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# The problem with orthodoxy in Zen Buddhism: Yongming Yanshou's notion of *zong* in the *Zongjin lu* (Records of the Source Mirror)

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**Summary:** The practice of Zen Buddhism in Japan, Chan Buddhism in China, and its counterparts in Korea and Vietnam bear little resemblance to the way this form of Buddhism is often characterized ideologically. The present study explores some of the premises of “moderate” Chan, which forms the basis for Chan/Zen as an institutional religion operating within the larger Buddhist world of East Asian societies. In particular, the study addresses the notion of *zong* in the *Zongjing lu* (Record of the Source Mirror), compiled by Yongming Yanshou (904-975), one of the leading representatives of “scholastic” (*wenzi*) Chan and a key figure in articulating the “moderate” Chan position. The study suggests how the definition of contemporary Zen orthodoxy has been dominated by representatives from the “rhetorical” Zen tradition, creating a disjuncture between our intellectual understanding of Zen and the principles guiding its actual practice.

**Résumé :** La pratique du bouddhisme zen au Japon, du bouddhisme chan en Chine et de ses équivalents en Corée et au Vietnam ressemble peu à l'idée que l'on s'en fait habituellement. Cette étude examine certaines prémisses du Chan « modéré », qui fait la base du Chan/Zen en tant que religion institutionnelle, opérant à l'intérieur du monde bouddhiste des sociétés est-asiatiques. En particulier, l'étude s'intéresse à la notion de *zong* dans le *Zongjing lu* (Rapport du Miroir de Source), compilé par Yongming Yanshou (904-975), l'un des principaux représentants du Chan scholastique (*wenzi*), un personnage clé pour expliquer la position « modérée » du Chan. Finalement, l'étude montre comment la définition de l'orthodoxie du Zen contemporain a été dominée par les représentants de la tradition Zen « rhétorique », provo-

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quant ainsi une séparation entre notre compréhension intellectuelle du Zen et les principes qui dirigent de sa pratique actuelle.

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In modern scholarship and popular understanding, the notion of the “ultimate” in Chan/Zen Buddhism is most often associated with the enlightenment experience (*wu/satori*). The emphasis on *satori*, however justified, is accompanied by a diminished role that historical and social context plays in determining how the enlightenment experienced was framed and understood, in favour of a universal enlightenment experience that transcends historical and cultural contingencies. Historians of religion, on the other hand, accept that all views stem from a particular context. The attempt to privilege *satori* as an enlightenment experience that knows no temporal or cultural limitation is no exception. Defining Zen orthodoxy in terms of the *satori* experience is a view promoted particularly by Rinzai scholars in Japan, who have been shaped by and in turn constructed a model of Zen favourable to modern Rinzai interpretation. Complex social and historical factors governed this process. Against the wave of western cultural dominance that invaded Japan from the beginning of the Meiji period (1868), some Japanese intellectuals seized upon Zen as a quintessential expression of Japan’s unique cultural identity, a more complex history than can be discussed here (see Ketelaar 1990). Rinzai scholars in Japan, from D. T. Suzuki to Yanagida Seizan, and Kyoto school philosophers like Nishida Kitaro, played leading roles in promoting the Zen tradition in ways that conformed with Rinzai orthodoxy (Faure 1993: 52-88, 107-110). To this extent, the Zen tradition in Japan became largely indistinguishable from Rinzai orthodox interpretation.

My concern here is not to delve into Rinzai orthodoxy and the forces that shaped it, an important topic that others have addressed (Sharf 1993; Faure 1993), but to illustrate how Rinzai teleology has privileged certain developments in the Chan/Zen tradition, and denigrated or marginalized others. Historical records show that those denigrated or marginalized often have been central figures in their tradition when their achievements are considered in their own context. They also show that, contrary to the way Chan and Zen are commonly understood in contemporary circles, the enlightenment experience has not always functioned as the organizing principle around which Chan or Zen notions of the ultimate were conceived. The organization of sectarian Chan in China and Taiwan (Welch 1967), Zen in Japan (Foulk 1992), and Sōn in Korea (Buswell 1992), shows that numerous practical and social concerns impinge on the real life functioning of Chan and Zen communities. The quest for enlightenment, the vital core of Chan and Zen, not to mention the Buddhist tradition as a whole, is engendered through a complex institutional structure framed against the practical realities of social and cultural life.

The figure I focus on here, Yongming Yanshou (904-975) (Welter 1993; Heng 1992), lived in China during the 10th century, after the so-called “golden age” of Tang (618-907) Chan masters heralded by Rinzai scholars as the progenitors of true Zen. The problem with the “golden age” hypothesis is that it represents not so much the activities of specific Tang Chan masters, Mazu Daoyi, Baizhang Huaihai, Linji Yixuan, and others, but a retrospective view of them in records first compiled much later in the Song dynasty (960-1279), when Chan was acknowledged as a leading force in Chinese Buddhism (Foulk 1987; Gregory 1999).

Before the reconsolidation of the Chinese empire by the Song in the latter decades of the 10th century, Chan had been represented for centuries by numerous regional movements, in what one scholar has named “provincial Chan” (McRae 1986). These regional movements were characterized by a wide assortment of beliefs, doctrines, and practices, all operating under the umbrella of “Chan.” The regionalization of Chan was exacerbated by the decline and eventual demise of central authority provided by the Tang, resulting in the breakup of China into a series of independent domains, characterized as “separatist movements” (Buswell 1989). As expressions of regional culture emerged from the homogenizing influences of Chinese central authority, distinct approaches to Buddhism appeared. Northern states tended to be antagonistic toward Buddhism, continuing policies from the late Tang (Ch’en 1956: 67-105; 1964: 226-33) aimed at restricting Buddhist influence over Chinese culture and society. Some southern states took the opposite approach, looking to Buddhism as the key to the revival of Chinese culture and civilization, modeled after the fading memory of Tang civilization and the role played by Buddhism in creating its glory. While the leading schools of Tang Buddhism, Tiantai and Huayan, were held responsible by the Chinese elite for their perceived role in the decline of the Tang, regional Chan movements were exempted and became the major force through which a Buddhist revival was mounted.

With the reunification of China came the need to establish standardized formulae, following the ensconced pattern of dynastic succession, that would characterize the new ruling mandate. Buddhism, although somewhat diminished in the face of a resurgent confidence in Confucianism, still had support from influential members of the imperial bureaucracy. Defining Chan, a principal form of Buddhism promoted in China during the Song dynasty, became an important concern for Song officials and leading members of the Chan movement. In the early Song (late 10th, early 11th centuries), two contrasting styles of Chan competed for government recognition. These two types of Chan, which I have termed as “Rhetorical” and “Moderate,” may be outlined as follows, based on their proposed definitions of the nature of correct Chan teaching and practice.

In terms of Chan factions, the most dominant roles in this debate were played by members of the Linji (Rinzai) and Fayuan (Hōgen) lineages. The

## Rhetorical Chan

- Chan transmission records (*deng lu*)
- anti-text, anti-ritual (indicators of a deluded state)
- sudden enlightenment as awakening to “original nature,” breaking bounds imposed by conventional limitations (i.e., no need to engage in ordinary practices—“everyday mind is the way”)
- “a special transmission outside the scriptures”

## Moderate Chan

- *Zongjing lu* (Records of the Source-Mirror)
- text and ritual (as expedient means)
- perfect enlightenment (sudden enlightenment) followed by “gradual” cultivation (i.e., practice) as an expression of one’s enlightened nature/to remove karmic legacy
- “harmony between Chan and the scriptures” (Chan as the culmination of the scriptures)

documents from this period represent other Chan factions (or “houses”), the Caodong (Sôtō), Yunmen (Unmon), and Guiyang (Igyō), as well, but they are most concerned with promoting the interests of either the Fayan or Linji branches. Treated in chronological order, the relevant documents from this period may be briefly characterized as follows.

Although the *Zutang ji* (Patriarch’s Hall Collection), compiled in 952, promotes the lineage of Chan master Wen (or Sheng) deng (884-972), it clearly aligns itself with the Chan legacy of Mazu Daoyi, the progenitor of Linji Chan (Welter, Forthcoming). The *Zongjing lu* (Records of the Source-Mirror) compiled by Yongming Yanshou in 960 represented the view of the Fayan faction in the Wuyue region (see below). The *Jingde chuandeng lu* (Jingde era Lamp Transmission Record) was compiled in 1004 by Daoyuan, a Wuyue monk of the Fayan lineage, and edited by the Song official Yang Yi, who had come under the influence of Linji monks at the Song court. Although it promoted the Fayan faction as the leading branch of Chan, Yang Yi clearly framed the work as “a special practice outside the scriptures” with Linji Chan aims specifically in mind (Welter 2000). The *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* (Tiansheng era Supplementary Lamp Record) was compiled in 1036 by Li Zunxu, son-in-law of the emperor, and avid promoter of Linji Chan. My focus on the Linji and Fayan factions here corresponds to the rival ways that Chan was represented in the early decades of the Song dynasty. Ultimately, the debate over the nature of Chan in these two factions at this time is representative of the poles between which a potential interpretation of Chan swung, rather than a hard and fast factional determinism pitting the ideological principles of one faction *en masse* against another. It is indicative of the range of possibilities for interpretation available to all Chan masters.

While “rhetorical” Chan dominates our contemporary understanding of “proper” Chan teaching and practice, my aim here is to show some of the hidden assets of “moderate” Chan and their persistent influence over Chan and the spread of Chan throughout East Asia, to Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, in spite of the persistent claims of contemporary Rinzai orthodoxy to the contrary. While the Linji/Rinzai lineage became dominant, the hidden assets of “moderate” Chan served as the model for defining Chan and Zen within the larger Mahayana Buddhist tradition and enabled the practical operation of Chan and Zen institutions in East Asian societies.

### **Yanshou’s understanding of *Zong***

Yongming Yanshou was a leading representative of the “moderate” Chan movement. The focus here is on Yanshou’s understanding of Chan truth as represented in the term *zong*. A key term for indicating the nature of truth in Chan circles, *zong* served as the organizing principle of the Chan movement in China. The term was used to distinguish Chan from the doctrinally oriented, or “teaching” schools of Chinese Buddhism, indicated by the term *jiao*. By the Song dynasty (960-1279), the distinction between *zong* and *jiao* became so commonplace that it regularly distinguished the different types of Buddhism in China. Buddhism designated as *zong* referred to Chan. *Jiao* referred to Buddhist doctrinal or “teaching” schools. In practice, this referred to Tiantai in the Song. Buddhist temples and monasteries, likewise, were officially designated as either *chan* or *jiao*, or in some instances as *lu* (vinaya) (Schlüter Forthcoming). Pure Land Buddhism and its institutions, which became a widespread phenomena in China from the Song onwards fell under the classification of Tiantai. The Pure Land movement was in fact an offshoot of Tiantai, sponsored and promoted by Tiantai monks at Tiantai institutions. Pure Land practices, of course, extended beyond Tiantai and were even evident in Chan contexts, but the main institutional support for Pure Land remained Tiantai.

The term *zong* serves as the focal point for Yanshou’s presentation of the Chan and Buddhist tradition in his voluminous work, the *Zongjing lu* (Record of the Source Mirror). The title of the *Zongjing lu* literally translates as “Source-Mirror Records.” The term *zong* is difficult to translate. It allows for a variety of connotations and nuances, both within and outside the Chan context. The term originally referred to an ancestral hall, where one’s clan ancestor(s) was (were) honoured.<sup>2</sup> It appears frequently in the posthumous titles for Chinese emperors, e.g. *gaozong*, “High Ancestor”; *taizong*, “Great Ancestor” (Bol 1992). As a result, one of its primary meanings in ancient China was as the progenitor of a specific clan. The *zong* took on concrete meaning as clan guardian or protector, and was the object of ritual veneration by clan descendants. The living clan head was responsible for decisions

affecting clan welfare and prosperity, for the preservation of clan identity and the preservation of its legacy. The authority of the clan head was symbolically linked to the clan progenitor. Chinese emperors naturally seized upon this symbolism, promoting their own deceased (as well as themselves) as ancestors and protectors of the Chinese people, responsible for the welfare and prosperity of the country as a whole. In this sense, the imperial family represented the “grand clan” of the Chinese people, the focal point of collective as opposed to individual clan identity.

The notion of *zong* as clan ancestor connected to lineal descendants played a major role in shaping Chan identity. The use of lineage to legitimize a teaching or tradition in Buddhism by tracing it back to India is by no means exclusive to Chan. All forms of Chinese Buddhism, in principle, were based on the notion of lineage, as all members of the Buddhist clergy, upon admission, were officially required to change their clan affiliation from their natal clan to their adopted Buddhist (*Shi* or *Sakya*) clan. By acknowledging several branches, Chan was able to capitalize on its clan identity as an extended family. What distinguished the Chan notion of lineage was its reliance on Chinese Confucian and imperial precedents (Jorgensen 1987).

As the Chan tradition developed, it found favour in the notion of lineage as its organizing principle. Ultimately, Chan came to designate not so much a set of doctrines, practices, and principles, as the framework of an extended clan based on common ancestors and lineal connections. This framework served as the organizing principle for the classic works of Chan identity, the transmission histories, or “lamp records” (*denglu*), compiled in the 10th and early 11th centuries: the *Patriarch's Hall Anthology* (*Zutang ji*, comp. 952), the *Jingde era Lamp Transmission Record* (*Jingde chuandeng lu*, comp. 1004), and the *Tiansheng era Supplementary Lamp Record* (*Tiansheng guangdeng lu*, comp. 1036). As an organizing principle, all three works share the belief in a common series of Chan ancestors, or patriarchs, extending from Śakyamuni Buddha in India, to Mahākāśyāpa down through a series of Indian patriarchs conventionally fixed at 28. According to these records, the 28th patriarch, Bodhidharma, brought the transmission to China, initiating a series of Chinese Chan patriarchs. The transmission remains essentially uni-lineal through the 6th Chinese patriarch, Huineng, from which point it blossoms into a multi-lineal profusion. The above mentioned transmission records are principally concerned with documenting this profusion of Chan masters following the 6th patriarch, organizing them according to lineage. The genesis of the so-called “five houses” (or “five clans”) of Chan Buddhism is found in these records. Organized in this fashion, the master-disciple relation serves as a surrogate father-son relationship, linking practitioners to the larger tradition of Chan ancestors and providing identity based on specific lineages. In this way Chan came to mirror the Chinese clan system, organized around common ancestors, patrilineal style relationships, factional branch lineages, and so on.

Yanshou lived during the same time period in China when these multi-lineal Chan arrangements were being identified in the way suggested above. The notion of lineage as an organizing framework for Chan was undisputed by this time, and Yanshou also accepted it. This is most evident in chapters 97 and 98 of the *Zongjing lu* (*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* [hereafter abbreviated as T] vol. 48.937c-947b), where Yanshou cites from numerous Chan masters, including the conventional list of Indian Chan patriarchs and the six Chinese patriarchs through Huineng. As inheritor of the Buddhist scholastic tradition, however, Yanshou was also influenced by other criteria and these assumed overriding importance in Yanshou's understanding of Chan and its relation to the Buddhist tradition at large. The point of convergence, as well as the point of divergence, between Yanshou's interpretation of Chan and those interpretations stressing lineage formation was the term *zong*. Like lineage based understandings of Chan this term also served as the organizing principle for Yanshou, but his understanding of it differs. Yanshou's use of the term *zong* derives primarily from its more abstract and theoretical meaning, common to the Buddhist scholastic tradition. In the scholastic tradition, the term *zong* came to have at least three different primary meanings, depending on context: (1) a specific doctrine or thesis, or an interpretation of a doctrine; (2) the underlying theme, message, or teaching of a text; and (3) a religious or philosophical school (Weinstein 1987; Nakamura 1975). Yanshou's primary meaning for *zong* derives from the underlying doctrine or principle of all Buddhist teaching and the primary indicator of the penultimate Buddhist teaching or school, *zong* implicitly contained aspects of all three of *zong*'s primary meanings. For Yanshou, the term *zong* took on an enhanced status, a kind of superstructure within which all manifestations of Buddhist teaching were indebted. In a word, *zong* functioned as the "grand progenitor," the source of all truth, however articulated. In this sense, one may look at it as embracing native Chinese meanings of *zong* as "the ancestor of progenitor of the myriad things," applied to a Buddhist context. By basing his understanding of *zong* on the precedents provided by the Buddhist scholastic tradition, and incorporating the Chan notion of *zong* as lineage into it, Yanshou's notion of Chan *zong* differed greatly from that of his Linji Chan counterparts.

Yanshou's usage of the term *zong* (see T 48.4156-4216) implies that the principles and teachings of Chan are in harmony with those of the scholastic Buddhist tradition, and it is for this interpretation that he is most well-known. There are several aspects to Yanshou's understanding of the term *zong*, most of which are inherited from the scholastic tradition that preceded him. The principle of unity within apparent diversity is sanctioned by none other than the Buddha himself, who posited "universal mind" (*yixin*) as the orchestrating principle of Buddhist teaching. Allowing for expedient means to lead those of lesser ability, "universal mind" is couched in different guises according to circumstances. In spite of the apparent diversity, the

essence (*ti*) is the same, invoking a common pattern in Chinese thought for explaining the relationship between a principle's noumenal essence (*li/ti*) and its phenomenal functionality (*shi/yong*).<sup>3</sup>

[Mind] in fact refers to the spiritual abode of living beings and the truth implicit (*i zong*) in the myriad dharmas (i.e., phenomena). It is constantly changing in unpredictable ways, expanding and contracting with unimpeded spontaneity. It manifests traces as conditions warrant, and names are formed according to the things [manifested]. When Buddhas realize the [mind] essence (*ti*), it is called complete enlightenment. When bodhisattvas cultivate it, it is known as the practice of the six perfections. Transformed by "ocean-wisdom," it becomes water. Offered by dragon maidens, it becomes a pearl. Scattered by heavenly maidens, it becomes petals which do not stick to one. Sought after by good friends, it becomes a treasure which is granted as one pleases. Awakened to by pratyeka-buddhas, it becomes the twelve-links of causal arising. Attained by śrāvaka-buddhas, it becomes the four noble truths and the emptiness of self-nature. Apprehended on non-Buddhist paths, it becomes a river of erroneous views. Grasped by common people, it becomes the sea of birth and death. Discussed in terms of its essence, it is in subtle harmony with principle (*li*). Considered in terms of phenomena (*shi*), it is in tacit agreement with the conditioned nature of existence as properly understood [according to Buddhist teaching]. (*Zongjing lu* T 48.416b. 13-20)

Elsewhere in the *Zongjing lu*, Yanshou provides specific examples to demonstrate how this is evident in different representations of Buddhist teaching, using a conventional short-hand pairing well-known scriptures, schools, and masters with their commonly designated teachings. In this way, the *Lotus sūtra* is paired with the teaching of the "one-vehicle," the Prajñā scriptures with the teaching of "non-duality," and so on. Tiantai teaching is designated by its focus on the "three contemplations," (a reference to the emphasis in Tiantai meditation practice on regarding phenomena in each of three ways, as "empty" or devoid of reality (*gong*), as non-substantial but existing provisionally as temporal phenomena (*ji*), and as "existing" in their true state between these two alternatives (*zhong*)). The teachings of Chan master Mazu Daoyi and Heze Shenhui are similarly rendered according to the principal teachings associated with them which maintain that mind itself is Buddha (Mazu), and directly pointing to knowing and seeing (Shenhui) (*Zongjing lu*, ch. 2; T 48.427b 29-c10). All of the above cases point to examples in their respective areas (scriptures, schools, and masters) that can be extended throughout the entire corpus of Buddhist teaching, embracing all Buddhist discourse within a comprehensive framework.

Extending his methodology still further, Yanshou introduces the distinction between explicit and implicit explanations of Buddhist teaching. Explicit explanations, according to Yanshou, are the literal teachings contained in the countless scriptures and treatises of the Buddhist tradition. Implicit explanations, by contrast, are based on the unique character of individual teachings, which Yanshou terms their *zong*, their basic or implicit



message. As examples, Yanshou gives the *zong* (or implicit message) of the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* as “miraculousness,” an apparent reference to the miraculous activities of Vimalakīrti described therein. The *zong* of the *Diamond* sutra is given in its teaching on “non-abiding.” The *zong* of the *Huayan sutra* is its teaching on “the dharma-realm,” and the *zong* of the *Nirvāna sūtra* is its teaching on “Buddha-nature” (T48.427c. 10-12). For Yanshou, the concept *zong* indicates a literary method through which the implicit, underlying message of a teaching, its fundamental meaning as opposed to its explicit depiction, is determined. The method parallels the essence-function (*ti/yong*), noumena-phenomena (*li/shi*) dichotomy introduced earlier to explain the inherent unity of Buddhist teaching amidst its apparent diversity (even contradiction).

Thus, even though I have revealed the main entrance to the dharma-realm, I must explain the unique message of the one vehicle for indicating all the various meanings of nature and appearance. With the perfect understanding inherent in great awakening, phenomena are all interconnected, serving as gateways for entering [the dharma-realm]. Only with Buddha-wisdom does one miraculously penetrate [the various meanings of nature and appearance]. It is just that those with weak capacities do not reflect on it; with lack of study they have difficulty understanding it thoroughly. They do not realize the two gates of nature and appearance are the essence (*ti*) and function (*yong*) of their own mind. If they utilize [the mind’s] functioning [ability] but ignore its eternally present essence, it is like a wave without water. If they realize the [mind]-essence while denying it as the gateway of miraculous functioning, it is like water without waves. There is never water without waves, nor waves without water. In the case of waves, one understands how they originate with water; in the case of water, one understands how it develops into waves. In the case of nature, one understands how it reveals itself in appearances; in the case of appearances, one understands how they originate in nature. (T48.416b. 20-27)

At this stage we are still left with an apparent diversity. The diverse teachings of a particular scripture, school, or teaching, may be reduced to a common underlying message, but an array of different messages, the *zong* of each individual scripture, school, or teaching, remain. Yanshou refers to these as the “thousand pathways,” the expedients for approaching the truth. For the truth itself, Yanshou posits a superordinating *zong*, universal or all-encompassing mind (*yixin*). The individual *zong* of the various scriptural teachings are but different aspects of this over-riding, unifying principle. Universal mind as the “great *zong*,” the grand progenitor, represents the source of all truth, articulated through the individual *zong* of scriptures, schools, and teachings.

The eyes are the mirror of mind (*xinjing*). When [the mind-mirror] reveals the universal truth, [all things] will appear in it as pristine and void [of self-nature]. It avoids all kinds of perversities without excluding even the slightest of things. In their wondrous essence (*miaoti*) [phenomena] are devoid of self-nature; perfect luminosity is not external to them. In the expanse of the infinite, everything reverts

to the status of a fleeting appearance. The appearances adopted by the myriad objects are all absorbed into the state of luminosity itself. This is none other than the doctrine of “a single flavour” taught [by the Sixth Patriarch] at Caoqi that the various patriarchs have transmitted in a uniform manner; it is the implicit truth (*zong*) of non-duality taught [by Śākyamuni] at the Crane’s Grove that various scriptures all explain. (T 48.416b. 6-10)

For Yanshou the ultimate meaning of *zong* is the underlying or implicit truth of universal mind, “the deep abode of myriad good deeds (*wanshan*), the profound source of all wisdom, the precious ruler of all existence, or the primordial ancestor (*yuanzu*) of the multitude of spiritual beings” (T48.416b.10-11). Universal mind constitutes the fundamental principle of all truth, however it is depicted in different renditions of Buddhist teaching. This principle is all-encompassing and transcends sectarian bounds. It is the source of both the oral, esoteric message transmitted from patriarch to patriarch through the Chan lineage, and the textual teaching attributed to Śākyamuni upon which the doctrinal schools of Buddhism are based. Through it, the doctrinal differences of Buddhist schools are all resolved. Even non-Buddhist teachings like Confucianism and Daoism may be incorporated within this framework, as partial representations of truth implicit in the principle of universal mind (see, for example the *Wanshan tongui ji*, T 48.988a 3-b9).

Chan came to characterize itself in terms of “a separate transmission outside the scriptures,” which more literally means “a special transmission outside the teaching (*jiao*),” the independence of Chan from *jiao*, or conventional Buddhist teaching. Contrary to this characterization, Yanshou proposed that Chan teaching was in essential harmony with Buddhist teaching. Quoting the major Tang dynasty proponent of harmony between Chan and Buddhist teaching, Zongmi (780-841), Yanshou provides the logic for this vision of solidarity as follows.

...the first patriarch of the various schools was Śākyamuni. The scriptures are the word of the Buddha. Chan is the thought of the Buddha. What the Buddhas [think] with their mind and [utter] with their mouth is certainly not different. What the patriarchs receive from each other is fundamentally what the Buddha personally handed to them. (T 48.418b 5-7; See also Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu, T 48.400b10-12; Kamata Shigeo, 1971: 44)

Accordingly, the scriptures (*jing*) and Chan have the same source, the Buddha. The doctrine inherent in the teaching transmitted by Chan patriarchs, and the truth preached by the Buddha in the various scriptures is one and the same. Here we encounter the syncretism between Chan and the scriptures of Buddhist teaching that is at the core of Yanshou’s understanding of Chan. As the penultimate teaching of Buddhism, however, Chan teaching (as defined by Yanshou as issuing from the same inherent truth, or *zong*) assumes the highest of priorities in Yanshou’s eclectic, syncretic mix.

### Concluding remarks

What is Chan/Zen Buddhism? Who defines it? What criteria are used to determine what it is and what it is not? Yanshou's notion of Chan raises the question of Chan/Zen orthodoxy and the process by which it is established. In December 1999 I visited the Institute for the Study of Zen Culture at Hanazono University in Kyoto, Japan, the leading Rinzai affiliated institution for the study of Zen in Japan, and met with the current director of the Institute, Professor Nishiguchi Yoshio. In conversation with him, I asked why so little research was done on Yanshou in Japan. I was informed, in a matter of fact manner, that the reason Zen scholars in Japan paid little attention to Yanshou was because he was not a Zen master. I do not fault Professor Nishiguchi for this assessment. As a professor affiliated with the leading Rinzai academic institution in Japan and a representative of Rinzai Zen he has a right, if not a duty to promote the interpretation of Zen accepted in Rinzai circles. Indeed, all professional academics who study Chan or Zen (or any religious tradition for that matter) choose the parameters for their study, and these parameters are consciously and unconsciously determined by numerous complex factors. We who work outside of Rinzai (and religious affiliated institutions), however, are not subject to the same parameters. We need not define Chan and Zen in such a way as to exclude or marginalize figures like Yanshou. The appropriate response to Professor Nishiguchi would perhaps be to state that Yanshou, by his own criteria, was a Chan/Zen master, but not a Linji/Rinzai master. It is true that Yanshou had relatively little impact on the development of Japanese Zen as compared with Chinese Chan, Korean Sŏn, or Vietnamese Thiên Buddhism. In all of the latter, Yanshou remained a figure central to the amalgamation of Chan and doctrinal Buddhism that Chan and its equivalents in Korea and Vietnam are predicated on. The works of several scholars working in these areas bear this out.

In the case of Chinese Chan, my own work and that of Shih Heng-ching demonstrate Yan-shou's understanding of Chan and his influence on blending Chan with scholastic Buddhist teaching (Welter 1993; Shih 1992), important features of Chan in Chinese communities down to the present. With regard to Korean Sŏn, the works of Robert E. Buswell on Chinul's Sŏn show an emphasis on harmony between *sŏn* and *jiao*, the correspondence between Chan and doctrinal Buddhist teaching, in a manner similar to Yanshou (Buswell 1991). In addition, Chinul frequently cited directly from Yanshou's works. Yanshou's implicit influence is also apparent in the development of Thiên in medieval Vietnam, as described by Cuong Nguyen (Cuong 1992 and 1997). Even in the case of Japan, documents show unequivocally that Yanshou was a major figure for the pioneers who planted Zen on Japanese soil, Nōnin, Eisai (or Yōsai), and Dōgen. Until recently, Nōnin and the Daruma-shū's role in establishing Zen in Japan was largely unrecognized (Faure 1987). It has been further revealed that Nōnin based his Zen teach-

ing on passages from Yanshou's *Zongjing lu* (Ishii 1991). Moreover, Yanshou was eulogized by Dōgen in the *Shōbōgenzō* as a great master for his compassion and dedication to saving living beings (Masunaga 1971: 13-14). Yanshou's teachings are also referred to, even quoted explicitly, by the initiator of Rinzai Zen in Japan, Eisai, who consciously relies on Yanshou's methodology and the "moderate" Zen tradition to argue for the adoption of Zen in Japan as the official ideology of the Japanese state (Welter 1992 and 1999).

Future research will demonstrate even further the explicit and implicit influence of Yanshou's style of Chan in a variety of venues, including Linji lineage masters in China and Rinzai masters in Japan. In spite of the exclusionary rhetoric of "a special transmission outside the scriptures" heralded in Rinzai circles, the actual practice of Chan and its associated forms in other countries strongly suggests a species of Mahayana Buddhism that fully subscribes to a broad range of Mahayana teachings, doctrines, rituals, and institutional forms characteristic of any form of mainstream Buddhism.

I am not trying to argue that Yanshou's interpretation of the ultimate in Chan Buddhism, or any interpretation for that matter, is superior. I have attempted to open the question of how orthodoxy itself is defined: who defines it, when was (and still is) it defined, and on what grounds does a particular text or practice or the views of any individual past or present become orthodox? Until such questions are openly addressed, the understanding of Chan and Zen framed through the lens of contemporary Rinzai orthodoxy will remain subject to the authority assumed by those defining it.

In the end, the Chan and Zen tradition is multi-faceted. What I have tried to show here is that Chan rhetoric, however seductive, is a poor guide to the real world of Chan and Zen practice. By looking at the two poles of the tradition, the "rhetorical" and "moderate," we come closer to appreciating the range of possibilities that Zen had to offer. Ultimately, Zen is neither one or the other, but encompasses both. The circumstances and inclinations of individual masters would determine particular styles, approaches, and interpretations. It is beyond the scope of the present study to address the factors that might structure an individual approach. It should suffice to note here that the approach of an abbot with a large lay congregation and wealthy patrons would of necessity differ from the style affected by the denizen of an isolated hermitage. Similarly, the style at a Chan monastery dependent on government support and catering to the needs of elite literati would understandably differ from one that had no support or for one where such support had been withdrawn. As Linji Chan came to prevail, so did its rhetoric and style come to represent Chan. As the "transmission record" (*deng lu*) texts indicate, all Chan masters regardless of factional affiliation, came to be represented as stereotypical Chan monks, brash, enigmatic, and spontaneous. However accurate the depiction of Chan masters in such texts, and however seductive the rhetoric of Chan was (and is), the success of Chan as an institution in Chinese (or any other) society was also indebted to the moderate approach that I have tried to introduce here.

## Notes

- 1 A version of this paper was delivered at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion held at the University of Alberta in Edmonton (May, 2000). The author would like to acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for research support. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions. The *pinyin* system, rather than Wade-Giles, has been used for the romanization of Chinese characters throughout. References to *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds., Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924-1932) have been abbreviated as T, followed by page no., column, and line no.
- 2 The Chinese character for *zong* is composed of two parts, the upper part indicating a roof, and the lower part meaning “a tablet for the deceased.” This indicates *zong*’s original meaning of a hall where the tablets of ancestors are kept. According to the Shuowen (*Shuowen jiezi*, 151b), *zong* referred to the honor or respect (*zun*) paid in the ancestral hall (*zu miao*). Works like the *Ci yuan* (*Ci yuan* 2: 812c) provide several meanings for *zong*, including “ancestral hall” (*zu miao*), “ancestor” (*zuxian*, literally “patriarch-former”), “clan” (*zongzu*), “origin” (*benyuan*), and “honor” or “respect” (*zunchong*). (For the meaning of “ancestor,” the *Ci yuan* cites a passage from the *Zuochuan* commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* for the third year of Duke Cheng.) *Ci hai* (The Ocean of Words) (p. 886), however, fails to include “ancestor” among its several meanings. Modern Chinese dictionaries continue the ambiguity of the meaning of *zong* as “ancestor.” The Taiwan published *Chung-wen ta tz’u-tien* (Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Chinese Language) (vol. 3, p. 424 ff.), following Morohashi Tetsuji’s *Dai kanwa jiten* (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Sino-Japanese) (vol. 3, p. 3228), makes no mention of *zong* as “ancestor” among its 24 definitions. (Nor does either work cite the *Zuochuan* passage the *Ci yuan* based its meaning of *zong* as “ancestor” on.) The mainland Chinese *Hanyu da cidian* (Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Han Language) (vol. 2, p. 886), as well as the Hong Kong issued *Hanyu da cidian* (vol. 3, p. 1347), lists “ancestor” (*zuxian*) as the second meaning, after “ancestral hall” (*zu miao*). While an argument might be made for including the meaning of *zong* as “ancestor” even in those works where it is not specifically defined as such, I follow those networks that acknowledge the *Zuochuan* commentary passage which clearly includes the meaning of *zong* as “ancestor.”
- 3 While some may find it odd to speak of Buddhism as affirming some kind of underlying “essence,” Chinese Buddhist masters, with rare exception, were not inclined to invoke interpretations of “emptiness” or *sūnyatā* to deny an ever existing substratum. Like many Chinese Buddhists, Yanshou was heavily indebted to the Buddhist school of Buddhism known as *Vijñānavāda* (Weishi or “Consciousness-Only” in Chinese), which came closest to openly affirming this substratum.

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