rival, Fukuchi Fukuichi 福地復一 (1862-1909) replaced him as editor of the official *History of Japanese Art*, published in French translation for the 1900 'Exposition Universelle' as *Histoire du l'Art du Japon*.[49] In this work Fukuchi marginalised all relationships between continental cultures and the art of Japan. Instead, the narrative of *Histoire du l'Art du Japon* was centred on an unbroken 10,000-generation line of imperial rule. Contrastingly, Okakura had granted Chinese art a significant role in the formation of the archipelago's aesthetic sensibilities.[50] Yet, in accordance with the aesthetic nationalism of his day, even Okakura's pan-Asian vision described this cross-cultural unity within a Japan centred hierarchy.[51]

In spite of this tendency to subsume Chinese painting within a Japanese narrative of art history, prominent early twentieth century Japanese scholars such as Omura Segai 大村西崖 (1868-1927) articulated an art history of China in its own right. In keeping with the popularity of grand narrative structures in early twentieth century scholarship, Seigai's 1920 *Shina Bijutsu Shi* 支那美術史 (*History of Chinese Art*) offers an expansive exposition of China's national stylistic development through a canon of named artists.[52] Painters of Chan subjects such as Liang Kai and Muxi Fachang are examined through examples of their works preserved in Japan.[53] Among the subsequent generation of scholars who developed Seigai's empirical and typological approach, Suzuki Kei's 鈴木敬 (1920-2007) expansive bibliography includes one of the most comprehensive extant catalogues of Chinese painting history.[54] Depictions of Chan subjects occupy notable positions within both these author's outputs. This empirical tradition based on canonical masterworks from Japanese collections is not without its own constraints. These will be discussed in later in this chapter in relation to the register of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties, while the implications of Liang Kai's position in the canon of Chan and Zen art will be examined in greater depth chapter six. Nonetheless, these authors illustrate that modern histories of Chan figure paintings in Japanese collections were not solely framed within Okakura's particular version of Japanese nationalism.

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[49] Fukuchi 2005 [Reprint of 1900 first edition].
[50] Clark 2005, 21.
[51] For a discussion of the global rise of nationalist ideology in this period see: Anderson, 1983.
[52] Accessed via Chinese translation: Omura, 1967 [first edition 1920].
[53] Omura 1967, 136.
[54] Suzuki 1982.

Yet in 1993 Brinker and Kanazawa were still predisposed to subsume Chan figure paintings within Zen aesthetic nationalism. The following discussion of the writings of DT Suzuki and Shini'ichi Hisamatsu argues that the narratives of national exceptionalism exemplified by Okakura were appropriated in the formation of a specific Zen aesthetic theory. In the following passage, I argue that the aesthetic dimension of Zen constructed by Suzuki and Hisamatsu was a nationalistic neologism. This ideal of Zen Art has had an enduring impact in masking the heterogeneity of Chan and Zen visual cultures.

The Aesthetic Theories of D.T. Suzuki and Shin'ichi Hisamatsu

> Zen gave great impetus to the development of Chinese philosophy in the Song dynasty, and also to the growth of a certain school of painting… The paintings of the Southern Song thus came to find their ardent admirers on this side of the sea, and are now national treasures of Japan, while in China no specimens of this class of painting are to be found.
> D.T. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture*, 1938 (republished 1959)[55]

With a career spanning the better part of a century, DT Suzuki's collected works in Japanese total thirty-two volumes, with over thirty titles to his name in English. As one of the most prominent and influential twentieth century authors on Zen Buddhism, he devoted the majority of his vast published output to discussions on the nature of Zen religious practice. However, his 1938 text, *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture*, republished in 1959, had a profound impact on art histories of Chan and Zen figure painting in the following decades, most pronounced in English language scholarship.[56] Despite the presence of a prominent counter narrative to Suzuki's subsuming of Chan within a phenomenological reading of Zen, he remained one of the most influential and prolific writers on Zen throughout the twentieth century.[57]

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[55] Suzuki 1938, 13; Suzuki 1959, 21.

[56] For a discussion of authors on Zen art whose writings reflect or emulate DT Suzuki, see: Levine 2007, 57-8.

Following conventions established by Okakura and his contemporaries, DT Suzuki celebrated the Song dynasty as a temporary flowering of Zen artistic ideals quickly superseded by their fuller embodiment in Japan. Referring to the cultural production of both China and Japan as Zen, Chan is ideologically and rhetorically subsumed within its Japanese successor. In the above quote Suzuki justifies Japanese patrimony over Chinese Song paintings of Chan figural subjects by juxtaposing their reception in Japan and China. In Suzuki's account, Japanese audiences have both appreciated and preserved these works because of their Zen qualities. This positions Chinese Chan figure paintings as a material inheritance of Japanese Zen. Suzuki legitimises this inheritance by ascribing Japanese viewers with a unique receptivity to the purported Zen quality of Chinese paintings, musing on whether this is due to "the racial psychology of the Japanese people".[58] By stressing these paintings' canonisation as national treasures, Suzuki also asserts the patrimony of the Japanese nation over these objects of Chinese manufacture. In Suzuki's estimation, Song paintings embody a Zen ideal inextricably linked to a Japanese national essence. This essence is encapsulated in his statement: "Zen has internally entered into every phase of the cultural life of the [Japanese] people".[59] While scholars of religion have made prominent critiques of Suzuki's equation of Zen with Japanese national character, these ideals have been surprisingly tenacious in academic studies that address Chan figure painting. As discussed above, receptivity to Zen art is presented as a form of Japanese national exceptionalism (*nihonjinron* 日本人論) as late as the 1990s, with even leading scholars Helmut Brinker and Hiroshi Kanazawa reductively juxtaposing "people in Japan" with "the West".[60]

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[57] These critiques emerged as early as the 1980s, and were further elaborated in the 1990s and 2000s. The following three sources are among the most articulate and insightful comments from a wider critical reading of Zen essentialism: Faure 1986; Faure 1993, especially 53-67; Sharf 1993.

[58] Suzuki 1938, 13.

[59] Suzuki 1938, 13.

[60] Brinker and Kanazawa 1996, 11. For a broader critical discussion of discourses of Japanese national exceptionalism in contemporary scholarship, see: Befu 2001.

Suzuki develops his ideal of Zen aesthetics through examples from the oeuvres of the Song artists, Ma Yuan, Muxi, and Liang Kai.[61] These are three of the four painters Okakura used to illustrate the early development of Zen aesthetics in China, omitting only Xia Gui.[62] Where Okakura presented these artists' oeuvres as a genre of Zen painting in Song China, Suzuki uses the paintings' formal qualities to construct his own system of Zen aesthetics. By treating these paintings as illustrative of his nationalist religious ideals, he overlooks the Chinese geographic and cultural contexts of their production. This is particularly pronounced in his reading of *Lone Fisherman on a Winter River* 寒江獨釣圖 (fig. 1.1), attributed to Ma Yuan. Ascribing the unsigned painting the reduced title *A Solitary Angler*, Suzuki describes the early thirteenth century court painter's work in the following terms:

> A simple fishing boat in the midst of the rippling waters is enough to awake in the reader a sense of the vastness of the sea and at the same time of peace and contentment – the Zen sense of the Alone. [63] [Capitalisations in the original].

Presuming the pictorial action is located on the sea, Suzuki obscures the geographic context on the work's production. As a painting collected by Ma Yuan's imperial patron, Empress Yang 楊皇后 of the Southern Song (1162-1233), the scene almost certainly refers to the lakes and rivers of the Jiangnan region around the Southern Song capital of Lin'an 臨安.[64] To the Southern Song viewer, paintings of fishermen and woodcutters were a well-established trope for idealised reclusion. Yet to Suzuki, this image is evocative of a psychological experience related to his religious practice of Zen.

By obfuscating the Chinese geographic and cultural context for which this image was painted, Suzuki is able to reposition the pictorial action onto the open sea. This better suits his reading of the Zen quality of the image, locating the fisherman within a vast body of water that amplifies the rhetorical impact of his 'Zen sense of the Alone'. He goes on to clarify that this 'Aloneness' is a translation of the Japanese term *sabi*.[65] To Suzuki, the *sabi* quality of an image or object is evident in the response it elicits in the viewer, prompting introspection and contemplation. By centring his analysis on the internal psychological response of the viewer to the painting, Suzuki's appraisal of *Fisherman* goes beyond earlier nationalist views of artistic teleology. Chan's visual expression in China is still subordinated to an ideal of Japanese Zen art. However, that ideal is explored by equating Suzuki's own internal psychological experience as a viewer of the image with a Zen aesthetic. Suzuki imposes his contemporary religious experience onto the historic meaning of the object. This reflects a broader tendency in his writing to present Zen as a timeless ideal, rather than an evolving ideology embodied in texts and images.

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[61] Suzuki 1938, 24.
[62] Okakura 1905, 178-9.
[63] Suzuki 1938, 14.
[64] Empress Yang's collection of this painting is attested by a partially cut off seal in the lower right: Edwards 2011, 34.

Suzuki's assertion that Zen should be understood as an a-historic quality is perhaps most clearly expressed in a polemical exchange with the eminent historian of China, Hu Shih 胡適 (1891-1962).[66] This conception of Zen's existence outside of history is exemplified by Suzuki's injunction that Hu examine "Zen in itself".[67] For Suzuki, Zen, and by extension Chan, are to be experienced rather than analysed. This correspondence frames two incompatible approaches to the ontology of Chan and Zen. To Hu, Chan and Zen were distinctive historical traditions. They exist as products of human activity, accessible through texts and images.[68] Chan and Zen had distinct ways of being, and these ways of being were subject to change over time. For Suzuki, Chan and Zen were singular. Their unified way of being transcended the critical appraisal of modern intellectuals, and did not change over time.

Indeed, this conflation of Chan's Chinese history and Zen's development in Japan into a singular essence is reflected in the breadth of historic exemplars Suzuki cites to support his argument. He concludes his response to Hu Shih with a discussion of the Tang dynasty monk Xiangyan Zhixian's 香巖智閑 (799-898/9), citing his rejection of learning from written sources and eventual enlightenment in an act of manual labour as an illustration of Zen individualism, equated with his notion of "Zen in itself". [69] Zhixian's experience of awakening is made analogous with Suzuki's claim to enlightenment. Thus, in spite of his claims that Zen exists beyond the bounds of history, Suzuki's self-fashioning as an enlightened Zen layman, and spokesperson for Zen's place in Japanese culture, is supported through a rhetorical associations with the hagiography of a Chan exemplar from Chinese antiquity. The inherent contradiction of Suzuki's simultaneous reliance on and dismissal of Chan and Zen's historical dimension are sidelined by his assertion that Zen is a mode of experience. To Suzuki, Zen was phenomenological rather than historical. Thus, Suzuki argues, when manifest in creative human action Zen was "beyond the ken of discursive understanding".[70] Such an approach effectively negates the possibility of meaningful engagement with Chan figure paintings as anything other than a source of religious insight.

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[65] Suzuki 1938, 24.
[66] This polemical exchange, and the contrasting conceptions of Chan and Zen presented by these two mid twentieth century scholars, are discussed in a 2009 volume of essays published by Fudan University. However, there is a notable error in the ascription of Arthur Wailey's 1927 review of Suzuki's *Essays on Zen Buddhism* to Hu Shih: Barrett 1989; Gong 2009.
[67] Suzuki 1953, 26 & 39.
[68] Hu 1953.

Both Suzuki and Hu's approaches to the history of Chan have been the subject of extensive revision by later scholars, most prominently Bernard Faure. Faure's 1993 *Chan Insights and Oversights* built on his earlier essay on the historicity of Bodhidharma, offering a powerful critique of Suzuki's rhetorical strategies for the elevation of Zen beyond discursive analysis, and Hu's projection of modern humanist rationalism onto historic Chan texts.[71] Faure notes how Suzuki's self-orientialising discourse positions him as the mediator of Eastern mystery to his English language readership, using this adopted position of insight to assert an interpretive hegemony over Zen.[72] Faure also problematises Hu's approach to Chan history, where Tang dynasty religious texts were sifted for elements of rational thought, contrasted with their mythological and irrational dimensions.[73] Thus, both Suzuki and Hu are shown to have ignored the earlier functions and meanings of Chan and Zen texts, doctrines, and images, instead constructing narratives that overlook the possibility of alternative meanings to these objects.

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[69] Suzuki 1953, 45.

[70] Suzuki 1938, 9. As Timothy Barrett has shown, this polemic was not limited to Suzuki's exchange with Hu Shih. The eminent British Sinologist Arthur Waley offered an earlier critique in an anonymous review of Suzuki's 1927 *Essays in Zen Buddhism*: Barrett 1989.

[71] Faure 1993; Faure 1986.

[72] Faure 1993, 53-4.

[73] Faure 1993, 97.

Though Faure's *Insight and Oversights* remains a seminal text in the reassessment of Chan history and Chan historicity, a recent publication by the late John McRae (1947-2011) offers important reflections on the methodology of this critique. McRae's posthumously published 2014 essay on sixth century representations of Bodhidharma illustrates the drawbacks of Faure's extensive reliance on contemporary cultural theorists.[74] McRae credits Faure with the introduction of "a new form of post-modern structuralist analysis" to the field of Chan studies, but notes that his extensive reliance on modern cultural criticism, and an attendant post-modern disillusionment with the notion of an historic narrative, come at the expense of careful appraisal of primary Chinese language materials.[75] Specifically, McRae critiques Faure's reading of the *Record of the Monasteries of Luoyang* (*Luoyang Qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記) (before 547), noting that Faure's earlier characterisation of Bodhidharma as "a devout and somewhat senile monk" misses the broader context of the text.[76] Through a close analysis of this text McRae shows that Bodhidharma's venerable age was a demonstration of the efficacy of his religious practice. While McRae's reading of Bodhidharma's biography in the *Record of the Monasteries of Luoyang* makes no claims to holistically reconstruct the sage as an historic figure, it does allow us to reconstruct his earliest representations, and to examine these representations in the religious context of the *Record of the Monasteries of Luoyang.* McRae's critique of Faure's methodology is by no means a revival of Zen essentialist notions of history, nor an assertion of a teleological narrative of Chan's development in China supplanting the plural narratives of Faure's post-modernism. Instead, McRae and Faure's collective contributions to the field prompt us to ask further questions about the context in which Chan hagiographic figures are represented, through the holistic examination of original source material within a methodological framework aware of its own critical limitations.

The rhetorical integration of Zen into the basic structures of Japanese society also met with rebuttals from within the Japanese scholarly establishment of the 1990s, in a movement that identified itself as Critical Buddhism (Hihan Bukkyō 批判仏教).[77] While the Critical Buddhism movement made major contributions to understanding of historic and contemporary perceptions of Zen, its aims had an even broader reach. The movement's two leading proponents Hakamaya Noriaki 袴谷憲昭 and Matsumoto Shirō 松本史朗 were advocating the merits of critical analysis and rational thought, in both academic scholarship on Buddhism, and in the lived practice Buddhism by its religious adherents in various schools.[78]

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[74] McRae 2014.
[75] McRae 2014, 129.
[76] Faure 1993, 127; Faure 1986, 189; McRae 2014, 134.

In its application to the writing of Zen histories, Critical Buddhism stressed the need for a critical historical consciousness. Such critical consciousness had a moral dimension as it pertained to the interpretation of Zen schools' and sects' relationship to Japanese culture. These scholars' conclusions go so far as to argue that historic Japanese Zen institutional practices are not "true Buddhism", instead serving to only reflect and reinforce the institutional privilege of historic elites. This complicity of Zen institutions in the segregation of society through a Japanese class system is discussed at length in William Bodiford's provocatively titled essay, "Zen and the Art of Religious Prejudice". Bodiford frames the emergence of the Critical Buddhism movement as a reaction to the continued marginalisation of outcast groups in contemporary Japan, known as *burakumin* 部落民. This was enacted through *burakumin* families' listings within necrologies (*kakochō* 過去帳) kept in Sōtō Zen temples, used to identify and exclude them from employment, marriage, and other areas of society.[79] In response, Critical Buddhism offered corrective readings of Sōtō Zen teachings, refuting the legitimacy of *burakumin*'s marginalisation. However, as Bodiford notes, these scholars of Critical Buddhism occasionally lacked a consciousness of their own historical context, where their correctives to historic prejudices also provided an apologist narrative for Sōtō institutions.[80] These ongoing debates show how disputes over the histories of Chan and Zen have an enduring relevance to living communities. Moreover, the arguments levied by the Critical Buddhism movement also highlight how conflation of Zen with Japanese culture has at times inhibited the confrontation of entrenched social prejudice.

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[77] For a series of insightful essays on this subject, see: Hubbard and Swanson 1997.

[78] The emergence of the Critical Buddhism movement, its distinctive approach to Buddhist scholarship and practice, and the impact of the historic context in which the movement emerged in shaping the new approaches it offered is summarised by Jamie Hubbard in the introduction to *Pruning the Bodhi Tree*: *the Storm Over Critical Buddhism*: Hubbard and Swanson 1997, vii-xiii.

[79] Bodiford 1996, 9.

[80] Bodiford 1996, 20-1.

Suzuki's phenomenological ideals of Zen found their most systematic application to visual culture in Shin'ichi Hisamatsu's 1958 work *Zen to Bijutsu* 禅と美術, translated into English as *Zen and the Fine Arts* in 1971. Hisamatsu codified Zen art through seven characteristics; asymmetry, simplicity, austere sublimity or lofty dryness, naturalness, subtle profundity or deep reserve, freedom from attachment, and tranquillity.[81] Aside from asymmetry, all of these characteristics refer primarily to the internal psychological experiences of the viewer. Hisamatsu's Zen aesthetics are defined by audience reception, rather than through the formal qualities or contexts of material and visual culture.

Hisamatsu elaborates his Zen aesthetic system by pairing each positive characteristic with the absence of an obstruction. He explains these corresponding presences and absences as criteria required to constitute what he terms the Formless Self, *musū no jiko* 無相の自己 in Japanese.[82] This Formless Self is an ideal state of being, generated in the Zen practitioner. It is embodied neither in a physical form, such as the material surface of a painting, nor in an abstract mental formation, such as the notion of a painting's aesthetic value.[83] Instead, it is experiential, echoing Suzuki's earlier phenomenological approach to the definition of Zen art. Hisamatsu argues that this Formless Self is related to Zen art as a psychological reaction to the principle embodied in objects: "The fundamental subject of expression [in Zen art] can only be considered in the context of Zen… Zen is the Self-Awareness of the Formless Self".[84] Moreover, Hisamatsu's didactic definition of Zen art through prescribed modes of reception explicitly privilege Japanese culture. Japan's exceptional position as the optimal context for the generation of appropriate reception of Zen aesthetics is framed within a familiar narrative, Zen art's decline in China and ascendance in Japan:

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[81] Hisamatsu 1971, 28-38.

[82] Seven characteristics and their corresponding aspects of the formless self are as follows: 'asymmetry' 不均斉 with the unmanifest (*adīnatva*) 無法, translated as 'no rule'; 'simplicity' 簡素 with 'no complexity' (*avyavakīrṇa*) 無雑; 'austere sublimity' or 'lofty dryness' 枯高 with 'no rank' (*anavakāśa*) 無位; 'naturalness' 故意とらしくないということ with a state of 'no mind' 無心; 'subtle profundity' or 'deep reserve' 幽玄 with an unfathomable quality that equates to release from the discriminating mind (*aneka*) 無底, translated as 'no bottom'; freedom from attachment 脱俗 with the absence of obstruction (*anāvaraṇa*) 無礙, translated as 'no hinderance'; and tranquillity 静寂 with 'no stirring' 無動: Hisamatsu 1958, 68-78; Hisamatsu 1971, 53-9.

[83] Hisamatsu 1971, 45-6.

> What in China had not yet appeared, or was present only embrionically, developed greatly after coming to Japan... China excelled, but only during the Song and Yuan periods; during the Ming and after, China had little to offer.[85]

Hisamatsu expands on the established narrative for Zen aesthetics in his use of the bodily metaphor of pregnancy. By characterising China's cultural production as embryonic, he sharply distinguishes a conscious Japanese Zen art from its unconscious gestation in China.

The seven characteristics are articulated in relation to objects and architectural sites in disparate media, with varied contexts of original production and subsequent use. This disparate group are unified in their circumstances of preservation and collection, all found within Japanese institutions. Yet *Zen and the Fine Arts* disregards Zen artworks' diverse contexts of production and reception. Echoing Suzuki, Hisamatsu exempts the creative agency behind Zen art from discursive analysis. He presents Zen's aesthetic system as not only self-contained, but also self-generating. The reflexive agency of Zen creativity constituted an active dismissal of the historicity of Chan and Zen's associated visual cultures.

> What is of greatest significance in this literature, however, is not so much that it gives objective expression to Zen, as that Zen is present as a self-expressive, creative subject. In other words that which is expressing itself and that which is expressed are identical… the same can be said not only of Zen literature, but of other Zen "Self-creative" arts as well…[86]

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[84] Hisamatsu 1971, 45.

[85] Hisamatsu 1971, 24-5.

[86] Hisamatsu 1971, 16. For original Japanese see: Hisamatsu 1958, 8.

Within this framework paintings identified as Zen become intermediary forms between the viewer and an ultimate reality of awakening, articulated through the concept of a "Formless Self" discussed above. The artist's agency is supplanted by that of his subject mater, a historically constant Zen. In his discussion of Liang Kai's *Śākyamuni Emerging from Mountains* 釋迦出山圖 (fig. 2.1), we see how Hisamatsu reads the image through a phenomenological experience of viewing rather than the historical context of its production.

Liang Kai's painting is used more than any other single work to illustrate Hisamatsu's seven characteristics in *Zen and the Fine Arts*; cited in definitions of asymmetry, austere sublimity or lofty dryness, subtle profundity or deep reserve, and tranquility.[87] Identifying the painting as a condensation of all seven characteristics, Hisamatsu discusses Liang Kai's *Śākyamuni* as the first of 37 "selected appreciations".[88] His reading of the painting addresses formal qualities such as the use of broken ink style brushwork (Chinese *pomo* 破墨, Japanese *haboku*), and the iconographic significance of Śākyamuni as the founder of Chan and Zen lineages.[89] However, Hisamatsu's commentaries on the material and visual properties of the painting are secondary to his use of the painting as a site for exegesis on Zen ideology. The conclusion of the "appreciation" of Liang Kai's painting makes it clear that Hisamatsu only values the visual and material properties of artworks as instruments that engender religious awakening:

> Of the seven characteristics, Tranquillity is best expressed in this painting; that is, it expresses what is prior to experience by means of what has appearance.[90]

To Hisamatsu, art historical enquiry is at best a means to an end. That end is the religious experience of Zen, on which Hisamatsu assumes a position of authority throughout *Zen and the Fine Arts*. The correlation of Hisamatsu's theories of aesthetics and those of Suzuki is no accidental correlation. While a visiting professor at Harvard University's School of Divinity in 1958, Hisamatsu and Suzuki discussed

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[87] Hisamatsu 1971, 30-1, 33 & 36.
[88] Hisamatsu 1971, 62.
[89] Hisamatsu 1971, 62.
[90] Hisamatsu 1971, 62.

Westerners' lack of receptivity to Zen, reaching a quick consensus on the unique spiritual capacities of their Japanese compatriots relative to their Western hosts. [91] This dialogue took place in the year of *Zen to Bijutsu*'s publication, underscoring the nationalist dimension of Hisamtsu's approach to Zen aesthetics.

Though Hisamatsu's seven characteristics function primarily as a platform for pedagogy on modern laymen's Zen, they remain the most systematic attempt to articulate a distinctive quality to Zen art.[92] Now, more than half a century since their publication, they are a rich illustration for historic modes for the reception of Zen art in post-war Japan. However, later art historical studies pertaining to Chan figure paintings continued to apply Hisamatsu's characteristics as a framework for analysis of historic visual and material culture. Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 (1922-2006), one of the leading scholars of Chan and Zen history in the twentieth century, was a student of Hisamatsu. Writing in 1981 on the historical distinction between Chan and Zen art in China and Japan, Seizan's discussion opens by referencing his teacher's systematic approach to the correlation of Zen material and visual culture with Japanese national identity. Seizan's reliance on Hisamatsu's approach leads him to juxtapose a Confucian and Daoist cultural context of Chan art with later development as Japanese Zen art. Seizan also reinforces the conceptual solidity of Hisamatsu's generalised characteristics (*sei kaku* 性格) by repackaging them as abstracted principles (*gen ri* 原理):

> 'Professor [Hisamatsu Shin'ichi] has summed up the aesthetic consciousness of Japanese people into seven principles - asymmetry, simplicity, austere sublimity, naturalness, subtle profundity, freedom from attachment, and tranquillity - and then showed that each of these originates in Zen thought.'

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[91] Sharf 1993, 28.

[92] Sharf discusses Suzuki and Hisamatsu's shared position as lay practitioners, noting that lay Zen was neither respected nor accepted by the orthodoxies of Japanese Zen monasticism. Sharf 1993, 40.

> 先生はこの本で日本人の美意識を、不均斉・簡素・枯高・自然・幽玄・脱俗・静寂という、七つの原理にまとめて、それらがいずれも禅の思想からくることを、詳しく指摘されています。[93]

Brinker and Kanazawa’s appraisal of Hisamatsu’s seven characteristics echo Seizan’s 1981 reiteration of Hisamatsu’s nationalist notions of Chan and Zen aesthetics, noting the seven characteristics’ unique position as the only systematic description of Zen aesthetics. Moreover, they read his typological approaches to Zen Art as a clear articulation of the distinguishing visual features of Zen vis-à-vis other schools of Japanese Buddhism.

> ...[Hisamatsu’s seven characteristics refer] beyond aesthetic values to moral and religious ideals, and at the same they adumbrate the basic tenets of an attitude toward art which separates Zen from orthodox schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism.[94]

A formalised structure for the mapping of Chan and Zen thought onto visual and material culture certainly has the potential to enhance understanding of these objects. Indeed, one of the central aims of this thesis is to explore relationships between texts authored by Chan clerics, and associated paintings. However, the conceptual framework onto which Hismatsu mapped this material was predicated on ideas of Zen’s reflexive a-historicity, and an obfuscation of Chan’s Chinese origins. Hisamatsu’s approach to Zen is less an isolation of heterodoxy from orthodoxy, and more the establishment of a new orthodoxy founded upon his own religious convictions. Moreover, as characterised by Brinker and Kanazawa, this orthodoxy is presented as the insights of a Japanese Zen pedagogue, whose views are characterised as interior to tradition. This interiority is juxtaposed with an insurmountable barrier of cultural exteriority that characterises all Western viewers of Zen art. Hisamatsu claims that China had lost its ‘Zen’ culture by the Ming dynasty, founded 1368, rendering Japan uniquely privileged to interpret these objects in the modern era. Thus, the rhetorical and ideological backdrop to these seven characteristics constricts the amorphous subject they profess to only loosely describe.

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[93] Yanagida 1981, 213.
[94] Brinker and Kanazawa 1996, 36-7.

While the essentialist notions of Chan and Zen art and aesthetics espoused by Suzuki and Hisamatsu have been uncritically accepted by some, Yoshiaki Shimizu's 1985 essay 'Zen Art?' raised a prominent rhetorical question mark over these homogenising definitions.[95] In their 2007 exhibition *Awakenings: Zen Figure Painting in Medieval Japan,* Gregory Levine and Yukio Lippit substantiated the alternative approaches posited by their teacher Shimizu. With no claims to cultural patrimony over Chan and Zen, *Awakenings* acknowledged and documented the diverse geographic origins and religious, social and political functions of Chan and Zen figure paintings. Lippit's essay on the Chan and Zen pantheon situated Chan and Zen's vast corpus of visual material within a dynamic nexus of cultural performance.[96] As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Levine's essay on modern approaches to Zen art in English language literature contextualised *Awakenings*' conceptual innovations within a critical appraisal of earlier scholarship.[97] From the outset, *Awakenings* offers a corrective to many of the popular conceptions of Chan and Zen art, its introduction dismissing the historicity of phenomenological characterisation of Zen aesthetics in the following terms:

> … [Chan and Zen's] aesthetic of abstraction and minimalism, the psychological state of oneness or emptiness in artistic practice or viewer response… are for all practical purposes a modern invention.[98]

Awakenings opened up new possibilities for art historical conceptions of Chan and Zen figure paintings, raising new questions on the role of style, time and place in shaping our understanding of Chan and Zen art. However, this study was primarily focused upon objects of Japanese manufacture, and drew its examples exclusively from Japanese collections. Consequently, Levine and Lippit presented a new approach without fully exploring its potential applications to the Chinese contexts of

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[95] Shimizu 1985.
[96] Lippit 2007a.
[97] Levine 2007a.
[98] Levine and Lippit 2007, 18.

Chan figure painting's production and reception. Lippit has explored some of these ramifications, notably the history of apparition style (Chinese: *wanglianghua* 魍魎畫, Japanese: *mōryōga* 魍魎画) paintings in China.[99] Sarah Fraser has furthered this discussion beyond its frequent focus on material in Japanese collections, examining a prominent scroll from the Shanghai Museum showing *Eight Eminent Monks* 八高僧圖 from Chan tradition, signed by Liang Kai (fig. 6.6). [100] Fraser's 2010 article explores the relationship of visual and textual content in this scroll, illustrating the potential functions of serial mono-scenic narratives within Chan visual culture. This type of object is markedly distinct from those preserved in Japan, where serial narrative scrolls have often been remounted in vertical formats for display in the *chanoyu* tea ceremony. While these studies raise and explore important new questions on the place of Chan figure painting in the visual cultures of dynastic China, there is still extensive scope for further enquiry into this rich body of material.

Itakura Masaaki's 板倉聖哲 2014 exhibition of the Higashiyama Gomotsu 東山御物 collection of the Ashikaga Shoguns, adds rich historical context to the reception of Chan figure painting in this major historic Japanese collection.[101] Itakura's exhibition, and the accompanying catalogue, situates prominent paintings of Chan subjects such as Liang Kai's *Śākyamuni Emerging from the Mountains* alongside the oeuvres of other court artists amongst which they were collected. In his essay on the Higashiyama Gomotsu collection, Itakura shows how it served as a formative basis for the later development of Japanese conceptions of Song dynasty Chinese painting.[102] Itakura demonstrates how the third shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358-1408, r. 1368-94), and the sixth shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori 足利義教 (1394-1449, r. 1429-41) used the collection and display of Chinese paintings as an act of self-fashioning, appropriating authority through both religious affiliations with Chan and Zen, and through the emulation of Song imperial collections. [103] The collection of monochrome ink paintings by Chan monk painters supported the Ashikaga Shoguns' patronage and founding of Zen institutions, deploying a visual identity contrasted with the polychrome Buddhist iconography exported to Japan from workshops in Ningbo.[104] The in-depth examination of the varied criteria by which these works were collected provides a powerful corrective for the purported Zen *volkgeist* ascribed to the Japanese people by Okakura, Suzuki, Hisamatsu, and even Brinker and Kanazawa.

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[99] Lippit 2009.
[100] Fraser 2010.
[101] Mitsui Kinen Bijutsukan 2014.
[102] Itakura 2014, 138.
[103] Itakura 2014, 135-6.

Nonetheless, contemporary publications still reveal occasional echoes of Suzuki and Hisamatsu's projection of a contemporary system of Zen aesthetics onto China's historic visual culture. In his 2011 monograph on Ma Yuan that reflects on a long career of research into the painter's oevure, Richard Edwards posits a probable connection to a Chan ideal and Ma's *Lone Fisherman on a Winter River*.[105] Edwards eloquently describes the painting's encapsulation of a single moment, noting the weighting of the skiff towards the fisherman's body, the water rippling from the stern as the bow rises above the waves, and the slight curve of the cast line which has yet to drift back to the boat on the current. Undoubtedly, these visual qualities exemplify a masterful capacity to convey a singular moment of lived experience. However, Edwards ascribes this quality to more than Ma Yuan's painterly accomplishments, equating paintings' capacity to capture the momentary with an idealised Chan aesthetic. Edwards supports this through comparison with Liang Kai's *The Sixth Patriarch Chopping Bamboo* 六祖截竹圖 (fig. 6.1), and a depiction of Master Clam 蜆子和尚圖 attributed to Muxi (fig. 5.7).[106]

This reading of the visual moment in *Fisherman on a Winter River* is not problematic in itself. What is problematic is the presumption that a capacity to visually evoke momentary experience, shared with works depicting Chan exemplars, necessitates a connection with Chan Buddhism. The potential allusion to Chan visual culture in Ma's painting should be distinguished from the distinctive embodiment of Chan hagiographic narratives in figure paintings, and the mediation of those narratives by the inscriptions of senior clerics. The deft evocation of momentary experience was a

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[104] Itakura has authored a separate study with the Nara National Museum, meticulously documenting the role of Ningbo in shaping Japanese Buddhist visual and material culture over a 1300 year period: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009.

[105] Edwards 2011.

[106] Edwards 2011, 36.