

Bodhidharma's speech, marking this as a seminal moment of Chan's first patriarchal transmission in China. The significance of Bodhidharma's transmission of authority to Shengguang is evidenced by the ensuing Chinese Chan lineage, visually manifest in the other six scenes on the painting, derived from the earlier Chinese print. By contrast, the narrative context for the painting attributed to Yan Ciping focuses upon a single interaction occurring over an extended period of time. It assumes the viewer's familiarity with Shengguang's preceding journey to Shaolin to seek out Bodhidharma as a teacher, and the subsequent success of his request to be taken on as a disciple. Instead of conflating Shengguang's earlier violent self-amputation with Bodhidharma's later speech on the conferral of his robe, this painting describes a period of ambiguous length. Shengguang is shown in an extended act of silent endurance, facing a Bodhidharma who is still immersed in his nine-year meditative reclusion. The accumulated snow around Shengguang visually compresses a prolonged period of significant stoicism into a single scene, capturing a period of extended stasis. Nonetheless, the interaction between the painting's subjects' has profound consequences for the genesis of Chan's transmission of lineage authority in China. In both cases, visual narrative is used to collapse protracted periods of time into a single scene. Where textual hagiographies are forced to explicate Chan patriarchs' transmission of authority through the serial exposition of sequential events, visual representations of Bodhidharma and Shengguang's interactions holistically manifest patriarchal authority.

The Rebirth of the Monk Yuanze

Song and Yuan Paintings of the rebirth of the monk Yuanze (active ca. 8th century) incorporated a figure from beyond the formal lineage of patriarchs into the Chan pantheon. (figs. 3.6-3.7).²⁵⁹ All surviving paintings show Yuanze with his steadfast companion, the scholar and secular devotee of Buddhism Li Yuan 李源 (724-823/4), in one of two interactions. In the first Yuanze is an elderly monk on a journey with Li through Shu 蜀 (modern Sichuan). Having taken a route to which Yuanze objected, the pair happen upon a woman pregnant with a child Yuanze declares to be his future

²⁵⁹ For a list of inscriptions by Chan clerics upon paintings of Yuanze, see: Nishigami 1981, 236-7.

self, causing him to lament his imminent death (fig 3.6). In the second type of scene, Yuanze is shown reborn as a young ox-herd, reunited with Li Yuan under the autumn full moon at the Tianzhu monastery 天竺寺 in Hangzhou thirteen years after his death (figs. 3.7). Yuanze had foretold the time and place of this meeting on his deathbed, and Li Yuan had travelled to meet him accordingly. In the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* Yuanze, or Yuanguan 圓觀 as he is known in this version of the narrative, is said not to die at all. Instead, he is ascribed with the supra-normal ability to predict and even choose his future births, as he is “one who can first send [himself] into the womb” 先寄胎者.²⁶⁰ The prevalence of these two modes of visual representation is supported by textual records of no longer extant paintings of Yuanze by Li Tang 李唐 (1066-1150), Zhao Boju 趙伯駒 (1123-73) and Liu Songnian 劉松年 (active 1174-1224).²⁶¹ In both painting themes the interactions of their protagonists subvert the expectation of deference to social hierarchy. In the first image type the aged monk Yuanze is overwhelmed by the vitality of the labouring woman who will be his future mother, and in the second the scholar Li Yuan is respectfully deferential to the cleric reborn as a lowly herd boy.

Though they both illustrate encounters, neither image of Yuanze quite falls under the conventional rubric of a Chan encounter painting. In the scene of Yuanze on his travels, the monk and layman have been together for some time, and the encounter is between the two travelling companions and the woman pregnant with the future Yuanze. There is no rhetorical triumph of a wise cleric over an elite lay interlocutor. Instead the monk experiences a profound realisation of his own imminent mortality, and demonstrates a thaumaturgical capacity for premonition by appointing a time and place to be reunited with his companion in his next incarnation. Paintings depicting Li Yuan’s reunion with the reborn Yuanze are equally ill fitted to the Chan encounter picture genre. Though a Confucian scholar makes up one half of the encounter, his interlocutor is a pubescent drover and not a wizened old pedagogue. In both cases, the interactions between the various pictorial protagonists imbue the scene with unique

²⁶⁰ SGSZ j. 20, in T.2061.50: c7-840, a24.

²⁶¹ Textual records of these works are discussed in: Nishigami 1981, 236. A probable Ming or Qing dynasty copy of the Liu Songnian painting is in the collection of the British Museum: British Museum, *Three Lives, in the Style of Liu Songnian*, 1936,1009,0.15.

meaning, rather than performatively rendering an easily recognisable type of encounter with an expected dynamic.

The narrative of Yuanze's rebirth was attractive to thirteenth and fourteenth century Chan clerics because of its correlation with the hagiography of Chan's fifth Chinese patriarch, Hongren 弘忍 (601-674).²⁶² Like Yuanze, Hongren's hagiography also spans his death and rebirth. In Hongren's previous life as an elderly woodcutter, the fourth patriarch Dayi Daoxin 大醫道信 (580-651) rejected his appeal to be taken on as a student. Though Daoxin told the woodcutter he was too old to achieve liberation in this lifetime, Hongren was reunited with the fourth patriarch in his next incarnation when still a young boy, and proved himself a child prodigy in Chan practice.²⁶³ The precocious fifth patriarch appears in the fourth scene of the Kōzanji painting of the first six patriarchs on Chinese soil, labelled: "The fifth patriarch, who achieved enlightenment and became a monk when seven years old 第五祖, 年七歲悟道出家時" (fig. 3.2). Minoru Nishigami 西上実 has documented the correlations between ninth and tenth century versions of the Yuanze narrative, under the name of Yuanguan, and changes to Hongren's hagiography that first appear in the eleventh century *Anecdotes from the Groves* [of Chan] (*Linjian Lu* 林間錄), compiled by Huifan Huihong 覺範慧洪 (1071-1128).²⁶⁴

While paintings of Yuanze were popular subjects for commentary in *encomia* by Chan clerics, as Yuanze was not part of a Chan lineage he was not included in their hagiographic records. However, versions of Yuanze's biography are known to have circulated in at least four extant compendia, dating from 868 to ca. 1101 CE. Three of these were compiled by secular scholars, and one by a monk. The earliest extant versions of the Yuanze narrative were recorded under the name of Monk Yuanguan 圓觀和尚. The Yuanguan narrative is first recorded in Yuan Jiao's 袁郊 (active 9th century) collection of Buddhist miracle tales, *Ballads of the Sweet Pool* (*Ganze Yao*

²⁶² For a discussion of these adaptations, see: Nishigami 1981, 235.

²⁶³ Depictions of Hongren's life as a woodcutter, and his rebirth as the patriarch see: Shimizu 2007d; Shimizu 1980, 20-1.

²⁶⁴ Nishigami 1981, 235. Huihong's inventiveness in the composition and compilation of the *Linjian Lu*, using it to combine both personal experience and excerpts from Chan history is discussed at length in: Keyworth 2001.

甘澤謠), dated 868, and was later incorporated into Li Fang's 李昉 (925–996) vast compendia, *Expansive Record of the Taiping* [Era] (*Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記), dated 978.²⁶⁵ Approximately a decade later the monk Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001) included this same narrative in his state sponsored hagiographic compendia *Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Song* (*Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳), preface dated 988.²⁶⁶ The earliest extant version of the narrative under the name of Yuanze is preserved in the collected writings of Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), *The Complete Record of Dongpo* (*Dongpo Quanji* 東坡全集). Of the extant iterations of this narrative, Su Shi's *Biography of the Monk Yuanze* 僧圓澤傳 is closest in date to the paintings discussed in this thesis, derived from Su Jiao's 蘇嶠 1179 compilation of Su Shi's collected writings.²⁶⁷ With the exception of the *Song Gaosengzhuan* version, these biographies are documented by Nishigami.²⁶⁸ The *Dongpo Quanji* is also the only version to use the same name for the monastic protagonist as is recorded in Chan abbots' list of *encomia* on Buddhas and patriarchs.²⁶⁹

The Yuanguan versions of this narrative open by describing the monk's monastic life and his clerical and cultural competencies. The texts note that beside his studies of Sanskrit he also had a thorough understanding of the phonological rules of poetic composition.²⁷⁰ Though Su Shi's account is nominally a biography of the monk Yuanze, the layman Li Yuan plays the central role. Where earlier narratives open with a focus on Yuanguan, Su Shi's *Biography of Yuanze* begins with a laudatory description of Li Yuan, praising Li's piety to both the Buddha and his father in his expression of mourning after his father's passing.²⁷¹ By embellishing the Buddhist

²⁶⁵ GZY, j. 1, 13-15; TPGJ, j. 387, 5-7.

²⁶⁶ SGSZ j. 20, in T.2061.50: 839, c7-840, b3.

²⁶⁷ DPQJ j.39, 10-11.

²⁶⁸ With the exception of the *Song Gaosengzhuan* version, these biographies are documented in: Nishigami 1981, 235-6.

²⁶⁹ For a survey of verses composed by Chan clerics to accompany images of Yuanze, as both *encomia* and colophons, see: Nishigami 1981, 236-7. A full translation of Su Shi's *Biography of the Monk Yuanze* has been provided in appendix 3.1.

²⁷⁰ TPGJ, j.387, 5; GZY j.1, 13; SGSZ j.20, in T.2061.50: 839, c8.

²⁷¹ In Su's account the, after his father's death "Stricken with grief [Li Yuan] made a personal vow to abstain from taking office, marriage, and the eating of meat, living in the monastery for over fifty years." 悲憤自誓，不仕不娶不食肉，居寺中五十餘年。 DPQJ j.39, 10-11. In the *Guanzeyao* and *Taiping Guangji* versions of the Yuanguan narrative, Li Yuan expresses his filial piety after his father's death through Confucian traditions of abstinence

piety of Li Yuan's conduct, Su Shi's version of this narrative emphasises Li's exemplary practice of lay Buddhism, rather than his role in the narrative as Yuanze's lay interlocutor.

While the opening of Su Shi's text places greater emphasis on Li Yuan rather than his monastic companion, the verses sung by the reborn monk that examine the cleric's relationship to the scholar are repeated verbatim in all four versions of the narrative. The first verse celebrates Li Yuan's arrival, the reborn Yuanze stating that he is: "Moved that a dear one has come to visit from afar 慚愧情人遠相訪". In the second verse the reborn Yuanze presents a poetic image of the cycle of death and rebirth explicitly related to Li's circumstances, as "a layman whose *karma* is not yet exhausted 然俗緣未盡".²⁷² Compared with textual versions of the narrative that either stress the importance of Li Yuan, or examine the relationship as a partnership of equals, paintings of Yuanze, and *encomia* by Chan clerics on these paintings stress the agency of Yuanze over his secular companion. These images and verses enhance Yuanze's gravity as a religious exemplar, embellishing the narrative through iconographic associations with symbols from Chan visual culture, and locating these events upon scrolls that show serialised images of Chan exemplars.

Yuanze's Meeting the Pregnant Woman

The following discussion addresses two of the few surviving extant paintings of Yuanze from the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties: one work in ink and colours on silk showing Yuanze and Li Yuan's encounter with the pregnant woman (figs. 3.6), and one in ink on silk showing the reunion of Li Yuan and the reborn Yuanze (fig 3.7). A hanging scroll in ink on silk in the collection of the Honpōji 本法寺 in Kyoto, attributed to the Yuan artist Zhang Fangru 張芳汝, also shows the reunion scene. However, given the thorough treatment of this painting attribution and provenance in

from grain and wearing coarse garments: "[Li Yuan] gave up grain and wore plain clothing, taking up residence in the Huilin monastery, donating all his family property to the monastery." 乃脫粟布衣，止於惠林寺，悉將家業為寺。TPGJ, j.387, 5, GZY, j.1, 13. The *Song Biographies of Eminent Monk* does not comment on Li Yuan's expression of mourning: T.2061.50: 839, c08.

²⁷² Full translations and transcriptions of the verses as are included in in appendix 3.1, which provides a full the translation of Su Shi's *Biography of the Monk Yuanze*: DPQJ j.39, 11.

Nishigami's earlier scholarship, and the illegibility of detail in the available image of Zhang's painting, this chapter focuses on two works not mentioned in Nishigami's essay.²⁷³

The only extant rendition of Yuanze and Li Yuan's encounter with the pregnant woman is preserved on a scroll of eight narrative scenes of Chan figures. Entitled *Eight Eminent Monks* 八高僧圖, this painting is signed by Liang Kai 梁楷 (active late 12th-early 13th century), and currently in the collection of the Shanghai Museum. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, I approach this painting as a probable late thirteenth or fourteenth century work in the style of Liang Kai, rather than an original from Liang's own hand.²⁷⁴ Alongside verbatim reproduction of texts in accompanying inscriptions that post-date Liang's career, technical aspects of the painting do not match the standard of stable attributions, such as Liang's *Śākyamuni Emerging from the Mountains* 釋迦出山圖 (fig. 2.1a). To take a single example, in the first scene, which shows Bodhidharma and Shenguang, the red underlining of the hem on Bodhidharma's robe goes beyond the black ink outline of the lower hem of the figure's garments (fig. 3.11). Such a technical oversight implies either a slip of a copyist's hand, or a deficit in the painter's technical ability incompatible with the virtuoso depiction of drapery in Liang's *Śākyamuni*. A fuller discussion of the distinctive reception of this painting in contemporary Chinese, Japanese, and Western language scholarship, and the implications of these different patterns of reception is offered in chapter six.²⁷⁵

Executed in ink and colours on silk, *Eight Eminent Monks* chooses a markedly distinct style and materiality from the monochrome ink painting recurrently used in thirteenth-fourteenth century Chan visual narratives of interaction (figs. 3.1, 3.3-3.6). *Eight Eminent Monks* deploys a descriptive representational mode known as the meticulous brush (*gongbi* 工筆) associated with court painting, contrasting sharply with the abbreviated and cursive style of the ink painting in the depiction of Yuanze's reunion with Li Yuan discussed below (fig. 3.7). In the Yuanze scene of *Eight Eminent*

²⁷³ Nishigami 1981, 238-9.

²⁷⁴ For arguments supporting the identification of this work as a product from the early portion of Liang Kai's career, see: Shan and Shan 2004, 96; Fraser 2010, 217.

²⁷⁵ Pages 239-247.

Monks, the figures are carefully outlined in black ink, and lent volume and body by the diffuse washes of coloured pigment across their garments and skin (fig. 3.6b). Thin vertical lines describe the grasses growing at the waters edge, while dry, diagonal movements of the brush are combined with saturated dots of ink to add texture to the riverbank. Liang's signature appears in the lower left hand corner of the painting, hidden within the dark mass of the riverbank to the left of the jetty. The thin ripples spreading out from the pregnant woman's jar show the specificity of the visual moment, occurring at the exact point when her gaze meets Yuanze. The meticulous development of a full landscape context, and the detail of the figures' postures and facial expressions situates this interaction in defined spatial and chronological context. Within this specific time and place, the artist juxtaposes the attitudes and bodily forms of the figures to articulate Yuanze's diminution in the face of the woman pregnant with his future self.

Progressing from right to left, the scene opens with Yuanze's reaction to events, sitting huddled under the cover upon his boat in the lower right corner of the scroll. Only his head is visible as his body is obscured from view by the riverbank. The prominent cranium of his shaven head, his deep eye sockets, his sunken cheeks, and the loose folds of skin around his jaw lend the old monk a morbid, skeletal quality. Li Yuan sits beside him, playing only a supporting role in this iteration of events. His back to the viewer, Li's head follows Yuanze's stare, directing the viewer's gaze to the pregnant woman who occupies the left hand side of the composition. She dominates the opposite bank. The sweeping curve of her sturdy shoulders atop an imposing figure mark her as a picture of health and vigour. Her stout physique is emphasised by contrast with the figure behind her, who stoops under the weight of her load and is shorter by a head than the pregnant woman at the water's edge. The bulge of her womb is visible in the short curved line of her belly, above the straight folds of the lower portion of her shirt. This subtle reference to her expectant state is underscored by her full breasts. Two heavy jars stand on the ground next to her, while she draws a third up from the water. The pregnant woman's eyes are locked in a downward diagonal stare toward Yuanze's forlorn face. This exchange of gazes underscores the vitality of Yuanze's future mother, directly contrasting her robustness with the frailty of his current self. Yuanze appears to recede from view beyond the

edge of the image, a withered, marginal figure distressed by the realisation of his impending death.

The interaction between Yuanze and the pregnant woman inverts the conventional hierarchy of authority. The confident presence of this labouring pregnant woman relegates both the elderly cleric and his scholar associate to the margins of the pictorial encounter. Her posture and facial expressions are central to the visual narrative. By contrast, in textual prototypes for this narrative the pregnant woman has no agency. She is identified simply as a member of the Wang clan, and serves only as a vehicle for Yuanze's rebirth. In her encounter with Yuanze there are no descriptions of her imposing presence, she is simply "a woman in brocade trousers carrying jars to fetch water 婦人錦襠負罌而汲者".²⁷⁶ In textual versions of the encounter she is simply a foil for Yuanze to demonstrate a capacity for prophecy in the exposition of his future birth to Li Yuan. By contrast, the painting is centred entirely upon her exchange of gazes with Yuanze, articulating the interaction between these two characters. Li Yuan appears only in the passive role of an observer of the interaction between the monk and woman around which the visual narrative is centred. This transfer of agency from one figure to another addresses the central theme of life, death and rebirth explored in the Yuanze narrative, in a dramatic rendition of grief experienced when confronted directly with the inescapability of one's mortality. The pregnant woman thus becomes a potent symbol of the vital future of rebirth.

As with the other seven scenes in *Eight Eminent Monks*, the painting of Yuanze and the pregnant woman is followed by a concise prose narrative in semi-cursive script, written within a faintly ruled grid on a separate panel of silk. This brief calligraphic rendition of Yuanze's hagiography contextualises the pictorial action in relation to the eventual reunion of Yuanze and Li Yuan, reading as follows:

Li Yuan was travelling to Mount [E] Mei with Master Yuanze. When their boat was passing through the Nanpu they saw a woman in embroidered brocade trousers carrying jars to fetch water. Ze wept, saying: "I am the unborn child in this woman, there is no avoiding it. Eighteen years from now,

²⁷⁶ DPQJ j.39, 10-11.

on the fifteenth day of the eighth month you will meet a boy at Mount Tianzhu [temple] in Hangzhou.” When he finished speaking he died.

On the allotted date [Li] Yuan went to Mount Tianzhu, and met with a herd-boy, who said: “Li Yuan is a true believer!” Yuan replied: “It’s the spitting image of Yuanze!” The herd boy then sang: “An old soul [sits] atop Three Lives Rocks etc etc...”, When the song came to an end, he rolled up his sleeves and left.

李源與圓澤法師游眉山，舟次南浦，見一女子錦襜花『？』負罌而汲。澤泣曰：『當託孕於此女，避之不可得。後十八年八月十五日當會君子杭州天竺山中。』言畢而卒。

源如期往天竺山見一牧牛兒，云：“李源真信人也”。源即應聲云：“圓澤正恙！”牧兒遂歌曰：『三生石上舊精魂，云云』。歌罷拂袖而去。

This concise rendition of events is clearly derivative of earlier versions of the narrative, though it does not directly quote any extant text I have encountered in the course of my research. The inscribed summary abbreviates and omits key events found in earlier versions, making no mention of the intimate association between Yuanze and Li Yuan prior to their journey, and quoting only the first line of the first of ox-herd Yuanze’s two verses. Such a terse rendition of the two encounters does not afford Li Yuan the central position he holds in the fuller textual iterations of the narrative, instead focusing upon the miraculous prediction of Yuanze’s rebirth and the fruition of this prophecy. There is also an inconsistency with earlier versions, dating Li Yuan and Yuanze’s reunion to eighteen years after the monk’s death rather than thirteen. This concise textual narrative provides only a perfunctory context for the subject matter of the preceding imagery, as the anonymous inscriber refrains from commentary in favour of a straightforward account of a series of events.

By contrast inscriptions upon paintings of this subject by senior Chan clerics used verse to comment upon the emotional and symbolic resonances of the pictorial

action.²⁷⁷ A poem of this kind preserved in the collected colophons of Qiaoyin Wuyi's discourse record reads as follows:

Rowing past brocade in the fine spring weather, seen through the boat
awning's window in the night rain,
When there is a single smile under the rush eaves, how far off is Tianzhu!
Affectionately taking leave at the three lives rock, the seed of grief [is sown]
in this meeting,
The painted image opens with the slap of waves on the oars in the mist,
With the airs of horse and ox, enraged at the far off Qutang gorge!²⁷⁸

濯錦春晴，篷窓夜雨，
茅簷一笑時，竺天在何許！
三生愛別離，一種冤憎遇，
拍波烟棹畫圖開，
馬牛風遠瞿塘怒！

Though we cannot be absolutely certain of the content in the painting to which this poem was added, the penultimate line “The painted image opens with the slap of waves on the oars in the mist,” clarifies that a scene of a boat featured at the beginning of the scroll. Wuyi's verse uses reference to the narrative sequence to evoke the emotional cadence of the intimate friendship between Li Yuan and Yuanze. Their separation and reunion across different incarnations address an idiosyncratic model of a clerical and lay relationship within the Buddhist cycle of death and rebirth. This eloquent verse shows a far greater degree of conceptual engagement with the subject matter of the painting than the in the prose inscription upon *Eight Eminent Monks*. Wuyi's colophon provides commentary, while the anonymous inscriber of *Eight Eminent Monks* offers only context.

²⁷⁷ Nishigami's discussion of the inscriptions made by Chan paintings of the depictions of Yuanze focuses solely on the evidence they give for the possible renditions of this subject, showing either the encounter with the pregnant woman, or the reunion at Tianzhu. The following discussion augments this summary with a close reading of the relationship between inscribed verse and other extant textual and visual versions of the narrative: Nishigami 1981, 236-7.

²⁷⁸ QYWYCSYL, j.2 in: X.1385.70: 308, a19.

The opening couplet references the visual nature of Yuanze's realisation of his impending mortality, seen through the window under the awning of the boat also depicted in *Eight Eminent Monks*. By using two contrasting scenes to describe a single encounter, Wuyi uses season and weather to stress the juxtaposition of the pregnant woman's vitality with Yuanze's imminent demise. The clear weather of spring signifies a new beginning, contrasted with the melancholy finality of the night rain. The simultaneous occurrence of clear daytime skies and nocturnal rain takes poetic license with the scene. Wuyi uses time and weather to signify the pregnant woman and Yuanze's contrasting subjective experience of the world, rather than describe a purportedly objective context for their meeting. The second line references both Yuanze's prophecies: that he would reveal himself to Li Yuan in the newborn infant's smile, and that thirteen years hence they would be reunited at the Tianzhu monastery. The subsequent line mourns the sadness of loss in the cycle of death and rebirth, and the bittersweet nature of these two protagonists' chance for a reunion. Unlike the elevated equanimity attributed to the Chan patriarchs and the historical Buddha, these two protagonists experience the emotions of loss and grief brought on by the profound attachment of their friendship.²⁷⁹

Wuyi's colophon relates Yuanze and Li Yuan's encounter with the pregnant woman to the popular literati trope of partings and farewells between scholars seen in painting and poetry. His poetic allusion to Li Yuan's emotional experience links this accessible narrative trope to the reborn Yuanze's verse on *karmic* causality, and to the demonstration of Buddhism's efficacy in the realisation of the monk's prophecy. In the final couplet Wuyi prompts a synesthetic experience of the visual narrative in the viewer by describing the sound of the scene that appears at the beginning of the painting. He closes with an image of finality appropriated from the last line of the reborn Yuanze's verse to Li Yuan, comparing a journey through the Qutan gorge to the cycle of death and rebirth. However, this is not a simple exposition of a narrative context for the adjacent image, as in the prose inscription that accompanies the *Eight*

²⁷⁹ Chan encounter paintings more frequently feature Chan master's demonstrating elevated equanimity in their meetings with an elite official, see for example the theme of 'Yaoshan Weiyuan Meeting Li Ao', discussed in chapter five through an example inscribed by Yanxi Guangwen, pages 185-95.

Eminent Monks Yuanze scene. Wuyi's verse is a commentary, which embellishes the reborn Yuanze's verse by equating the lay and clerical protagonists to a symbolic pairing of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽. This evocation of a cosmological context for the inversion of social norms is central to the depiction of Yuanze reunited with Li Yuan discussed below.

Li Yuan Reunited with the Reborn Yuanze

Like *Eight Eminent Monks*' depiction of the aged Yuanze's meeting with his future mother, scenes showing the reborn Yuanze's reunion with Li Yuan also subvert the viewers' expectation of the relative authority of their pictorial protagonists. The depiction of the venerable scholar Li Yuan reverently greeting Yuanze's new incarnation as a lowly ox-herd is exemplified in the following discussion by an ink painting now in a private collection (fig. 3.7). This monochrome work is signed "Muxi 牧溪", with a date corresponding to 1269. The signature exactly replicates the text of another signature, written in a similar hand, found on a painting of a tiger in the collection of the Daitokuji monastery 大徳寺 in Kyoto (fig. 3.12). While the Daitokuji tiger has none of Muxi's seals, it is impressed with the *Tensan* 天山 collectors seal of the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358-1408, r. 1368-94). If the *Tensan* seal is authentic, it gives the work a lengthy provenance, associating it with a powerful collector who had access to a large corpus of artworks that had been brought back to Japan by Buddhist monks who travelled to China. This group of monks included Enni Benin, who like Muxi was a disciple of Wuzhun Shifan. The Yuanze painting also has an impressive provenance, documented as part of the Edo period collection of the Tokugawa family, though not as far reaching as that indicated by the *Tensan* seal on the Daitokuji tiger.²⁸⁰

The Yuanze painting is impressed with two seals, one on the same space as the signature, and a second in the upper left. There is consensus that the seal either beneath or above the signature reads "Muxi". However, while Richard Barnhart states

²⁸⁰ Barnhart 2008 [unpaginated].

that the seal in the upper left is illegible, the painting's catalogue entry in the 1996 Gotoh Museum 五島美術館 catalogue, *Mokkei: Shōkei no Suibokuga* 牧谿：憧憬の水墨画, also reads this second seal as “Muxi 牧谿”.²⁸¹ Regardless of whether there are one or two impressions of a Muxi seal, it is odd that only one of Muxi's monikers would be repeated on a single work, in both the signature and the seal impressions. In the archetypal example of Muxi's oeuvre, his triptych of Guanyin, a crane, and gibbons in the collection of the Daitokuji, his signature uses the name Fachang 法常, while the seal impressions on these paintings use the name Muxi (figs. 1.2-1.4). Given Muxi's propensity to combine his monikers Muxi and Fachang seen on this more stable attribution, and the exact replication of the signature on a separate work, the signature and seals on the Yuanze painting are insufficient evidence for a certain attribution to Muxi.²⁸² Nonetheless, there is consensus among published assessment of the painting that it is an original southern Song work, representative of the artistic ideal that Muxi came to embody in Japanese collections.

Regardless of its associations with the cultural ideals Muxi came to embody in Japan, the painting has numerous stylistic affiliations with contemporaneous trends in Chan ink paintings from late thirteenth and early fourteenth century China.²⁸³ The animated rapid strokes of the overhanging foliage resemble those in the anonymous *Śākyamuni Emerging from the Mountains* inscribed by Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263-1323) (fig. 2.4a). Moreover, the deft contrast between the fine line of the figures and the diffuse textures of the buffalo and rocks resembles the balancing of figures and their environment seen in *Pei Xiu Meeting with Huangbo* 黃檗裴休問答圖, attributed to Li Yaofu 李堯夫 (active late 13th century) (fig. 3.5), and in the *Meeting between Yaoshan and Li Ao*, formerly attributed to both Zhiweng Ruoqing 直翁若敬 (active late 12th-early 13th century) and later to Muxi, inscribed by Yanxi Guangwen 偃溪廣聞 (1189-1263) (fig. 5.1).²⁸⁴ The potential for embellishment in the Yuanze narrative,

²⁸¹ Gotō Bijutsukan 1996, 23, Barnhart 2008.

²⁸² For further discussions of the seals and signature on the Muxi Guanyin triptych see: Gotō Bijutsukan 1996, 11.

²⁸³ For discussions of the historic receptions of Muxi in Japanese and Chinese collections and connoisseurship, see: Hiromitsu 1996; Yūji 1996.

²⁸⁴ The appropriation of authority from Yaoshan's interaction with Li Ao in Yanxi Guangwen's inscribed *encomium* on *Meeting between Yaoshan and Li Ao* 藥山李翱問道圖 is

and these other images of interactions, prompted artists to incorporate details of landscape and setting that enhance the complexity of the actions upon the pictorial surface.

The painting of Yuanze's reunion with Li Yuan attributed to Muxi departs from textual iterations of the narrative in its distinctive emphasis on the balance of power in the encounter. The standing scholar makes a deferential bow of his head, his eyes staring down. Though Li's body is turned slightly away from the viewer, his left sleeve is raised to the height of his chest rather than resting at his waist. The raised hands are joined in a gesture of greeting that, though not accompanied by the requisite deep bow, matches the position of the hands in the greeting between elite men seen in Song court paintings of the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing* 孝經) (fig. 3.13).²⁸⁵ This gesture also reflects the deference expected of a Chan novice to their teacher. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter in relation to *Xuefeng Receiving his Student Xuansha*, Chan monastic regulations included strict injunctions that a monk should join their hands together adjacent to the chest when expressing a greeting. Li Yuan's respectful attitude to the ox-herd in the painting fits neither Buddhist nor Confucian conventions for the expression of respect, making it a serious subversion of both monastic and secular norms. By focusing on the significance of a single moment against the backdrop of an implied narrative context, the anonymous painter stresses the inversion of social hierarchy in this interaction.

As exemplified by the earlier discussion of the anonymous painting of Xuefeng and Xuansha, subversion of convention through gesture was a popular trope in Chan visual culture of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century (fig. 3.1). However, Li Yuan's posture is measured and dignified, while Xuansha's stance is erratic and unbalanced. Li's stance appropriates conventions for revered greeting for a meeting with a lowly herdboy. Its subversiveness lies in the inappropriate occasion for the gestures, rather than a disregard for the conventions of the gestures itself. Further to

discussed in chapter five, pages 189-99. A similar dynamic is also seen in the exchange between Bai Juyi and Niaoke Daolin, seen in scene three of *Eight Eminent Monks*. The associated narrative text is translated in the notes to fig. 6.6d.

²⁸⁵ For a discussion of this gesture as a paradigm of polite greeting in the *Classic of Filial Piety*, see: Barnhart 1993, 105-8. For a later version of this painting from the Southern Song court, see: Liu 2010.

his use of a respectful form of greeting seen in didactic Confucian imagery, the artist's rendition of Li Yuan has a clear prototype in paintings of Śākyamuni Emerging from the Mountains (figs. 2.1-8). With his joined hands, wind blown robe, and bearded face, Li appears both respectful, and introspective. The artist has cast Li Yuan's reunion with Yuanze as an awe inspiring, liminal encounter, occurring across the boundaries of life and death.

The religious symbolism of the interaction is further enriched in the depiction of Yuanze as a herd boy riding an ox.²⁸⁶ This image alludes to representations of the ox-herder as a sanctified subject in Chan paintings of the ten-stage ox-herding Chan parable. Produced in Song and Yuan circles as a serial visual metaphor for the stages in the realisation of awakening, these paintings used the ox to represent the mind of the Chan practitioner.²⁸⁷ The mind, like the ox, must be first located then tamed. Finally, both man and ox disappear, signifying a realisation of the unreality of the self. The image of Yuanze atop the ox corresponds to the sixth image in the series 'returning home on the back of the ox 騎牛歸家'. Though no examples of this image survive from thirteenth and fourteenth century China, the iconographic parallel can be seen in a comparison of the painting of Yuanze attributed to Muxi with a Japanese rendition of the theme, formerly attributed to Tenshō Shūbun 天章周文 (active ca. 1423–60) (fig. 3.14). This later Japanese work is believed to be based on a Chinese prototype by Kuo'an Shiyuan 廓庵師遠 (active ca. 1150).²⁸⁸ In this sixth stage the man has mastered his cognitions, but has yet to realise the extinction of ego. Such an allegory corresponds succinctly with the verbal exchange between Li Yuan and Yuanze. Su Shi's account of the reunion reads as follows:

²⁸⁶ The relationship of this work to the broader genre of ox paintings in the Southern Song is addressed in: Jang 1992, 84.

²⁸⁷ Nishigami notes several other examples of Chan narratives which featured oxen recorded in both textual records and in extant paintings: Hanshan's 寒山 (8th century) pointing out the traces of the ox to Zhaozhou 趙州 (778-897); Zheng Huangniu 政黃牛 (Wei Zheng's 惟正) (986-1049) travelling to meet with Hangzhou magistrate Jiang Tang 蔣堂 upon a yellow ox; and the parable of patriarch Linji's 臨濟 (767-866) meeting with an old woman driving an ox through a field. While these other examples are *gong'an* centred on the ideal of reclusion, the Yuanze narrative takes the identity of the oxen and its rider as its central theme: Nishigami 1981, 239.

²⁸⁸ For a discussion of Tenshō's Shūbun's ox herding paintings, see: Brinker and Kanazawa 1996, 171-3 & 234. A modern re-printing of an ostensibly 12th century version of the ten ox-herding pictures is discussed in: Jang 1992, 70-83.

Thirteen years later he [Li Yuan] travelled through Wu [modern Jiangsu] for the appointed meeting. Coming to the appointed place, he heard a young ox-herd by the bank of the Gehong river, tapping the oxen's horns and singing to him:

Upon the Three Lives Rock sits an old soul,
Enjoying the full moon singing in the wind, there's no need for
discussion,
Moved that a dear one has come to visit from afar,
Though this body is strange, its nature is eternal!

[Yuan] called out: "Are you well Mr Ze?" He replied: "Mr Li is a man of true belief! If a layman's *karma* is not exhausted, be careful not to become too close. Only through ceaseless, diligent cultivation can such a reunion occur".

There followed another verse:

Matters before and after this body are unclear,
Desiring to speak of *karmic* causality, yet fearing heartbreak,
Searching throughout the mountains and rivers of Wu and Yue,
Returning back on that misty boat into the Qutan [gorge].

Thereafter he left, and it was not known what became of him.²⁸⁹

後十三年自洛適吳，赴其約，至所約，聞葛洪川畔有牧童扣牛角而歌之。曰：「三生石上舊精魂，賞月吟風不要論。慚愧情人遠相訪，此身雖異性長存。」呼問：「澤公健否？」答曰：「李公真信士！然俗緣未盡，慎勿相近。惟勤修不墮，乃復相見。」又歌曰：「身前身後事茫茫，欲話因緣恐斷腸。吳越山川尋已遍，卻回煙棹上瞿塘。」遂去，不知所之。

²⁸⁹ DPQJ, j.39, 11. Full translation in appendix 3.1.

The first verse celebrates Li Yuan's "coming to visit from afar", alluding to Yuanze's earlier deathbed prophecy that they would be reunited in his next life. The second verse presents a poetic interpretation of the cycle of death and rebirth, explicitly related to Li's circumstances as "a layman whose *karma* is not yet exhausted". The reborn Yuanze's verse comments on his old friend's diligent cultivation, but notes that he has yet to escape the accumulation of *karma* based on a sense of self. The reborn Yuanze's iconographic correlation with the sixth stage of the ox herding parable, and the content of the verse Yuanze sings in the associated textual narrative, communicate a common teaching on Yuanze's lay associate. Li Yuan's spiritual accomplishments as a secular adherent to Buddhism are expressed through his interaction with Yuanze. The exceptional quality of this interaction is that Yuanze does not communicate this teaching from the body of an old monk, but in the youthful guise of a wandering herd boy.

The visual presentation of Li Yuan's meeting with Yuanze upon a buffalo would have been readily accessible to secular viewers, resembling popular genre paintings of water buffalo and herd boys. These works created a pastoral aesthetic popular in court paintings of the Southern Song, offering visual escapism from the pressures of official service, and alluding to an idealised reclusion from government without actually promoting withdrawal.²⁹⁰ Moreover, the Yuanze reborn painting articulates a geographic context with resonances among Southern Song and Yuan scholars. The rock dominating the left of the composition illustrates the Three Lives Rock mentioned in the reborn Yuanze's first poem. This site creates a geographic continuity between the historic encounter from the late Tang, and the subsequent generations of clergy and scholars who visited and inscribed the rock (fig. 3.15).²⁹¹

The iconographic cross over between secular paintings of oxen and Chan images of the ox-herding parable made the Yuanze theme more aesthetically appealing to

²⁹⁰ Jang 1992, 66.

²⁹¹ For a selected list of prominent inscribers upon the Sansheng rock dating back to the Northern Song, noting the compendia in which their inscriptions are preserved, see: Nishigami 1981, 236. The rock is still venerated today, located near the Lower Tianzhu monastery 下天竺寺, now known as Fajing Monastery 法鏡寺.

secular audiences. However, the representation of human figures in secular pastoral scenes communicated a dramatically different message to the viewer than Chan paintings of the ten ox herding parables. The former are part of a pastoral aesthetic into which the viewer may temporarily withdraw, while the latter are a visual allegory of exemplary spiritual conduct. In a hanging scroll attributed to Yan Ciping, formerly in the collection of the Ashikaga Shogun and currently housed in the Sen-oku Hakuko kan 泉屋博古館, two herd boys sit beneath the autumnal bows of deciduous trees, one picking the lice out his companions hair (fig. 3.16).²⁹² To the lower right, a mother cow and young calf lie just beneath the two human figures, the mother licking the hide of her young to clean it. The painting of Yuanze elevates the ignoble herdboy into an unlikely paradigm of spiritual authority. Contrastingly the aestheticised pastoralism of this Southern Song genre painting debases the humanity of its subjects through a visual equivalence to their bovine charges. The zoomorphic representation of the herdboys is not necessarily representative of the entire genre of Southern Song ox-herding paintings. However, the distinction between this debasement of the herd boys and Yuanze's elevation in the painting attributed to Muxi is indicative of the distinctive qualities figure paintings imbued in Yuanze as part of the Chan pantheon.

In the painted scene of the reborn Yuanze and Li Yuan, the full moon of autumn under which the reunion had been foretold to take place is represented by a circle of reserve white in the upper centre of the composition. Further to clarifying the time of the pictorial action, the image of the moon provides a cosmological context suitable to this inversion of conventional relationships of authority. As the moon is a symbol of negative *yin* energy, in contrast to the normally dominant positive *yang* of the sun, the pictorial evocation of an environment saturated with moonlight provides a cosmological mandate for this inversion of social norms. The full moon of autumn, under which Yuanze foretold his reunion with Li Yuan, is the largest of the year. Consequentially, Yuanze allotted the annual peak of *yin* energy as the time for his reunion with Li Yuan, allowing for the subversion of the normal predominance of *yang*.

²⁹² The painting is accompanied by an authentication slip, attributed to the Japanese painter Sōami 相阿弥 (d. 1525), identifying the artist as Yan Ciping: Mitsui Kinen Bijutsukan 2014, 160.

In Su Shi's account the only mention of the moon is in one of Yuanze's lines of verse: "Enjoying the full moon singing in the wind, there's no need for discussion". The scene of the reunion in the *Expansive Record of the Taiping [Era]*, *Ballads of the Sweet Pool*, and *Great Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* all explicitly locate the scene at night, mentioning the bright moonlight. These earlier accounts also describe the bamboo pole visible in the reborn Yuanguan's hand in the work attributed to Muxi. The common account from the *Expansive Record of the Taiping [Era]* and *Ballads of the Sweet Pool* reads as follows:

Twelve years later, in the autumnal eighth month he went directly to Yuhang, at the allotted time by the Tianzhu monastery. As the rain from the mountains was beginning to clear, and the moonlight filled the creek, [Yuanguan] was nowhere to be found. Suddenly [Li Yuan] heard an ox-herd singing and keeping time with a bamboo pole, coming along the bank of the Gehong river. Tapping the horns, with his hair in twin topknots, and dressed in a short tunic, the boy suddenly stopped in front of the monastery. It was [Yuan]guan!²⁹³

後十二年秋八月直指餘杭赴其所約時天竺寺。山雨初晴，月色滿川，無處尋訪。忽聞葛洪川畔有牧豎歌竹枝詞者乘牛，叩角雙髻，短衣俄至寺前乃觀也。

While *Expansive Record of the Taiping [Era]* and *Ballads of the Sweet Pool* mention moonlight in the elaborate scene for Li Yuan's reunion with his old companion, it is one detail among many in a rich description of the setting. In the painting attributed to Muxi the moon is given far greater prominence than in written descriptions of the scene. The artist has emphasised this feature by placing it at the centre of the image, directly above the ox-herd to place the ascendancy of *yin* energy at the centre of the pictorial narrative. Like the painter, Chan clerics' *encomia* on paintings of this subject also give great prominence to the lunar presence within the scene, and the

²⁹³ The only variation between the *Guanze Yao* and the *Taiping Guangji*'s accounts of this reunion are in the use of Yuanguan's full name in the *Taiping Guangji*. The *Guanze Yao* simply refers to him as Guan: TPGJ, j. 387, 7; GZY, j.1 15.

consequential associations of *yin* energy. An *encomium* accompanying a now lost painting of Yuanze reunited with Li Yuan preserved in the discourse record of Qiaoyin Wuyi, who also wrote the colophon for a painting of Yuanze discussed above. Wuyi's second verse reads as follows:

Picture of Tapping Horns

In autumn shadows [*yin*] by Tianzhu [monastery], [under] the moonlit *feilai* [peak],²⁹⁴

A singular, playful spirit, finds death and birth hard to abandon.

Upon the oxen's back in mid reply he taps the horns and sings,

The lingering sound travels far off, beneath the aged pines.²⁹⁵

扣角圖

天竺秋陰，飛來月夜，

一等弄精魂，死生難放捨，

牛背聲中扣角歌，

餘音遠寄長松下。

Wuyi's verse opens with an explicit allusion to the *yin* energy prevalent under the full moon of autumn. This frames his subsequent poetic evocation of the verse sung by the reborn Yuanze in the same *yin* permeated context seen in the painting attributed to Muxi, suited to the subversion of conventional hierarchies. Unlike Su's account of the meeting, the entire focus of Wuyi's verse is on the actions and qualities of the reborn Yuanze. Though Li Yuan almost certainly featured in the painting, his presence is only implied in the verse through the narrative context of the interaction. Mention of the moonlit scene is also found in a colophon for a painting of Yuanze, by the Chan abbot Xisou Xiaotan 希叟紹曇 (d. 1298).²⁹⁶ The recurrent and explicit emphasis on the predominance of *yin* energy in Chan clerics' *encomia* on and paintings of Yuanze

²⁹⁴ Lower Tianzhu monastery is overlooked by the south side of Feilai peak 飛來峰, situated to the south of the Lingyin monastery 靈隱寺.

²⁹⁵ QYWYCSYL, j.2, in X.1385.70: 307, a15.

²⁹⁶ Nishigami 1981, 237.

and Li Yuan's interaction contrasts with the cursory use of moonlight to set the scene in prose accounts of the narrative. Moreover, the ox itself is associated with *yin*, paired with the horse as a complementary emblem of *yang*.²⁹⁷ As discussed above, Qiaoyin Wuyi's colophon to another painting of Yuanze also drew on the *yin yang* pairing of the ox and horse to characterise the relationship between Yuanze and Li Yuan. Consequently, the centrality of the moon in this image, and in the verses that accompanied similar paintings, augments the image of the ox, providing a cosmological mandate for the inversion of social hierarchy in Chan versions of this narrative. Like its textual prototype, the painting of this scene is still centred upon the interaction of an educated layman with the reborn form of his clerical companion. However, this figure painting, and Chan clerical encomia on similar works, recast this interaction by emphasising the agency of the juvenile ox-herd Yuanze over his secular companion from a past life.²⁹⁸

Among the varied extant versions of the Yuanze narrative in painting, prose and verse, we see how disparate media provided alternative readings of the relationship between Li Yuan and Yuanze. In the Muxi painting the iconographic and stylistic properties of the image presented a version of events which amplified the resonance of the narrative to Chan teachings upon ox-herding, while reasserting the agency of the clerical protagonist vis-à-vis his scholarly companion. The Yuanze scene in *Eight Eminent Monks* similarly elevates a vernacular subject. In the case of the pregnant woman the resonance of this iconographic innovation created an original visual moment of drama. The reborn Yuanze's reunion is less original, but has a clearer connection with Chan teachings through its appropriation of the generic symbolism of the ox-herding parable. While these paintings place a distinctive emphasis on subversive dimension of their subjects' interactions, their visual narratives still require context. Like the Wuyi inscription, these paintings should be read with an assumed

²⁹⁷ The evolving symbolic resonance of the ox in painting during the Song dynasty is evident in the preface to the section on animal painting in the early twelfth century *Record of Paintings of the Xuanhe Era Xuanhe Huapu* 宣和畫譜. This text identifies the ox as a receptive bearer of burdens, corresponding to *kun* 坤, the hexagram that symbolises earth, discussed in: Jang 1992, 59.

²⁹⁸ A similar instance of a full moon used to represent an imbalance of *yin* and *yang* energies in narrative imagery is discussed in relation to a Ming painting of Han dynasty femmes fatale Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕 and Zhao Hede 趙合德 by professional painter You Qiu (act. 1553-83), in: McCausland 2014, 103.

knowledge of the longer textual iterations of the narrative, or the transmission of this story in cultural memory. In this respect we see how paintings of these subjects functioned as visual commentaries on hagiography, rather than simple illustrative reproductions of actions recorded in text.

Conclusions

Chan figure paintings used interaction in visual narratives to communicate a wide variety of messages to a broad range of viewers. They promoted historic models of didactic pedagogical authority, as in the case of Bodhidharma's meeting with Shengguang (figs. 3.2, 3.3). They added an air of impenetrability to Chan teachings, showing idiosyncratic relationships between master and disciple, as in the painting of Xuansha and Xuefeng (fig. 3.1). The various images of Yuanze subverted social norms through innovative visual interpretations of textual narrative prototypes, augmented by clerical commentary (figs. 3.6, 3.7). By appropriating Yuanze into the Chan pantheon, these paintings used the protagonists of Li Yuan and the pregnant woman to address audiences from beyond the confines of the cloister. Chan images of interaction also frequently illustrated the authority of clerics over their lay interlocutors, a theme touched on briefly here, and explored more fully in chapter five.²⁹⁹ While a single chapter does not offer sufficient scope to explore the full array of meanings enacted by figural interactions in Chan figure paintings, it has been my intention to illustrate that the narrative trope of interaction was recurrently used to embody and enact authority. This authority was both intrinsic and extrinsic to paintings' visual narratives: intrinsic in the relative power and gravity of pictorial protagonists, and extrinsic in the use of visual narrative to mediate viewers' relationships to Chan monastic institutions and clerics.

In the case of Bodhidharma's encounter with Shengguang, Bodhidharma's authority may appear self-evident in his status as the first patriarch, with an intrinsic superiority to his successor in the hierarchy of the Chan lineage. However, the visual narratives discussed here are less concerned with the presentation of that authority as a *fait accompli*, than with the use of narrative to express how that authority manifests itself

²⁹⁹ See pages 189-99.

in the behaviour of the pictorial protagonists. The painting is not intended to illustrate Bodhidharma's importance through his presence, or even his action, but through the actions he elicits in his student. The extremes of Shenguang's self-mortification, and the implicit connection between his sacrifice and Bodhidharma's eventual conferring of *dharma* transmission underscore the gravity of Bodhidharma's patriarchal authority. This gravitas is implicitly transmitted, alongside the teachings, from one generation of patriarchs to the next. Presented as an inheritance documented in painting, this authority is in fact a construct, actively created by the display and distribution of these images, and by the inscriptions of thirteenth and fourteenth century clerics upon them.

The discussion of paintings of Yuanze illustrates the popularity of figures from beyond the formal patriarchal lineage as subjects for visual representation and clerical commentary. Yuanze's inclusion within the corpus of painting subjects produced by Chan monk painters such as Muxi, which in turn were inscribed by clerics such as Qiaoyin Wuyi, reveals the elasticity and permeability of thirteenth and fourteenth century Chan visual culture.³⁰⁰ While this permeable pantheon makes the definition of Chan figure painting as a pictorial genre a necessarily imprecise art, it allows us to appreciate the pragmatism and inclusivity of the pantheon as a tool for religious exegesis. The distinctive Chan interpretation of the Yuanze theme is evident in the use of visual allusion to the Chan parable of the ox-herd, and the inscribed commentary by Chan clerics. The innovative visual narrative that focuses on Yuanze's relationship to the pregnant woman in *Eight Eminent Monks* is also part of Yuanze's incorporation into the Chan pantheon, included as part of a painted catalogue of Chan exemplars.

The diverse thematic content of these visual narratives is matched in the range of media and formats in which they were produced. The distinct media of the woodblock print, vertical hanging scroll, and the horizontal handscroll frame these encounters in a diverse range of physical and spatial relationships to their viewers. Their distinct formats construct varied relationships between text and image, often with great degrees of intellectual sophistication as in the Kōzanji painting's reproduction of the

³⁰⁰ The expansive cast of the Chan pantheon is discussed in: Lippit 2007a.

Northern Song print's use of a diachronic temporal narrative. As in the prose account following the *Eight Eminent Monks* painting and the unscribed surfaces of the paintings attributed to Yan Ciping and Muxi, the immediacy of visual language is at times explicitly prioritised within these objects over the iteration of events in accompanying text. However, where inscription is the creative product of a named clerical author, the texts offer commentary as well as narrative exegesis, seen in the records of Qiaoyin Wuyi's various inscriptions. Chan figure paintings of interactions documented a wide array of historic encounters. However, their documentary function does not appear to have been the primary impetus for their creation. These paintings of meetings between historic figures were active interpretations of evolving narratives, and not simple replications of exemplary encounters. Through the subtle details of their imagery and accompanying texts, these paintings and their inscriptions produced complex commentaries on the nature and circumstances of the interactions they represented.