or as a simple, descriptive *yūgen*-esque expression of nature beyond both literal and metaphorical that counteracts the supernatural claims: the mountain crags alone make up the universal/local place or topos of nothingness, to evoke Nishida's terminology, for Wu-cho, who no longer needs to rely on visions or dialogues with otherworldly beings to experience the true nature of the world.

Furthermore, the metaphor is not only negated but turned upside-down and topsy-turvy, especially when seen in light of the *Yu-hsuan yü-lu* version's ending that praises Wu-cho. According to Yüan-wu, "Later Wu-cho stayed on Mount Wu-t'ai and worked as a cook. Every time Mañjuśrī appeared on the rice pot, Wu-cho lifted the rice stirrer and hit him." Yet even here the *Pi-yen lu* adds an ironic comment, "Still, this is drawing the bow after the thief has already fled." Then Yüan-wu, recalling Dōgen's rhetorical style of refashioning traditional kōan dialogues, counsels that Wu-cho should have hit the diminutive Mañjuśrī right on the spine even before he is asked the question about the size of the southern congregations. Finally, Yüan-wu returns to Hsüeh-tou's comment, "It is laughable to ask, 'Are the congregations large or small on Mount Ch'ing-liang,'" but now this is used in the context of laughing at Mañ-

juśrī rather than Wu-cho. He also includes the anecdote that a monk inquired about the meaning Mañjuśrī's dialogue of master Feng-hsüeh, who said, "His phrase did not answer Wu-cho's query. He is still one who sleeps in the fields." Lest we think that the *Pi-yen lu* intends to support Wu-cho as the victor, it concludes: "There is a sword in Hsüeh-tou's laughter. If you can understand what he's laughing about, you will realize the meaning of 'In front, three by three; in back, three by three.'"

Therefore, the effectiveness of the last line of Ming-ch'ao's verse seen in light of the *Pi-yen lu* commentary lies in a multifaceted double-edged quality that is quite different from a logical standpoint of assertion and denial. Both versions of the Mount Wu-t'ai kōan reflect an ability to construct and deconstruct the multiple meanings of a sacred place through the use of ironic word-play, ambiguity, ellipsis, tautology and paradox which purposefully subvert the text's own claims and fulfill what Roland Barthes refers to as the Ch'an "emptiness of language" based on a "loss of meaning" by signs and symbols. Barthes criticizes "the ways of interpretation, intended in the West to *piecer* meaning, i.e., to get into it by breaking and entering—and not to shake it, to make it fall like the tooth of the ruminant-of-the-absurd which the Ch'an apprentice must be."<sup>46</sup> For the kōan this loss of meaning is accomplished through irony and ambiguity, or a reason of unreason that appears illogical and absurd from the standpoint of logic yet knows well the meaning of Hsüeh-tou's laughter, which according to Yüan-wu "exists prior to any discourse."

#### APPENDIX:

#### TRANSLATION OF *Pi-Yen Lu* CASE 35, "THE DIALOGUE OF MAÑJUŚRĪ AND WU-CHO"

##### *Introduction to the Translation*

This case follows the typical seven-part structure of kōan commentary in the *Pi-yen lu* collection, which was based on a collection of kōans with verse comments by Hsüeh-tou that was edited and further commented on with capping phrases and prose commentary by Yüan-wu. The seven parts of the case are: (1) the opening instruction or pointer by Yüan-wu; (2) the main case originally selected by Hsüeh-tou with (3) capping phrase commentary by Yüan-wu; (4) prose commentary on the main case by Yüan-wu; (5) Hsüeh-tou's verse commentary on the main case with (6) Yüan-wu's capping phrase commentary; and (7) prose commentary by Yüan-wu on Hsüeh-tou's verse (which in this instance cites a verse by Ming-ch'ao).

##### *Instruction (Yüan-wu)*

Distinguish between dragons and snakes, discriminate jewels from stones, and separate the complex and simple decisively and without delay. But if you do not have an eye on your forehead or an amulet under your arm, you will keep on missing the point right

in front of you over and over again. If right here and now your seeing and hearing are not obscured<sup>47</sup> so that sound and form are perceived without impediment, I will still ask you: “Is this black or white?” or “Is this crooked or straight?” Show me how you are able to discriminate.

*Main Case (selected by Hsüeh-tou) with Capping Phrases (Yüan-wu)*

Mañjuśrī asked Wu-cho, “Where are you from?”<sup>48</sup>

*Under the circumstances, the question must be asked.*

Wu-cho said, “The South.”<sup>49</sup>

*[Wu-cho’s] head pokes up from his nest in the weeds, but why must he raise his eyebrows? There is nothing beyond the one vast realm, and yet there exists a place called “the South.”*<sup>50</sup>

Mañjuśrī asked, “How is the Buddha Dharma being upheld there?”

*It would have been a terrible mistake to ask anyone but him. [The question] still lingers on his lips.*

Wu-cho replied, “In the Age of Decline,<sup>51</sup> monks have little regard for ethics (*śīla*) or the monastic rules of discipline (*vinaya*).”

*It is hard to find such a truthful person.*

Mañjuśrī asked, “Are the congregations large or small?”

*Right then and there he should have given Mañjuśrī a shout. He would have hit the mark right off.*

Wu-cho replied, “Some have three hundred, some have five hundred.”

*It’s obvious from the way he said it that they are all nothing but wild fox spirits.*<sup>52</sup>

Then Wu-cho asked Mañjuśrī, “How is [the Dharma] being upheld in these parts?”

*What a blow! He pushes the spear in and turns it round and round.*

Mañjuśrī responded, “Unenlightened people and sages dwell together; dragons and snakes intermingle.”

*The tide is turned. He’s tripping over his own feet and his hands are flailing.*

Wu-cho asked, “Are the congregations large or small?”

*The phrase comes back to haunt me, [Mañjuśrī is thinking].*<sup>53</sup> *But [Wu-cho] couldn’t hold it in any longer.*

Mañjuśrī said, “In front, three by three; in back, three by three.”<sup>54</sup>

*An extraordinary statement! But, are the congregations large or small? Even a thousand arms of great compassion could not count all the people.*<sup>55</sup>

*Prose Commentary on the Main Case (Yüan-Wu)*

Wu-cho was making a pilgrimage to Mount Wu-t’ai.<sup>56</sup> When he came upon a rough area on the road, Mañjuśrī conjured a temple so that he could spend the night. Mañjuśrī asked him, “Where have you just come from?”<sup>57</sup> Wu-cho replied, “The South.” Mañjuśrī said, “How is the Buddha Dharma being upheld in the South?” Wu-cho replied, “In the Age of Decline, monks have little regard for ethics or the monastic rules of discipline.” Mañjuśrī asked, “Are the congregations large or small?” Wu-cho replied, “Some have three hundred, some have five hundred.” Then Wu-cho asked Mañjuśrī, “How is [the Dharma] being upheld in these parts?” Mañjuśrī responded, “Unenlightened people and sages dwell together; dragons and snakes intermingle.” Wu-cho asked,



"Are the congregations large or small?" Mañjuśrī said, "In front, three by three; in back, three by three."

While drinking tea, Mañjuśrī held up a crystal bowl<sup>58</sup> and said, "Do you have anything like this in the South?" Wu-cho said, "No." Mañjuśrī said, "What do you use to drink tea?" Wu-cho was speechless, and he decided it was time to depart. Mañjuśrī told the servant boy, Ch'un-t'i, to escort him to the gates. When they approached the gate, Wu-cho asked the boy, "When [Mañjuśrī] said, 'In front, three by three; in back, three by three,' does this mean [the congregations] are large or small?" The boy called out, "O Virtuous One," and Wu-cho called back, "Yes." The boy asked, "Is this large or small?" Wu-cho inquired, "What are you referring to—this temple?" The boy pointed to a diamond-shaped opening behind the temple, but when Wu-cho turned his head to see it, suddenly the illusory temple and the boy had disappeared completely; all that remained was an empty valley. Thereafter, the site was known as the Diamond Grotto.

Sometime later, a monk asked Feng-hsüeh, "What about the master of Mount Chi'ng-liang?" Feng-hsüeh said, "His phrase did not answer Wu-cho's query. He is still one who sleeps in the fields."<sup>59</sup>

If you want to attain the ultimate truth with your feet set firmly on the ground, then realize the meaning of Wu-cho's words. You will gain a natural ability to stay free from feeling hot whether you stand in a cauldron of boiling water or in the embers of a stove. You will also not feel cold even if you stand on frozen ice. If you want to conquer all dangers, whether facing something steep or sharp, like the jeweled sword of the Diamond King, then realize the meaning of Mañjuśrī's words. You will gain a natural ability to stay free from getting wet even if water is poured all over you, and also the wind will not penetrate you.

Have you not heard about how Chi-tsang of Cheng-chou asked a monk, "Where have you just come from?" and the monk said, "The South." Chi-tsang asked, "How is the Buddha Dharma upheld there?" The monk replied, "They are constantly engaged in dialogues" [C. *wen-ta*, J. *mondō*] Chi-tsang said, "How does that compare with the way we sow paddy fields and reap in rice?"<sup>60</sup>

Now, let me ask, is this the same or different than Mañjuśrī's response [to Wu-cho]? There are many who consider Wu-cho's answers wrong, while Mañjuśrī's answers are said to enable one to experience the union of dragons and snakes, or of the unenlightened and sages. At least there is such a way of thinking. But can you clearly discern the meaning of "In front, three by three; and in back, three by three"? The first arrow hit the mark, but the second arrow probed deeper.<sup>61</sup> Now, let me ask you, are [the congregations] large or small? If you can penetrate the meaning of this, then a thousand phrases, or even ten thousand phrases, will be realized through just this one single phrase. If through this one single phrase you can cut off all attachments and maintain tranquility, then you will attain the unsurpassable realm.

*Verse Commentary on the Main Case (Hsüeh-tou) with Capping Phrases (Yüan-wu)*

A thousand peaks swaying with the color of indigo.

*Can you see Mañjuśrī?*

Who says that it was Mañjuśrī that was conversing with him?<sup>62</sup>

*Even if it were Samantabhadra, it wouldn't matter. He's already slipped by.*

It is laughable to ask, "Are the congregations on Mount Ch'ing-liang large or small?"

*Let me ask, what's all this laughter about? It exists prior to any discourse.*

In front, three by three; and in back, three by three.

*Take a look and see it below your feet, but beware of the thorns in the muddy ground.<sup>63</sup> A teacup falls on the ground and splinters into seven pieces.*

*Prose Commentary on the Verse (Yüan-wu)*

Of the lines, "A thousand peaks swaying with the color of indigo / Who says that it was Mañjuśrī conversing with him?" there are those who say that Hsüeh-tou was just reiterating a previous prose commentary passage without really adding an original verse commentary. But it is just like when a monk asked Fa-yen, "What is a drop of water from the source of the stream?" Or it is like when a monk asked Hui-chüeh of Lung ya, "How does fundamental purity and clarity give rise to the mountains, rivers, and great earth?" You cannot say these were just repetitions of earlier comments.

The One-Eyed Dragon of Ming-ch'ao also wrote a verse commentary that enveloped heaven and earth.

Extending throughout the whole universe is the marvelous monastery,  
The Mañjuśrī that fills the eyes is the one conversing;  
Not knowing to open the Buddha-eye on hearing his words,<sup>64</sup>  
[Wu-cho] turned his head and saw only the green mountain crags.

The line, "Extending through the whole universe is the marvelous monastery," refers to the temple conjured up in the weedy caves. The appearance [of the temple] reflects an opportunity to manifest ultimate reality in the realm of provisional truth. Of the lines, "The Mañjuśrī that fills the eyes is the one conversing;/ Not knowing to open the Buddha-eye on hearing his words,/ [Wu-cho] turned his head and saw only the indigo mountain crags"—at the right moment this could imply the realm of Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, or Avalokiteśvara. The essence is not limited to any particular principle. Hsüeh-tou modifies Ming-ch'ao's phrasing to thread the needle when he writes, "A thousand peaks swaying with the color of indigo." He wields a sword without hurting his own hand. Within the phrase he uses there is the manifestation and the reality, the principle and the phenomena. Of the line, "Who says that it was Mañjuśrī that was conversing with him?"—it seems that even though they spent the night conversing, [Wu-cho] still didn't know that he was talking with Mañjuśrī.

After the dialogue, Wu-cho decided to stay on Mount Wu-t'ai and was serving as cook in a monastery. Every day Mañjuśrī appeared above his cauldron of rice, and each time Wu-cho struck him a blow with the bamboo stick used for churning the porridge. But that is like drawing the bow after the thief has already fled. At the right time, when asked "How is the Buddha Dharma being upheld in the South?" he should have hit Mañjuśrī on the spine—that would have accomplished something.

In the line, "It is laughable to ask, 'Are the congregations on Mount Ch'ing-liang large or small?'" there is a sword's edge in Hsüeh-tou's laughter. If you can understand

what he's laughing about, you will realize the meaning of "In front, three by three; in back, three by three."

## NOTES

1. In T 48:173b–74b, and in *Hekiganroku*, ed. Iriya Yoshitaka et. al., 3 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1994) 2:49–57; a translation is in *The Blue Cliff Record*, 3 vols., trans. Thomas and J. C. Cleary (Boulder, Col.: Shambala, 1977), 1:216–20. The case also appears in the recorded sayings of Ta-hui (T 47:816a) and of Ju-ching (T 48, p. 127c), the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* collection by Dōgen (case 127), and the *Wu-teng hui-yüan* collection (J. *Gotō egen*, vol. 9), in addition to Dōgen's *Chiji shingi* and *Eihei kōroku* and the *Lin-chi lu* (J. *Rinzai roku*, vol. 1.9).

2. This version is in Charles Luk, trans., *Ch'an and Zen Teaching First Series* (Berkeley, Cal.: Shambala, 1970), pp. 139–42.

3. It is interesting to note that Mañjuśrī's manifestations are not always majestic or regal, for he also appears as an old man or beggar. Furthermore, as will be seen, Mañjuśrī is considered by Lin-chi to be purely internal, and in the Pai-chang record he is associated with Mind, though in the Ch'an monastic institution he is often venerated as a deity wielding a sword to cut through ignorance and enshrined in a special room in the compound. Also, in the Ritsu sect in Kamakura-era Japan, the bodhisattva is identified with outcasts (*hinin*) and beggars, for whom he strove to bring salvation.

4. The mountain was visited in modern times by the Ch'an master Hsü-yun in the 1880s. For an account of visionary experiences there in the 1930s, including a discussion of how these sights contradict a scientific outlook, see John Blofeld, *The Wheel of Life* (Berkeley, Cal.: Shambala, 1972, rpt. 1959), pp. 114–55. Also during the Maoist era, Mount Wu-t'ai, apparently once used by Mao as a hideout because of its caves, remained relatively popular and was the subject of afforestation campaigns in the 1950s.

5. The other three are Mount Omei in Szechuan in the south, the home of Samantabhadra (C. P'u-hsien, J. Fugen); Mount P'u-t'o on an island near Chekiang in the east, the home of Avalokiteśvara (C. Kuan-yin, J. Kannon); and Mount Chiu-hua in Anhui in the west, the home of Kṣtigarbha (C. Ti-tsang, J. Jizō). As is mentioned above, Mount Wu-t'ai is actually a group of five peaks (the literal meaning of the name) or terraces, with dozens of caves and grottoes.

6. For material on the mountain see Abe Chōichi, *Zenshū shakai to shinkō* (Tokyo: Shinkai shoseki, 1992), pp. 46–68 (which deals specifically with Ch'an during the Sung); Raoul Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-T'ai in T'ang Context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 106, no. 1 (1986): 119–37; Raoul Birnbaum, "Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords: The Caves of Wu-T'ai Shan," *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie*, no. 5 (1989–90): 115–40; Edwin O. Reischauer, trans. *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955); Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), esp. pp. 194–211; and Edwin Birnbaum, *Sacred Mountains of the World* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), pp. 35–40. I also benefited from Raoul Birnbaum's slide presentation at the 1998 meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Orlando.

7. See Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversight: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 155–74.

8. See especially *Wu-men kuan* case 40 in T 48, p. 298a, which deals with Kuei-shan founding a mountain monastery, as well as the hagiographical background to the kōan case focusing on the role of geomancer Ssu-ma in the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* in T 264b–266b.

9. *Lin-chi lu* (2.7) in T 47:498c26–29, and in *Rinzai roku*, ed. Iriya Yoshitaka (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1991), pp. 65–66. This passage is also cited in Robert M. Gimello, “Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan,” in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, ed. Susan Naquin and Chün fang Yü (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 119–24, from *The Recorded Sayings of Ch'an Master Lin-chi Hui-chao of Chen Prefecture*, trans. Ruth Fuller Sasaki (Kyoto: The Institute for Ch'an Studies, 1975), p. 16—this translation uses a different system for numbering the passages.

10. In T 51:1111b–1112c.

11. Yanagida Seizan, “The ‘Recorded Sayings’ Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism,” trans. John R. McRae, in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster (Berkeley, Cal.: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1983), pp. 185–205.

12. Yanagida, “The ‘Recorded Sayings,’” p. 189.

13. John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 93–97. The main difference is that these were not conversations but monologues, or one-sided pronouncements of masters only without any interaction with disciples.

14. McRae, *Northern School*, p. 95.

15. Yanagida, “The ‘Recorded Sayings,’” p. 190.

16. Steven Heine, *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition: A Tale of Two Shōbōgenzō Texts* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 27.

17. See Kawamura Kōdō, *Shōbōgenzō no seiritsu shiteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1987).

18. Faure emphasizes the role of “dreams, thaumaturgy, death, relics, ritual, and gods . . . usually silenced or explained away—both by the tradition itself and by its scholarly replication—by means of notions of such as the Two Truths,” in *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 305.

19. In *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, 7 vols., ed. Kagamishima Genryū et al., (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1999–1992), 4:230; the case is also cited by Dōgen in *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 183. A common theme in Ch'an kōans, as in *Wu-men kuan* case 11, is the testing of irregular practitioners by Ch'an masters, who generally seek to prove their own superiority while acknowledging the insights attained by all those who do some form of zazen training.

20. In an extended commentary on this encounter dialogue in *Shōbōgenzō* “Dō-toku,” Dōgen remarks that Hsüeh-feng should not and would not have asked or expected the irregular practitioner to “express the way” (*dōtoku*), unless he already knew that the hermit was enlightened. Yet the silent response indicates the superiority of Hsüeh-feng despite the hermit's own considerable spiritual attainment.

21. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* 3:274; the saying is not unique to Dōgen but is found in earlier Ch'an/Zen records, especially *Pi-yen lu* case 96 citing a verse by Tung-shan, and is also used by Yün-men an Ikkyū, among others.

22. *Sung kao-seng chuan* in T 50, pp. 836c–837b.

23. T 47:548c8–15; and Urs App, trans., *Master Yunmen: From the Record of the Chan Teacher “Gate of the Clouds”* (New York: Kodansha, 1994), pp. 116–17.

24. In the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu*, vol. 10, in T 51:277a. An English translation is in Sohaku Ogata, trans., *The Transmission of the Lamp: Early Masters* (Wolfeboro, N.H.: Longwood Academic, 1990), p. 349.

25. This case, known as "Chao-chou Checks Out an Old Woman," first appeared in the transmission of the lamp history, *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* in T 51, p. 277b, and it is included in two kōan collections, the *Wu-men kuan* in T 48:297a and the *Ts'ung-jung lu* in T 48:233c.

26. This rhetorical strategy, used in many dialogues and kōans in the *Wu-men kuan* and other collections, combines tautology and paradox from an absurd, ironic point of view—so that identical answers get opposite responses, or opposite answers spark identical responses. Chao-chou is also known for offering tea to disciples regardless of how they reply to his queries.

27. In T 48:165a–165c. This case also included in *Ts'ung-jung lu* case 60.

28. On the latter temple see Marilyn M. Rhie, *The Fo-kuang ssu: Literary Evidences and Buddhist Images* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977).

29. It is important to note that Mañjuśrī worship on Mount Wu-t'ai is not mentioned in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* text of the sixth century and appears only briefly in the *Supplementary Biographies* text of the seventh century. But in the *Sung Biographies* text of 988, there are over a dozen stories, including many of those discussed in this chapter; see John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 105–6.

30. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels*, p. 195; Birnbaum, "Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords," pp. 129–30; Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-T'ai Shan," p. 130 n. 24. In addition to Ennin, a Japanese monk, Chōnen, arrived in the tenth century and later built Seiryōji Temple (Ch'ing-liang ssu in Chinese) in Kyoto after a vision of five-colored clouds.

31. Birnbaum, "Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords," pp. 130–31, citing *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* in T 51:1114a–1115a; and Daniel Stevenson, trans., "Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai," *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 203–22.

32. Stevenson, "Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai," p. 218.

33. Birnbaum, "Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai," p. 128; and T 50, pp. 1112c–1113a and 52:422c. In a Noh play, *Shakkyō*, a Japanese priest traveling through India and China in search of Buddhist holy places visits the mountain and is about to cross over a great stone bridge when a boy warns him that the bridge stretches to the heavenly paradise of the bodhisattva but the valley below plunges as deep as hell. The bridge is impossibly narrow and slippery, but suddenly a golden lion appears dancing among flowers to lead the pilgrim on. See Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpow Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975), p. 316.

34. In *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* in T 51, pp. 1113a–1114b; *Sung kao-seng chuan* in T 50:843c–844a; and in Birnbaum, *Studies in the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī* (Boulder, Col.: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, 1983), pp. 14–16. Unlike the case of the two Wu-cho's, the Tao-i account is essentially the same in the *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* and the *Sung kao-seng chuan* versions.

35. Stanley Weinstein suggests that the problems Tao-i had with completing the building of the temple stemmed from the An Lu-shan rebellion lasting from 765 to 73, in *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 80.

36. *Sung kao-seng chuan* in T 50, pp. 855c–856b; see the discussion in Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, pp. 37–39.

37. *Kuang Ch'ing-liang chuan* in T 51, pp. 1111b–1112c.

38. *Sung kao-seng chuan* in T 50, pp. 836c–837b; Birnbaum, “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords,” p. 131.

39. T. Griffith Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism,” *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. 183.

40. *Rinzai roku*, p. 49; Sasaki translation, p. 11.

41. *Rinzai roku*, p. 28; Sasaki translation, p. 6.

42. *Nyōjō goroku*, ed. Kagamishima Genryū (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1983), pp. 291–93.

43. Gimello, “Chang Shan-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan,” pp. 121, 122.

44. A prime example is the comment in Yüan-wu's notes on the kōan case in which he writes that “they are probably all wild fox spirits” about Wu-cho's response to the question about the size of the southern congregations; the fox-spirit criticism, often used in Ch'an texts, especially the *Lin-chi lu*, in which the term appears five times, seems to be a part of the Ch'an reaction to *mo-fa* (J. *mappō*) theory in which lazy or irresponsible monks are questioned as to whether they are legitimately of human status. For a related use of this kind of rhetorical device see *The Ch'an teachings of Hakuin*, trans. Norman Waddell (Boston: Shambala, 1994), pp. 9–18, 115 n. 3.

45. Ming-ch'ao is featured in *Pi-yen lu* case 48, which deals with a spirit that haunts stoves, and in the commentary on *Ts'ung-jung lu* case 55 about Hsüeh-feng working as a rice cook. His name also happens to be cited in the commentary on case 19 near a reference to master Mi-mo, who dwelled on Mount Wu-t'ai and is also cited in *Ts'ung-jung lu* case 62. Mi-mo, also mentioned in Dōgen's *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 73, was known to carry a forked branch and demand of Mount Wu-t'ai pilgrims: “What kind of demons brought you on this path? You will die in the stocks whether you answer or not, so speak quickly!” Ming-ch'ao's verse alludes to the poem given to Chao-chou to discourage him from traveling to the mountain, and it is responded to in Hsüeh-tou's verse comments on the dialogue.

46. Roland Barthes, *The Empire of Signs* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 72.

47. This phrase recalls the famous “Pai-chang and the wild fox” kōan in *Wu-men kuan* case 2.

48. Mañjuśrī was one of the four main bodhisattvas venerated in China and was said to make Mount Wu-t'ai his earthly abode.

49. This reply can be considered to imply southern Buddhism or, more specifically, the Southern school of Ch'an.

50. In other words, in the realm of nonduality how can distinctions between directions be made?

51. This notion is based on Buddhist prophecies that about 1,500 years after the life of Śākyamuni a period of degeneration would set in due to people's ignorance and karma. The Age of Decline (*mo-fa*) would last for a period of 10,000 years, during which no one could gain enlightenment through self-effort alone.

52. The term “wild fox spirits,” borrowed from folklore about magical, shape-shifting foxes, is a conventional epithet used to refer to those who claim a false, inauthentic enlightenment. See Heine, *Shifting Shape, Shaping Text: Philosophy and Folklore in the Fox Kōan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

53. The sentence structure is vague here, but it seems to imply that Mañjuśrī is

thinking that Wu-cho has turned the tables, at least momentarily, by asking him the identical question.

54. This saying alludes to a saying used in the *Hsüan-hsa kuang-lu* (J. *Gensha kōroku*), which could be interpreted to mean “six in front (or before), and in back (or behind)” —six may refer to the six senses, which are gateways for the perception of the world of external stimuli.

55. Yüan-wu is questioning, as echoed below in the anecdote about Feng-hsüeh, whether Mañjuśrī’s response really answered Wu-cho’s question, by referring to another bodhisattva, Kuan-yin.

56. This narrative is apparently based on records of two monks named Wu-cho who visited the mountain, one cited in the *Kuang Ch’ing-liang chuan*, who envisioned and later constructed the Prajñā Temple, and the other cited in the *Sung kao-seng chuan*, who saw but failed to enter the Diamond Grotto because of his doubt.

57. The passage in the commentary section adds the word “just” to the question as asked in the main case.

58. The crystal bowl may have been made, as in other Wu-t’ai tales, of *vaidūrya*, one of the seven precious objects in Central Asian (particularly Gandharan) Buddhist mythology.

59. Again there is a vagueness, so it is not clear whether the passage is criticizing Mañjuśrī or Wu-cho as the one sleeping in the fields.

60. This anecdote makes an interesting contrast between those monks who spend their time in encounter dialogues and those who adhere to Pai-chang’s saying, “a day without work is a day without eating,” by carrying out their chores with dedication and determination.

61. This line echoes in Hsüeh-tou’s verse commentary in *Pi-yen lu* case 93.

62. This line can be considered an ironic response to the assertion in Ming-ch’ao’s verse, cited below, that the identity of the mysterious supernatural being conversing with Wu-cho was the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

63. This line is echoed in the Yüan-wu’s capping phrases on the main case in *Pi-yen lu* case 28.

64. The reference to the opening of the eye of wisdom alludes to a verse once given by a monk to discourage Chao-chou from visiting Mount Wu-t’ai, as recorded in the *Ching-te ch’uan-teng lu*.