

Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark

THE KOREAN BUDDHIST
MASTER CHINUL'S *EXCERPTS*
ON ZEN PRACTICE

TRANSLATED, ANNOTATED, AND
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
Robert E. Buswell, Jr.



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Robert E. Buswell, Jr.



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*To my heart's 도반, C. L. B., who helps me focus on
what's important, not just necessary.*

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About the Translator

Preface

This book is a complete reworking of Chinul's masterwork, a translation of which I started back in the mid-1970s and which eventually appeared in my first book, *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul* (1983). After that book went out of print a few years later, I prepared a paperback abridgment of the material that would be better suited to classroom use. The result was *Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean Way of Zen* (1991). The selections I included from Chinul's *Excerpts* in that abridgment were just enough to give a small taste of its rich material. The full text of this important work has remained out of print for more than three decades now.

When the Chogyŏ Order asked me in 2008 to prepare a new translation of Chinul's writings for the English edition of the *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* series, I was asked to duplicate the contents of the Korean version of the collection and so reworked only Chinul's shorter works. Chinul's *Excerpts* was much too long to include in that collection, but it played such a central role in the mature tradition of Korean Buddhism that a new, entirely updated translation of Chinul's magnum opus

seemed to me warranted as well. Starting the Korean Classics Library project, administered by the Center for Buddhist Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, finally gave me the opportunity to return to this text. Although Chinul's *Excerpts* was not included on the original list of one hundred classics of the Korean tradition proposed for translation by the Academy of Korean Studies, I argued for its stature as the single most influential text ever written in the Korean Buddhist tradition and eminently deserving of inclusion in this series. I was therefore delighted that the Academy consented to add this work to its updated list of titles. Thanks to the Korean Classics Library project, I have finally been able to prepare a complete, fully revised, and exhaustively annotated translation of the full text of Chinul's *Excerpts*, which includes also extensive interpretive material drawn from two Chosŏn-dynasty commentaries. Preparing this new translation has also given me an opportunity to write an extensive new introduction that focuses exclusively on Chinul's magnum opus, its analysis of the "Sudden/Gradual Issue" in East Asian Buddhist thought, and the text's broader impact on the Korean Buddhist tradition. This work has helped me to clarify some of my earlier work on Chinul and this text, which I have published over the intervening decades in different venues in both Korea and the West; I have adapted some of that earlier material here.

This publication project is sponsored by the English Translation of 100 Korean Classics program, supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Studies Promotion Service of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2007-AA-2002). This sponsorship is greatly appreciated. I am also grateful to the UCLA Center for Buddhist Studies and the Irving and Jean Stone Endowed Chair in Humanities for subventions to help defray the cost of publication.

Chinul's *Excerpts* is especially important in the context of the *Fourfold Collection* (*Sajip*), the core of the traditional Korean monastic curriculum on Sŏn training. (I discuss in my translator's introduction the pivotal role the *Excerpts* plays in that curriculum.) I am still pursuing a larger project to translate the entire *Sajip* collection into English. I remain grateful for the encouragement that I and a couple of close colleagues received to pursue that project from the Hanmaŭm Sŏnwŏn and its late founder, Taehaeng (Daehaeng) K'ŭnsŭnim, along with the Sŏnwŏn's adherents Hyegŭn Sŭnim, Chŏngwŏl Sŭnim, and especially Song Migyeong Posallim and Song Misook Posallim.

I am profoundly grateful to many people in both Korea and the United States who have inspired me to continue with my studies of Chinul. Ven. Hyŏnho sŭnim, the former abbot of Songgwangsa and a

cofounder of the Pojo Sasang Yŏn'guwŏn (and the monk who met me at Kimpo Airport when I first arrived in Korea from Southeast Asia in 1974), has always been the epitome of Buddhist compassion and the embodiment of the accommodating attitude toward both Sŏn practice and Kyo doctrine that Chinul forged in Korea. He is also a superb photographer and generously provided the color portrait of Chinul that is the frontispiece of this book. My wife, Christina Lee Buswell, herself a long-time adept of Korean Buddhism, has unfailingly encouraged me in my research on Chinul and in my own personal practice and has otherwise been a supportive presence in all aspects of our life together. I am keenly aware that she always has my welfare at heart, even when “Mr. No, Yes” may initially seem to resist the reminders. Patricia Crosby recognized the significance of the Korean Classics Library series when she was senior acquisitions editor at the University of Hawai'i Press. We are extremely fortunate that she has yet to read the manual on retirement and has consented to serve as the series' in-house copy editor; her punctilious editorial sense has spared me from many an egregious error both here and in previous books. Pat deserves a medal or two for everything she has done over the decades to encourage rigorous scholarly publications in both Buddhist and Korean studies; all I am able to offer

here is my own heartfelt thanks and a deep bow. I am also grateful to the two anonymous readers who reviewed the manuscript for the series and offered copious comments on my introduction and translation, which were valuable in helping me hone my treatment. Peter Gregory graciously allowed me to consult him repeatedly about the nuances of Zongmi's *Preface* and my translations of the many extended sections from the text that Chinul quotes here. Of course any errors that may remain are my sole responsibility. Finally, my collaborators on the Korean Classics Library here at UCLA—John Duncan, Namhee Lee, and my assistant director at the Center for Buddhist Studies, Jennifer Jung-Kim—have continually been a source of camaraderie and inspiration, as have my Buddhist studies *kalyānamitrāḥ* William Bodiford, Natasha Heller, and Gregory Schopen, and all my colleagues in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures and the International Institute. Thanks to these and many other friends, colleagues, and students, I have been fortunate to live through the Saddharma Age for the study of Buddhism, and especially Korean Buddhism, during my thirty years at UCLA.

Conventions

Transcriptions of East Asian languages follow the systems now commonly used in the Western scholarly community: Pinyin for Chinese, revised Hepburn for Japanese, and McCune-Reischauer for Korean. In 2000, the Korean government promulgated still another revised romanization system for Korean, but it has yet to enjoy widespread usage outside Korea and its transcription rules have not been rigorously honed for academic writing. Because this book is intended principally for a non-Korean audience, I have decided to stick with the better-known McCune-Reischauer system, which has been the transcription system of choice in the West for over seventy years and which offers more accurate and, I believe, more elegant transcriptions.

Most Sinitic Buddhist technical terms are rendered according to their Korean transcriptions, with the Sinographs following; where I give both Korean and Chinese transcriptions, the Korean typically appears first, followed by the Chinese and then the Sinographs: for example, “meditative topic” (*hwadu/huatou* 話頭). For the sake of consistency, the names of East Asian Buddhist schools and technical terms are generally given according to their

Korean pronunciation. Proper names are transcribed according to the nationality of the person or site or the provenance of the text. When the reference clearly applies only to Chinese or Japanese schools, however, I have used the corresponding national transcription. For mainstream Buddhist technical terminology that is known across the Buddhist tradition (e.g., *kleśa*, *saṃyojana*, *āsrava*, etc.), I typically provide only the Sanskrit form; I encourage interested readers to look up these Sanskrit terms in Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (2014), for their Korean and Chinese equivalents, an English definition, and an extended treatment of these terms' broader doctrinal significance. Buddhist terms that appear in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* I regard as English and leave unitalicized, including such Buddhist technical terms as *dhyāna*, *prajñā*, *saṃsāra*, and *tathāgatagarbha*. For a convenient list of over a hundred such terms, see Roger Jackson, "Terms of Sanskrit and Pāli Origin Acceptable as English Words," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5 (1982): 191–192. I have expanded Jackson's list to include compounds formed from accepted words. Finally, in order to conserve space in the annotation, I provide only short-form citations to secondary sources; full citations may be found in the bibliography.

In order to make the translation a bit easier to read, I have divided the text into chapters and sections. Internal cross-references to *Excerpts* and citations from it in the annotation are cited by those chapter and section headings (e.g., *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Role of Numinous Awareness in Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation”). For a full listing of these sections, see the [appendix](#), “Complete Table of Contents of Chinul’s *Excerpts*.” For ease of reference to the original Sinographic text, I also embed in brackets the page numbers of the *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism (Han’guk Pulgyo chönsö)* edition of the text.

Part I.

Translator's Introduction

Chinul's *Excerpts* and the Sudden/Gradual Debate in East Asian Buddhism



Chinul 知訥 (1158–1210), or Knowing Reticence, is the preeminent Zen (K. Sŏn/Ch. Chan 禪) figure of premodern Korean Buddhism. (He is more commonly known in Korea by his posthumous title, State Preceptor Puril Pojo 佛日普照國師, the Sun of Buddhahood That Shines Everywhere.) Chinul's influence pervades the Korean Buddhist tradition. The writings of this sober, analytical teacher belie many of the common tropes popular to this day concerning the iconoclastic, bibliophobic Zen teacher. Unlike many of his counterparts in the Zen tradition, Chinul was an autodidact, who seems to have had little personal contact with experienced Zen teachers. Instead, Chinul derived much of his training and insight from books, and indeed each of his own awakening experiences was said to have been prompted by specific readings. For this reason,

Chinul is much more sanguine about the value of written materials than many teachers in the Zen tradition claimed to be.

Chinul's esteem for the writings of both Zen and the broader scriptural tradition of Buddhism is nowhere more evident than in the work that is his magnum opus and one of the definitive compositions of the premodern Korean Sŏn tradition: *Excerpts from the "Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record" with Inserted Personal Notes* (*Pŏpchip pyŏrhaengnok chŏryo pyŏngip sagi* 法集別行錄節要科目並入私記). Don't be put off by the impenetrable title, which I will unpack later; mercifully, the Korean tradition knows the book as, simply, the *Excerpts* (*Chŏryo* 節要), and that is how I will refer to it in this study and translation.

Excerpts was completed in 1209, just a year before Chinul's death. The product of a lifetime of study, it is the quintessence of his mature thought. The work covers in detail most of the major themes prominent throughout his writings and, as such, is the best work through which to approach the entirety of his thought and his approaches to Sŏn practice. The work was intended to serve as a vade mecum to practice for students under his tutelage; indeed, its treatment of the fundamentals of Korean Buddhist practice proved to be so compelling that it became one of the basic texts of the traditional seminary

curriculum in Korean monasteries. It continues to be studied avidly today, though not without some controversy, which I will explore in due time.

Chinul's text is structured around excerpts from the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* (K. *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok*, Ch. *Faji biexing lu*) by Guifeng Zongmi 圭峯宗密 (780–841), a Chinese Buddhist scholiast and the putative Fifth Patriarch of both the Heze (K. Hat'aek 荷澤) school of Chinese Chan and the Huayan (K. Hwaŏm 華嚴) doctrinal school. Zongmi's text examines four emblematic styles of Zen practice found in representative traditions of early Chan: the Northern, Oxhead, Hongzhou, and Heze schools. After offering an overview and analysis of the respective approaches and styles of these four traditions, Zongmi singles out for special attention the Heze school, whose schema of religious practice, or soteriology as I will call it, both Zongmi and Chinul describe as ideally suited to the needs of the vast majority of Buddhist practitioners. This soteriological schema, which Chinul championed throughout his career, is termed "sudden awakening" (*tono/dunwu* 頓悟) followed by "gradual cultivation" (*chŏmsu/jianxiu* 漸修). This approach suggests that genuine religious training can only begin after an initial sudden awakening to the reality of the buddha-nature that is inherent in all sentient beings; for, only by being grounded in that

initial sudden awakening would Zen practice be correctly oriented and thus able to lead to full enlightenment. Such a regimen would ensure that Zen practice would produce adepts who not only *knew* they were enlightened buddhas but could also *act* like them.

In Chinul's presentation of Sŏn practice, the soteriological schema that Zongmi and the Heze school outline emerges not only as the most viable approach to Zen Buddhism practice, but also as one offering the prospect of a rapprochement between Zen and the various doctrinal schools of Buddhism (K. Kyo, Ch. Jiao 教), a rapprochement that Chinul sought to foster throughout his career. Chinul uses the Heze school's outline of sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation to exhaustively examine a whole range of alternate soteriological schemata described in both Zen and doctrinal materials, ranging from gradual cultivation/gradual awakening to sudden cultivation/sudden awakening. Chinul investigates the underpinnings of each of these schemata, examines their viability as soteriological options, and in some cases specifies what type of practitioner they are designed to target. But even if some of these alternate soteriologies might prove to be viable regimens for a specific, if narrowly circumscribed, set of adepts, Chinul ultimately concludes that sudden awakening followed

by gradual cultivation best suits the vast majority of Buddhist practitioners.

Chinul's exegesis, or "personal notes" (*sagi/siji* 私記), builds out from the coverage of soteriology in the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* to offer a much broader discussion of the different taxonomies of sudden and gradual enlightenment and practice as promulgated by several important Chinese thinkers. These include two other extended treatments by Zongmi: his *Preface to Comprehensive Expressions of the Fount of Chan Collection* (*Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu*) and his *Notes to the Great Commentary to the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra* (*Yuanjue jing da shu chao*). These are complemented by quotations from the Huayan scholiast Chengguan's 澄觀 (738–840) *Commentary to the "Original Vows Chapter" of the Avataṃsakasūtra* (*Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu*), which Chinul calls the *Zhenyuan Commentary*; and the Chan exegete Yongming Yanshou's 永明延壽 (904–975) *Mirror of the Source Record* (*Zongjing lu*) and *Myriad Good Deeds and their Common End Collection* (*Wanshan tonggui ji*). Chinul's personal notes, or commentary, thus offers one of the most exhaustive examinations of the sudden/gradual debate to be found in premodern East Asian Buddhist literature.

In the course of his analysis of different Buddhist soteriological schemata, Chinul also examines two of the quintessential constituents of Buddhist meditative training: meditative concentration (*sammae/sanmei* 三昧, *samādhi*) and gnoseological wisdom (*hye/hui* 慧, *prajñā*) and the ways in which these two components function symbiotically in the Zen interpretation of their practice. He particularly examines how concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) could be cultivated not sequentially, as was typical of much of Buddhism, but simultaneously. He also examines in detail the role of nonconceptualization, which he calls “no-thought” (*munyŏm/wunian* 無念) or “no-mind” (*musim/wuxin* 無心) practice, in the gradual cultivation that follows awakening.

Chinul tacks in a radically different direction at the conclusion of his treatise, where he appends a completely different set of excerpts, this time extracted from the writings of Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163), a Chinese Zen teacher who lived one generation earlier. The contrast between these two broad divisions of Chinul’s treatise could not be more stark, both in content and style. No longer are we reading a dense analysis of the constituents of Buddhist belief and practice, written in the refined, sometimes turgid, prose of exegetical literature; such materials, Chinul’s later commentators would say, are

“dead words” (*salgu/siju* 死句). Here, we have instead a clarion call for the breakthrough that is enlightenment, described in the exuberant, even iconoclastic, colloquial language of Song-dynasty vernacular Chan materials; these are the “live words” (*hwalgu/huoju* 活句) of the mature Zen tradition. Dahui’s works are a quintessential example of such live words and how they may be employed as topics of meditation in their own right. Dahui had systematized and taught a new style of Zen meditation practice, which was just then emerging on the Chinese mainland: the Zen of examining meditative topics (*kanhwa Sŏn/kanhua Chan* 看話禪), what we in the West usually know as *kōan* (K. *kongan*, Ch. *gong’an* 公案) meditation, after its later Japanese Zen analogues. In this technique, Zen uses the enigmatic exchanges and sayings of predecessors in its own tradition as grist for the mill of contemplative practice. The investigation of these sorts of “topics” (*hwadu/huatou* 話頭), or live words, was intended to generate a sense of inquiry, or doubt (*ŭijŏng/yiqing* 疑情), that would eventually break the student’s inveterate tendency to conceptual understandings of Buddhism and ultimately remove the “point of view” that is the constructed sense of self. The disintegration of this stifling sensation of doubt would generate such a compelling experience of awakening that cultivation would also be perfected

—perfected, in some interpretations, simultaneously with the awakening experience. This schema was termed sudden awakening accompanied by simultaneous sudden cultivation. Chinul was exposed to this new technique later in his life and was increasingly emphasizing it in his writings as he neared his death. But even though Chinul is obviously intrigued by *kanhwa* Sŏn—and was himself inspired and, we are told, even enlightened, by it—he was struggling with how to reconcile its putative “radical subitism,” as I have called it, with his more moderate soteriological schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. Despite his personal struggles with this knotty issue, Chinul’s promotion of *kanhwa* Sŏn deeply influenced his successor, Hyesim 慧諱, State Preceptor Chin’gak 眞覺國師 (1178–1234), who made the technique the core of his own approach to Zen. From that point forward, *kanhwa* Sŏn became emblematic of Korean Sŏn practice, and it continues to hold pride of place in Korean meditation halls to this day. It is Chinul, in his *Excerpts*, who laid the groundwork for *kanhwa* Sŏn’s emergence as a dominant practice in Korean Buddhism.

As the widest ranging of all his works, Chinul’s *Excerpts* is also illustrative of the synthetic tendency in his thought, which seeks to demonstrate the convergence between Zen thought and Buddhist

scriptures (i.e., Kyo, “the Teachings”). The system of doctrinal training combined with Sŏn practice championed by Chinul, following Zongmi—and the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation that epitomized this system—outlined for Chinul and later Korean adepts an ecumenical approach to Buddhist training that would remain the hallmark of its tradition down to the present. But the new practice of *hwadu* investigation that Chinul treats at the very end of *Excerpts* was to augur the partial eclipse of Zongmi’s influence over Korean Sŏn by the “shortcut” meditative approach of Dahui Zonggao’s *kanhwa* Sŏn. This shift adumbrates the ultimate fusion of Zongmi’s soteriology (sudden awakening/gradual cultivation) and Dahui’s practice (*kanhwa* Sŏn) that characterizes the later Korean Sŏn tradition. Indeed, it is with Chinul that we can first speak of a truly native Korean interpretation of the Sŏn tradition, which developed in ways influenced by, but nevertheless independent of, the Chan schools of China. Hence, the synthesis Chinul sought to forge in Korea between different strands of East Asian Buddhism offers insights into the ways in which Chinese Buddhist positions on doctrine and practice could be adapted in a different culture with novel, and sometimes decisive, results. For all these reasons, Chinul’s *Excerpts* has exerted pervasive influence in Korea ever since its composition in the

early thirteenth century and is today widely acknowledged as one of the enduring classics of the Korean Buddhist tradition. As I believe my introduction will show, I would even go so far as to say that Chinul's *Excerpts* is the single-most influential text ever written by a Korean Buddhist author.

***Excerpts* as Chinul's Religious Autobiography**

Chinul's *Excerpts*, as its full title suggests, is an abridgment and reorganization of a text that he and the Korean tradition knew as the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*, into which Chinul inserted his own commentary, including his extensive exposition of the core text's major ideas and careful comparison with related materials by other renowned Chinese masters. (This *Special Practice Record* is known by several different titles and deciding what to call this text is a bit of a detective story in its own right. I will relate that story in the next section.) The *Record*, as I will generally refer to it here, is a short but influential treatise by Guifeng Zongmi, one of the towering intellectual figures of premodern Chinese Buddhism.¹ Zongmi had connections to one of the principal strands of Tang-dynasty Chan Buddhism: the Heze school, which derived from Heze Shenhui 荷澤 神會 (670–758), one of the successors to the putative Sixth Patriarch of the East Asian Chan tradition, Huineng 慧[惠]能 (638–713). But Zongmi was also deeply imbued with the doctrinal traditions of the Huayan, or Flower Garland, school. Zongmi's encyclopedic knowledge of the writings of both the Chan and doctrinal schools led him to explore the intersections in the doctrines and practices of Chan

and the Teachings (Kyo/Jiao), to the point that his thought is often reduced to the slogan “the correspondence of the Teachings and Chan” (Sŏn-Kyo *ilch’i*/Jiao-Chan *yizhi* 禪教一致). This slogan certainly oversimplifies Zongmi’s profoundly informed and intricately nuanced vision of the Buddhist tradition as a whole.² Even so, it conveniently summarizes Zongmi’s broader vision of the essential unity of the Buddha’s words, as articulated in the scriptures, and the Buddha’s enlightened mind, as transmitted by the Chan patriarchs and teachers down through the generations. This unity Zongmi expressed in the clarion call that appears early in his best-known and most widely read work, his *Preface to Comprehensive Expressions of the Fount of Chan Collection* (*Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu*): “The scriptures are the Buddha’s words (Pul ōn/Fo yan 佛言); Chan is the Buddha’s thoughts (Pul ūi/Fo yi 佛意). The minds and mouths of the buddhas cannot possibly be in contradiction to one another.”³

Zongmi’s vision of the essential unity of Chan and the Teachings deeply inspired Chinul and it became one of the central features of much of Chinul’s own writing. At the same time, however, this eclecticism should not obscure the fact that Chinul considered himself to be ultimately an adherent of Sŏn and, especially in his later works, his sympathies are more with Sŏn than with Kyo. He was ordained into the

Nine Mountains Sŏn school's (九山禪門) Sagulsan 闍崛山 tradition (founded in 847),⁴ which claimed to derive from the Nanyue 南嶽 lineage of the so-called Southern school (Nam chong/Nan zong 南宗) of Chan (and thus connects it to the Hongzhou school, which Zongmi will discuss in the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*). Chinul also passed his monastic examinations in the Sŏn division in 1182, when he was twenty-four years old.⁵ While he was on retreat soon after finishing his exams, he had his first awakening experience while reading the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu tan jing*), certainly one of the seminal works of the Sŏn tradition.⁶

Despite this penchant for Sŏn, however, Chinul's funerary stele tells us that he did not train for an extended period under an accomplished Sŏn master, and there is no evidence that he ever received formal transmission from a recognized successor in the Korean Nine Mountains Sŏn lineage.⁷ Chinul was also one of the few important Korean teachers who never made the requisite pilgrimage to the mecca of the Chinese mainland, so he was compelled to look for his information in the sources readily available to him: Buddhist sūtras, East Asian and Indian commentarial literature, and the records of earlier Chan and Sŏn masters. (All of these materials are of course in Chinese, not vernacular Korean, at this

period, and Chinul himself wrote only in the literary argot of Chinese.) For this reason, Chinul was fervently eclectic from early on in his vocation, never hesitating to draw upon the doctrinal teachings of the mainstream scriptural tradition when he found their instruction of benefit in understanding even the Sŏn school. Throughout his life, all of his spiritual progress and each of his three enlightenment experiences were catalyzed by insights gleaned from passages in texts rather than through the direct intervention of Sŏn masters.⁸ Hence, despite the classic Chan adage that the school “does not establish words and letters” (*pullip muncha/buli wenzi* 不立文字),⁹ it is hardly conceivable that Chinul, despite his strong Sŏn allegiances, would have denied the merit of the written teachings in fostering religious cultivation.

Chinul’s recognition of the symbiotic relationship between scriptural study and Sŏn meditative practice comes through in a spontaneous utterance that he made at the time of his second major awakening experience. As Chinul recounts in the preface to his *Condensation of the Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra* (*Hwaŏm non chŏryo*) in the autumn of 1185, when he was twenty-seven years old and living in retreat on Haga Mountain 下柯山 in southwestern Korea. There, he was meditating (*myŏngsim/mingxin* 冥心) on the Sŏn adage that

“mind is Buddha” (*chŭksim chŭkpul/jixin jifo* 卽心卽佛).¹⁰ But Chinul also says he was confused as to why Kyo teachers rejected the efficacy of Sŏn and declared that the only valid meditative technique was contemplation of the realm of reality, or *dharmadhātu*.¹¹ Chinul’s practice while he was staying on Haga Mountain thus also involved an exhaustive search of the Buddhist canon, hunting for a passage that would both confirm the “mind doctrine” (*ximjong/xinzong* 心宗) of Sŏn and offer an account of Buddhist soteriology that would be appropriate for his fellow adepts. His inquiry took him to the Hwaŏm (Flower Garland) teachings, which Korean Buddhists since the preceding Silla 新羅 dynasty (traditional dates 57 BCE–935 CE) had regarded as the apex of the Buddhist doctrinal tradition. Chinul embarked on three years of study, focusing on the Hwaŏm school’s emblematic scripture, the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, and a massive commentary on it by the enigmatic Chinese layman Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635–730) titled the *Exposition of the New [Translation of the] Avataṃsakasūtra* (*Xin Huayan jing lun*). After three years of reading, Chinul discovered passages in the *Avataṃsakasūtra*¹² and Li’s *Exposition*¹³ that confirmed for him the veracity of the Sŏn teachings and outlined an approach to Buddhist practice that he felt would be appropriate for the majority of his fellow-cultivators. Especially in

Li's *Exposition*, Chinul found answers that confirmed for him the fundamental identity between Sŏn and Kyo and demonstrated that ordinary, unenlightened persons (*prthagjana*) were in fact already buddhas. Thereupon, Chinul says, under the obvious influence of Zongmi,

I set down the volume and, breathing a long sigh, said: "What the World-Honored One said with his mouth is the Teachings (Kyo). What the patriarchs transmitted with their minds is Sŏn. The mouth of the Buddha and the minds of the patriarchs cannot possibly be in contradiction to one another. How can [students of both the Sŏn and Kyo traditions] not plumb the fundamental source but instead, complacent in their own training, wrongly foment disputes and squander all their time?"¹⁴

Based on this inspiration, Chinul developed an approach to Buddhism in which the ontological and epistemological accounts found in Kyo Buddhist doctrine could be used to validate Sŏn soteriological techniques. Much of Chinul's career was devoted to his ongoing attempts to bring about the reconciliation of Sŏn practitioners and Kyo adepts, especially adherents of the Hwaŏm doctrinal school. Indeed, this combination of two seemingly disparate approaches to Buddhist doctrine and practice constitutes one of the most distinctively Korean contributions to East Asian Buddhist thought.¹⁵

Chinul's affinities with Zongmi—and specifically with Zongmi's *Dharma Collection and Special*

Practice Record, the text that he would draw from in his *Excerpts*—go back to the beginnings of his monastic vocation and his writing career. In 1182, Chinul left his home monastery on Sagulsan for Kaegyŏng 開京 (modern Kaesŏng 開城 in North Korea), the capital of the Koryŏ dynasty 高麗 (918–1392), to take the ecclesiastical examinations in the Sŏn branch of the tradition. Although he passed the examinations, his stay at the capital led to a change of heart: rather than pursuing monastic office, a career path that success in the examinations now opened for him, Chinul decided to return to the mountains to practice and study. Disillusioned by his colleagues' pursuit of status and wealth, which he felt was enervating the tradition, in 1185 he decided to start a religious society (*kyŏlsa* 結社) with ten monks of similar persuasion. Chinul left the capital for the mountainous countryside in the southwest of Korea (i.e., to Haga Mountain, where he had his second awakening experience), hoping that his colleagues would soon join him. Three years later, in 1188, he founded the Samādhi and Prajñā Society (Chŏnghye Kyŏlsa 定慧結社) and in 1190 finished his first work, *Encouragement to Practice: The Compact of the Samādhi and Prajñā Society* (*Kwŏnsu Chŏnghye Kyŏlsa mun*). In that work, Chinul quotes a lengthy passage from Zongmi's *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* (which he does not include

in *Excerpts*) on the active and passive aspects of the mind and how these are made manifest at various stages along the bodhisattva's path to buddhahood.¹⁶ Chinul also quotes in this first of his own works Zongmi's *Preface* and two other of Zongmi's writings;¹⁷ he quotes here as well Li Tongxuan's *Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra* and the writings of Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617–686), an early Korean Buddhist exegete who also pioneered a synthetic approach to the variant teachings of the Buddhist tradition. These quotations are interspersed with references to a panoply of Mahāyāna scriptures and extensive exchanges involving seminal Chinese Chan figures. The range of materials Chinul draws on in this, his very first composition, demonstrates how deeply Chinul was influenced by the ecumenical perspective on the Buddhist tradition that Zongmi advocated.

To illustrate how *Excerpts* is in a very real sense autobiographical, Chinul concludes his magnum opus with an extensive set of additional excerpts on the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique, drawn from the writings of Dahui Zonggao. Dahui's writings figure crucially in Chinul's third, and final, awakening experience. While Chinul was on retreat in 1198 at the isolated hermitage of Sangmuju 上無住庵 on the Chirisan 智異山 massif, he read a passage from Dahui's *Records* that struck him to his very core: "Sŏn does

not consist in quietude; it does not consist in bustle. It does not consist in the activities of daily life; it does not consist in ratiocination. Nevertheless, it is of first importance not to investigate [Sŏn] while rejecting quietude or bustle, the activities of daily life, or ratiocination. Unexpectedly, your eyes will open and you then will know that these are all things taking place inside your own home (*ongni sa/wuli shi* 屋裏事).” This passage instantly resolved his last remaining doubts, which to that point, he said, had been “as if something were crushing my chest or as if I were living with an enemy.... From then on I was at peace.”¹⁸

The first Korean advocate of the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique taught by Daihui, Chinul framed that practice as a valuable technique for weaning Sŏn practitioners from their attachment to intellectual interpretations of Buddhism. *Kanhwa* Sŏn makes no claim to being ecumenical; it instead points to the error of any kind of conceptual understanding of Buddhism, whether derived from the Kyo teachings of doctrinal schools, like Hwaŏm, or Sŏn adepts, like Zongmi. *Kanhwa* Sŏn demands that all of its practitioners’ efforts be directed toward an immediate, and thoroughgoing, awakening that brooks no need for any supplementary meditative or soteriological development. It thus rejects the moderate subitism of Zongmi, where a sudden

awakening is to be followed by gradual cultivation, in favor of radical subitism, where the sudden awakening to buddhahood is so compelling, profound, and exhaustive that no further cultivation is necessary.

Chinul's *Excerpts* thus represents all of the major influences on his own development as a Sŏn practitioner also deeply influenced by Kyo doctrine. Building on a base of Sŏn (the four representative approaches to Chan as described by Zongmi), the text develops an overarching vision of the Buddhist tradition that reconciles Sŏn and Kyo and culminates in the new *kanhwa* Sŏn technique. *Excerpts* is in an important sense, then, the articulation of Chinul's own religious autobiography.

The Title of the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*

Before I move on to a more detailed examination of Chinul's *Excerpts*, let me discuss the unintuitive title of the text that is at its core: Zongmi's *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*. The one thing we can be sure of is that it was one of Zongmi's shorter works, which was included in a posthumous collection of his letters and briefer writings. The text was initially composed sometime between 830 and 833 as a letter to the eminent imperial official and noted Chan lay adherent Pei Xiu 裴休 (791–864). Pei had sent Zongmi a series of six questions inquiring about the authenticity of the lineage claims made in the major Chan schools of his time and the respective profundity of their basic premises. Zongmi answered Pei's questions, opening his response with a detailed chart of several different Chan lineages. This exchange was later included in a collection of Zongmi's shorter works that his disciples compiled after his death. This written exchange between Zongmi and Pei Xiu circulated in East Asia under at least seven different titles.¹⁹ (In fact, since it started as correspondence, it originally may not even have had a title.²⁰) One of the earliest of these titles seems to have been the *Inquiry of Pei Xiu* (*Pei Xiu shiyi wen*

裴休拾遺 文). The text is perhaps best known to modern scholars by the title *Chart of the Master-Disciple Succession in the Chan Gate that Transmits the Mind-Ground in China* (*Zonghua chuanxindi Chanmen shizi chengxi tu*), a title I will abbreviate as *Chan Chart* (or CXT in the annotation). The noted Zongmi scholar Jeffrey Broughton, in his study and translation of Zongmi's Chan works, found the issue of the title of this text so vexing that he simply gave it the generic title *Chan Letter*. To compound the problem, the posthumous collection of Zongmi's works in which this text was included also seems to have had various titles, including the *Later Collection of Guifeng* (*Guifeng houji* 圭峯後記), the *Collected Correspondence with Clergy and Laity* (*Daosu chouda wenji* 道俗酬答文集), the *Collection of Miscellaneous Correspondence with Clergy and Lay on the Meaning of the Dharma* (*Daosu zhanda fayi ji* 道俗瞻答法義集), and apparently just *Dharma Collection* (Ch. *Faji*, K. *Pöpchip* 法集). This last title is the important one for my discussion here.

Koreans seem to have been completely unaware of this complicated textual history and knew Zongmi's short work only by the title under which it circulated on the peninsula: *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok*. *Pöpchip* here must refer to the *Dharma Collection* (*Pöpchip/Faji* 法集) just mentioned, one of the many alternate titles of the posthumous collection of

Zongmi's shorter works. *Pyörhaeng* ("separately/specially circulated," Ch. *biexing* 別行) is an editorial term that refers to a "separate edition"; here, it apparently means that this text was extracted from the larger posthumous *Dharma Collection* and "separately circulated" as an independent edition of the text.²¹ Thus we get the title under which the text circulated in Korea: *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok*, which would probably be most accurately translated as *A Separately Circulated Record from the Dharma Collection*.

Because Koreans had no knowledge of these different recensions of Zongmi's letter to Pei Xiu, their interpretation of the *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok*'s title differs from the above. Although Chinul himself nowhere glosses the title, his later Chosŏn-dynasty commentators do.²² Both Hoeam Chŏnghye 晦庵定慧 (1685–1741) and Yŏndam Yuil 蓮潭有一 (1720–1799) presume that *Pöpchip* (Dharma collection) refers to the selections included at the opening of the text from four representative Sŏn schools, selections they presume were derived from Zongmi's *Collection on the Fount of Chan* (*Chanyuan ji*), the massive anthology of Chan to which Zongmi wrote his famous and widely known *Preface*. In their interpretation, *pyörhaeng* then refers specifically to the Heze school, which Zongmi singles out for "special

practice.” As Hoeam Chŏnghye, writing in 1726, explains,

Dharma Collection (Pŏpchip/Faji 法集) refers to the *Fount of Chan Collection* (Sŏnwŏn chip/Chanyuan ji 禪源集). That [work] is a straightforward compilation of phrases and gāthās recorded by all the schools [of Sŏn] and therefore contains both quotations from primary materials [taken from the literature of each of the Sŏn schools] and secondary descriptions [of the approach followed in each school written by Zongmi personally]. Therefore, it is called *Expressions of the Fount of Chan Collection*. Now, since [this text] only collects the dharmas taught by four schools and records just [Zongmi’s] secondary descriptions, it is called the *Dharma Collection*. Consequently, the text of the *Record* itself refers to the “basic premise of the Northern school,” the “basic premise of the Hongzhou school,” and so forth. *Dharma Collection and Special Practice* (Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng/Faji biexing 法集別行) means that it “collects the dharmas” of all these [four Sŏn] schools but “specially practices” the dharma of Heze. Hence, it says that “[the text progressed] from the shallow toward the profound, clearly elucidating each of their strengths and shortcomings.” Thus can we understand the idea behind [Chinul’s] *Excerpts (Chŏryo) with Personal Notes (sagi)*.²³

Yŏndam Yuil’s commentary, written in 1797, one generation after Chŏnghye, accepts without further comment his predecessor’s explication of the meaning of the title. He says simply, “*Dharma Collection and Special Practice* means that the dharmas of the four [Sŏn] schools are collected and the school of Heze is to be specially practiced in the world.”²⁴ Hence, in the view of both traditional Korean commentators, *Dharma Collection* always means the

four major Sŏn schools drawn from Zongmi's more extensive coverage in the *Chanyuan ji*, while *Special Practice* refers specifically to the tenets and practice of the Heze school alone.

Although Zongmi's *Fount of Chan Collection* was certainly not extant during Chŏnghye's and Yuil's time—if, indeed, it ever existed at all²⁵—Chŏnghye's intimations about the structure of the *Chanyuan ji* are plausible and, moreover, substantiate Zongmi's own remarks in his *Preface*.²⁶ the *Chanyuan ji* was divided according to master and school, with a short synopsis of the major doctrinal tenets and approaches to practice of each school, given initially by Zongmi himself, followed by confirmatory quotations drawn from the literature of each school and perhaps interspersed with his own personal commentary in the manner of Zongmi's other works. Certainly Yongming Yanshou's later *Mirror of the Source Record*—the structure and content of which seem to have been heavily beholden to Zongmi's *Fount of Chan Collection*—is so arranged.²⁷ But where the *Chanyuan ji* was at least a hundred rolls in length and covered ten different Sŏn houses, or schools, represented by over a hundred masters, the *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok* dealt only with the four most important schools covered in Zongmi's full collection, insofar as the orthodoxy of their tenets and their

significance in the historical development of Chan were concerned.²⁸

These premodern Korean commentators' interpretation of *pyŏrhaeng* as “special practice” has a long pedigree in Chan and Sŏn materials. Indeed, the Chan tradition often referred to itself as a “special” or “separate practice” that was completely distinct from the scriptural tradition of Buddhism. This denotation goes back to the incipency of Chan tradition, as for example in the *Essentials of the Dharma on the Transmission of the Mind* (*Chuanxin fa yao*), by Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (d. 850), who is associated with the Hongzhou lineage.²⁹ The term also commonly appears in a catchphrase describing Chan's own sense of itself as a “separate practice outside the teachings [of the scriptures]” (*kyooe pyŏrhaeng/jjaowai biexing* 教外別行).³⁰ For Chŏnghye and Yuil, however, since Zongmi's *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* did not cover the entirety of Buddhism but only the Sŏn tradition, what was to be singled out for special practice in this specific text was not Sŏn as a whole but the Heze school alone. There were thus ample precedents in Sŏn writings for their interpretation of *pyŏrhaeng* as special practice; it was not that they were just oblivious to the editorial denotation of the term as a “special edition” of a text that “circulated separately.”

Some modern Korean scholars have given a slightly different interpretation of the title, proposing that the *Dharma Collection* in the title refers to the full text of the *Chanyuan ji*, with *Special Practice* referring not to the Heze tradition but to the four schools singled out for coverage in the *Record*.³¹ The main justification for this view seems to be that there is no specific passage in Chinul's *Excerpts* specifying the Heze school as the approach best suited to Sŏn students.³² Nevertheless, when the text of Zongmi's *Chan Chart or Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* is taken as a whole, there is substantial evidence that Zongmi's intent was to demonstrate the superiority of the Heze school over the other three schools and, moreover, to encourage Chan students to follow its approach. For instance, as I will discuss later, Zongmi states explicitly that only the Heze school is complete in both aspects of dharmas (immutability and adaptability), whereas one or the other elements is missing in the other three schools.³³ He says elsewhere that the other three schools are either predominately apophatic or kataphatic in their descriptions, depending on the type of questions raised; only Heze explains his dharma in a way that embraces both rhetorical styles simultaneously.³⁴ Finally, the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* ends with a detailed description of the soteriological schema that Zongmi

believed was the only viable one from the standpoint of both the Chan and scriptural traditions: sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation. Zongmi demonstrates conclusively the deficiencies of the other three schools in relation to these two aspects of practice and shows that Heze is the only school of Chan that implements them both.³⁵ Indeed, Chinul had to work mightily in his personal notes in *Excerpts* to correct Zongmi's obvious bias in favor of the Heze school and to vindicate the approaches of the two rival schools of Oxhead and Hongzhou.³⁶ (No such luck for the Northern school. Chinul, like the entirety of the mature Chan and Sŏn traditions, considered the Northern school to be irredeemably gradualist.)

Sections of the *Chan Chart* not included in the sections of the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* that Chinul extracted for his *Excerpts* also substantiate the view that Zongmi's text was intended to promote the approach of Heze. In the beginning of the *Chan Chart*, Zongmi outlines the principal and collateral lineages of the Chan masters and, after discussing the relative profundity of their teachings, says, "Naturally it will be seen that the mind of Bodhidharma has flowed down to Heze."³⁷ In the historical section of the text, which discusses the lineages of the four major Chan schools, Heze Shenhui is shown to be in the main transmission lineage of Chan. Briefly, Zongmi

considers the transmission from Daoxin 道信 (580–651) to Hongren 弘忍 (601–674) to Huineng—the fourth, fifth, and sixth patriarchs, respectively—to be the orthodox line. As the mind of the patriarchs was transmitted through a single lineage, the school of Oxhead (Udu/Niutou 牛頭), which also derived from the Fourth Patriarch Daoxin, is regarded as a collateral lineage and not the orthodox line. The Northern school of Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706) is also dismissed because Hongren passed his mantle to Huineng, not to his senior student Shenxiu. Finally, Zongmi provides evidence that Heze was the legitimate successor of the Sixth Patriarch, making him the seventh patriarch and primary successor. Hence, for Zongmi, the Hongzhou tradition, which derives from Huairang 懷讓 (677–744), still another disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, also must be a collateral lineage.³⁸ Not so Chinul, who is well aware that the Heze, Northern, and Oxhead schools had not survived the Tang dynasty and that only the Hongzhou lineage continued into Song-dynasty China and Koryŏ-dynasty Korea.

I think we have grounds for suspicion concerning whether the Korean edition of Zongmi's work even included the opening lineage section found in the *Chan Chart*; indeed, neither Chinul nor his Chosŏn-dynasty commentators evince any knowledge of that section. When Zongmi's full text was extracted from

the larger posthumous collection of his writings (the *Dharma Collection*, or *Pöpchip*) to be “circulated separately” (*pyörhaeng*), the editor(s) might well have considered that lineage section to be completely antiquated and effectively moot. Whatever the reason, Chinul’s *Excerpts* do not include the opening section on the lineage claims of these four Chan schools. All evidence suggests that we are on solid ground in dismissing the suggestion that *Dharma Collection* refers to the entire *Chanyuan ji* and that *Special Practice* refers to all four of the Sŏn schools covered in the *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok*. Instead, *Dharma Collection* refers to the four Sŏn schools, with the Heze school singled out for special practice.

Because these four schools are representative of four different approaches to Sŏn teaching and practice, Chinul extracts the discussion of their essential premises, along with Zongmi’s simile of the *maṇi*, or wish-fulfilling, jewel. However, in Chinul’s review of the four Sŏn schools, he rearranges Zongmi’s coverage so that the Heze school is discussed first, followed by the Northern, Hongzhou, and Oxhead schools. He seeks to highlight Heze’s treatment of the true nature of the mind and of practice by placing Heze first, justifying the reordering by explaining that the insights and expedients taught in the other schools will then be

understood also to have real value. Chinul retains Zongmi's extensive criticism of the Hongzhou school (or at least the Hongzhou school as Zongmi knew it to be practiced when he was writing in the early ninth century); but in his "personal notes" to these passages, Chinul tones down that criticism significantly and largely vindicates the Hongzhou position. I will discuss three possible reasons for this tolerance below but briefly suggest here that it may stem largely from the benefit of three centuries of hindsight: Chinul knew that, of these four schools, Hongzhou had emerged predominant as the Chan tradition matured, making Zongmi's critiques largely anachronistic.

Let me move on now to discuss Zongmi's and Chinul's presentations of these four representative schools of Chan or Sŏn.

Zongmi's and Chinul's Treatments of the Four Chan/Sŏn Schools

The mature Chinese Chan tradition of the late-Tang and Song dynasties offered an account of its own history that was dominated by the so-called Five Houses (O ka/Wu jia 五家) and Seven Schools (Ch'il chong/Qi zong 七宗). The Five Houses were (1) Linji (K. Imje 臨濟), (2) Caodong (K. Chodong 曹洞), (3) Yunmen (K. Unmun 雲門), (4) Fayan (K. Pŏban 法眼), and (5) Weiyang/Guiyang (K. Wiyang 沚仰). The two subbranches of the Linji house fill out the Seven Schools: (6) Yangqi (K. Yanggi 楊岐) and (7) Huanglong (K. Hwangnong 黃龍). Each of these traditions was named after its putative founder(s) and was presumed to have its own distinctive teaching style (*kap'ung/jiafeng* 家風). In Japan, the later Japanese Zen tradition derives largely from two of these mature lineages, the Rinzai (Linji) and Sōtō (Caodong), and these two schools continue to receive the lion's share of coverage in Western treatments of Zen. Through these several schools, Chan emerged as a dominant strand of East Asian Buddhism, exerting immense religious, political, economic, and literary influence across broader Sinitic culture.

Western accounts of the Chan and Zen tradition have long been shaped by discussions of the schools listed above, but little of this account is relevant to Zongmi's coverage of Chan or to the early history of Korean Sŏn Buddhism. A focus on the mature Five Houses and Seven Schools neglects many of the nascent strands of the Chan tradition, especially some of the early eighth- to mid-ninth-century lineages, which were experimenting with methods of practice and the underlying epistemological foundations of the Chan tradition itself. Zongmi, who was writing in the ninth century as this experimentation burgeoned, left detailed accounts and extensive exegeses of these earlier traditions of Chan current in his time.³⁹ For example, in his *Notes to the Great Commentary on the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra* (*Yuanjue jing da shu chao*), which Chinul quotes extensively in his "personal notes" in *Excerpts*, Zongmi discusses seven principal "houses," or schools, that were popular during this period,⁴⁰ and there are passing references to still more schools in other of his works.⁴¹ Those houses have little connection to the Five Houses of the mature tradition. But Zongmi also misses some Chan lineages that wielded inordinate influence in later Chan history. As but one example of such neglected Chan lineages, Zongmi makes no mention in his *Notes to the Great Commentary to the Consummate*

Enlightenment Sūtra of the transmission line connected to Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (d. 740), which evolved into the later Caodong, Yunmen, and Fayuan schools of the classical Five Houses. Four of the schools that Zongmi does treat, which are representative of several of the major streams of Chan thought and practice current in his time, are singled out for detailed treatment in the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*, which forms the core of Chinul's *Excerpts*: the Northern, Oxhead (Niutou), Hongzhou, and Heze schools.⁴² Chinul was deeply influenced by Zongmi's perspectives on the Chan tradition and closely examined these same schools himself in the personal notes he inserted in his *Excerpts*. His analysis, however, differs in some important respects from Zongmi's. Zongmi was the last exponent in China of the Heze school before it died out, and his critiques of the other schools were colored by his sectarian bias. Although Chinul is generally favorable toward the Heze approach, he is not nearly so critical of the other schools and finds something of value in each (with the usual exception of the hapless Northern school).

I will consider the details of their respective analyses below, but I would like first to examine the basic criteria Zongmi and Chinul employed in arriving at their judgments regarding these four schools.

According to the analyses of Zongmi and Chinul, the reason why the teachings of the Heze school were to have pride of place was that they offered a balanced approach toward dharma and person. “Dharma” (*pö̃p/fa* 法) refers to the nature of reality: viz., the ontological factors of immutability (*pulbyö̃n/bubian* 不變) and adaptability, or conditionality (*suyö̃n/suiyuan* 隨緣); these factors are sometimes referred to more succinctly as nature (*sö̃ng/xing* 性, viz., immutable) and characteristics (*sang/xing*, 相, viz., adaptable/conditional). “Person” (*in/ren* 人, *pudgala, sattva*) refers to the soteriological process followed in an individual’s meditative development: specifically for Zongmi and Chinul, this meant the two ventures of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation.⁴³ This division of dharma and person has antecedents in both Indian and Chinese Buddhist doctrine. In Indian Abhidharma materials, for example, the binary resonates with the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*’s distinction between the interpretation of conditioned origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) as “associated with the person” (*sattvākhya*), corresponding to our soteriological aspect (*in/jen*), and “not associated with the person” (*asattvākhya*), equivalent to our ontological aspect (*pö̃p/fa*).⁴⁴ An early tathāgatagarbha text, the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, distinguishes the *adhigamadharmā*—“the realized doctrine,” as

distinguished from the *āgamadharma*, or “scriptural dharma”—into “that which is realized” (i.e., the truth of extinction, corresponding to dharma), and “that by which realized” (i.e., the truth of the path, corresponding to person).⁴⁵ The specific dichotomy between dharma and person, though with a rather more pejorative connotation, is mentioned as the second of a bodhisattva’s four reliances, or points of reference (*pratisaraṇa*): “One should take refuge in the dharma [that is taught], not in the person [who teaches it].”⁴⁶

As Zongmi and Chinul view the soteriological process, the sudden awakening to the essence or nature of mind—the immutable aspect of dharma—lays a firm foundation for the refinement of all the adaptable or conditioned qualities that are derived from that essence. This refinement takes place through the subsequent gradual cultivation of the myriads of practices incumbent upon the bodhisattva. In such an approach, both the immutable and adaptable aspects of reality and the absolute and conventional approaches to practice are kept in harmony. For this reason, these teachers suggest, relatively consistent progress in spiritual development can be expected.

Through these two aspects [of dharma], they will be able to understand that the most crucial points of all the sūtras and śāstras in the entire canon are the nature and characteristics of one’s own mind. Through these two approaches [concerning

person], they will see that the tracks followed by all the sages and saints are the beginning and end of their own practice. This sort of detailed assessment of the fundamental and ancillary aspects [of the process of practice] will obviously help people free themselves from delusion, transition from the provisional toward the real, and realize bodhi quickly.⁴⁷

The relative quality and utility of the systems of training outlined by other Sŏn schools were weighed according to how well they emulated this ideal approach.

Chinul's intent was not to give a historically grounded description of the development of these four Chan schools or the influences that shaped them; he instead views each school as a representative approach to Chan teaching and practice. Hence, Chinul treats these schools not as historical realities but as emblematic styles of training offering valuable expedients for practice; these expedients were valid in any era and among any group of practitioners, including the Sŏn adherents of his own time.

Since Chinul's goal is to offer a guide to practice, not history, I will limit myself to the briefest of historical descriptions to help bring these schools into focus. I will then turn to Zongmi's and Chinul's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the four schools' respective approaches. In this way, we will gain some sense of the approach Chinul advocates in his own Sŏn synthesis.

T. E NORTHERN SCHOOL OF SHENXIU

The Northern school (Bei zong 北宗) of Chan was founded by Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706), a prominent disciple of the putative fifth patriarch of the tradition, Hongren 弘忍 (601–674). Shenxiu, a renowned Chan master of the seventh and eighth centuries, commanded a large following in both clerical and secular circles of the Chinese imperial capitals of Luoyang 洛陽 and Chang'an 長安. Although he was later criticized by proponents of Huineng's "sudden teaching" (*ton'gyo/dunjiao* 頓教) in the South, most early Chan works recognize him as the legitimate successor to the Fifth Patriarch. In the mainstream Chan literature that was available to Zongmi and Chinul, however, the Northern school's teachings were conveyed principally through polemical accounts that appear in the works of his adversaries in this so-called Southern school (Nam chong/Nan zong 南宗), accounts that misrepresent the beliefs, practices, and influence of the school.⁴⁸ In this traditional view, Shenxiu is denigrated as advocating an inveterately gradualist approach to enlightenment, modeled along the lines of the sūtra teachings. All beings are considered to possess a luminous and monistic enlightened nature that, in the ordinary person, is obscured by passions and mental afflictions and bifurcated by dualistic tendencies of

thought. Enlightenment is to be achieved by gradually cleansing the mind of these afflictions until that nature is rediscovered and its inherent qualities appear.

After the ascension of the so-called sudden teaching of the Southern school to a position of orthodoxy in Chan, the putative gradual teachings (*chōmgyo/jianjiao* 漸教) of the Northern school were disparaged by teachers in virtually all other traditions of Chan. The critique of this school that is given by Zongmi and accepted without reservation by Chinul in *Excerpts* is no exception.⁴⁹ Because the Northern school's gradual teachings center on the control and progressive removal of the passions, afflictions, and residual proclivities of mind, its entire approach is seen as compromised, for it substantiates the reality of conditionally generated phenomena rather than recognizing that they all come into existence from the essence of the mind itself. By ignoring the immutable aspect of dharmas, the Northern school is attached to adaptability—the conditioned characteristics of mundane phenomena. Hence, by treating the afflictions, proclivities, and the like as realities that had to be overcome, it deals with them on their own terms, which further enmeshes the practitioner in their net. Although the school's counteragents are in fact employed in the Heze school during the gradual cultivation that follows awakening, in the Northern

school, those practices are not based upon the initial sudden awakening that would assure a proper outlook on the practice. Consequently, the adept cannot know that, although the afflictions must be counteracted, there is nothing in reality that needs to be counteracted and no such practice that in reality needs to be performed. With a theory and practice that are both compromised, right enlightenment is, accordingly, presumed to be impossible to achieve by following the Northern school's approach.

Shenxiu's teachings attracted considerable attention during his lifetime and that of his principal disciple, Puji 普寂 (651–739). However, the virulent attacks of Shenhui in the south beginning in 730 severely undermined the influence of the Northern school. Finally, its location in the Chinese capitals made it particularly vulnerable to political upheaval at the imperial court and led to its enervation during the An Lushan 安祿山 Rebellion of 755–757. Although its lineage seems to have continued until the early tenth century, it lost much of its influence following the depredations of the Huichang 會昌 persecution of Buddhism between 842 and 845. The Northern school ultimately exerted little influence on the later development of the mature Chan schools of China and Korea.

According to Chan lore, after the Fourth Patriarch Daoxin 道信 (580–651) had handed down his patriarchate to Hongren, he went traveling in the vicinity of Oxhead Mountain (Niutoushan 牛頭山), south of present-day Nanjing in Jiangsu Province. Presuming that adepts of outstanding potential must be deep in practice in such an austere and isolated environment, he climbed the mountain and discovered the monk Farong 法融 (594–657) practicing in a rock cave near Youxi Monastery 幽棲寺. After receiving instruction from Daoxin, Farong became enlightened and received transmission from the patriarch. Thus began one of the most successful of the early Chan schools—the Oxhead school (Udu chong/Niutou zong 牛頭宗), which survived for some eight generations until the end of the eighth century.⁵⁰

Before his encounter with the fourth Chan patriarch, Daoxin, Farong is said to have been an avid student of the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā) texts, the tenets of which are centered on the ultimate emptiness or voidness (śūnyatā) of all particularities. Even after the Fourth Patriarch's instruction that the mind-nature is originally enlightened and inherently endowed with all numinous qualities, Farong's approach to Chan was still supposed to have been influenced by this early exposure to the doctrine of emptiness, and Zongmi

draws on this feature in his synopsis of the school's teachings.

The approach of the Oxhead school was designed to point the way toward a vision of the essential voidness of all mundane and supramundane dharmas. Through this vision, the affairs of this world—which were conventionally presumed to be real—were exposed as the deluded hallucinations of the ignorant mind. By understanding the illusory nature of all matters, the student begins to be able to abandon all attachments. By realizing emptiness, the student relinquishes passions and desires and eventually transcends suffering.

Zongmi's critique of this approach is based upon the school's thoroughgoing emphasis on the immutable aspect of dharmas: their voidness. Oxhead simply recognizes that all qualities, whether mundane matters or the supramundane experiences of nirvāṇa or enlightenment, are essentially empty. For Zongmi, this is not a particularly salutary or encouraging vision. The dharma-nature might be void, but it is also pure; it might be characterized by absolute immutability, but it is also capable of manifesting the myriad of conditioned things and a whole range of soteriological expedients. Oxhead practices may therefore help to penetrate illusion, but they do not reach the full realization in which the dharma-nature is seen to be the sum total of both

immutability and adaptability. Consequently, as the school entirely neglects the salutary role of the buddha-nature in promoting spiritual progress, it reaches only halfway to the approach of sudden awakening found in the Heze school. From the standpoint of the gradual cultivation after awakening, however, its approach is acceptable because it stresses the cultivation of techniques that remove the mental afflictions and maintain the mind's innate serenity.

Chinul is not quite so critical of Oxhead and looks for another motive behind Zongmi's appraisal. Quoting a passage from Zongmi's *Preface to the Fount of Chan Collection*, which says that the Oxhead idea that everything is simply an illusion is not the only dharma of this school, Chinul surmises that Zongmi's reason for criticizing the school is to ensure that Sŏn students do not cling to voidness alone as being truth but also move toward a realization of the dynamic aspect of that void essence of mind: the numinous awareness that is the original functioning of the self-nature, a term I will discuss in detail later. Hence Oxhead's approach is a perfectly valid teaching that can be effective in enlightening people who obstinately grasp at dharmas as being real—the fault to which the Northern school was subject.⁵¹ Furthermore, in combination with the kataphatic discourse of the

Hongzhou school, Oxhead's *via negativa* serves as a perfectly valid rhetorical strategy, which counters Hongzhou's tendency toward antinomian "unconstrained conduct" (*muae haeng/wu'ai xing* 無礙行). Hence, in Chinul's view, the Oxhead style of training is worthy of being retained as an expedient method of Sŏn practice.

THE HONGZHOU SCHOOL OF MAZU

Of the seven schools of early Chan that Zongmi covered in his *Notes to the Great Commentary to the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra* (and the four treated in his Record), the only one to survive past the Tang dynasty was the school of Hongzhou. Although there are no reliable sources through which to trace the history of this school's lineage, it traditionally is presumed to have been founded by Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744), an obscure disciple of Huineng, the reputed Sixth Patriarch. The school was popularized, and its approach set, however, by Huairang's renowned successor Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788), who was based at Kaiyuan Monastery 開元寺 in Hongzhou 洪州, a district in present-day Jiangxi Province. Since Mazu's disciple Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (720–814), another important figure in the school's early history, lived on Baizhang Mountain in the same region, the

school that grew up around them came to be known as the Hongzhou (K. Hongju) school 洪州宗. The Hongzhou school eventually evolved into the Linji school of the mature Chan tradition, and a collateral line of the extended Nanyue lineage evolved into the Weiyang/Guiyang school.

Unlike those of the three other Sŏn schools covered in *Excerpts*, many early teachers in the Hongzhou school taught in the southern and western hinterlands of the Chinese empire, far from the northern imperial capitals of Luoyang and Chang'an. Because of its isolated rural location, the lineage was able to avoid most of the periodic persecutions suffered by all the schools based in the capitals. It is the Hongzhou school that is presumed to have developed the style of teaching that later comes to be so distinctive of Chan: the iconoclastic use of shouts, verbal paradox, beatings, and other illocutionary gestures to give expression to the ultimate reality that transcends all concepts and to awaken its students to this state.⁵² Its lineage was one of the few direct transmission lines of Chan to outlast the Tang dynasty in China. Although its teaching style eventually became one of the hallmarks of Chan, at the time Zongmi was writing—the middle of the ninth century—it was as yet one of many competing schools and hardly seen as the mainstream of the Chan tradition.⁵³

The Hongzhou's approach to dharma is portrayed by Zongmi as offering a kataphatic, or positive, description of an ideal reality. It views all discriminative phenomena as manifestations of the inherent buddha-nature: "The arising of mental states, the activity of thought, snapping the fingers, shifting the eyes, and indeed all actions and activities, are in their totality the functioning of the buddha-nature...."⁵⁴ This buddha-nature embraces fully the absolute, immutable characteristics of the mind, as well as its relative, adaptable properties. Mazu's statement "mind is Buddha" signals this central conception.⁵⁵ Awakening in this school means simply understanding that all thoughts and activities are expressions of the buddha-nature itself. Shouting and the use of paradoxical expressions were used as pedagogical expedients to expose directly to the student the reality of that nature.

Zongmi identified one major flaw in the Hongzhou approach to practice: the school holds that practice involves nothing more than keeping the mind in a completely receptive state, so that it is free to act naturally and spontaneously. Hence, rather than cultivating wholesome qualities of mind or counteracting unwholesome afflictions, "cultivation means simply to give free rein to the mind," in other words, to release the mind from all conventionally imposed restraints. Once the buddha-mind is

functioning freely, all the qualities and attributes that are inherently contained in that mind can then operate freely as well. The school represents, accordingly, a sudden awakening/sudden cultivation approach to practice and does not actively encourage further spiritual development after awakening, as does Zongmi's preferred Heze school.

Chinul assumes that Zongmi's criticism of this school stems from his concern that the Hongzhou soteriological approach might limit its students to inferential knowledge (*anumāna*) of the buddha-nature through indirect observations of the active functioning of that nature in "raising the eyebrows, shifting the eyes, laughing, yawning, coughing," and the like. Such training would not necessarily yield direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) of the reality of the buddha-nature, as is revealed through the Heze teaching of numinous awareness. Without this grounding in experiential knowledge of the buddha-nature, the Hongzhou practice of maintaining spontaneity in all situations might too readily degenerate into antinomianism: since all things were inferred to be the functioning of the buddha-nature, morality and immorality were identical and there was therefore nothing that students actually needed to cultivate.^{[56](#)}

Chinul, writing nearly four centuries after Zongmi, is much better disposed toward the Hongzhou

lineage than was his predecessor. As I mentioned above, Chinul was ordained in the Sagulsan school of Korean Sŏn, one of the Nine Mountains Sŏn schools (Kusan Sŏnmun) that trace their lineages back to the Silla dynasty. Seven of these Nine Mountains schools, including Chinul's Sagulsan line, derived from first-generation successors of Mazu Daoyi in the Chinese Hongzhou school. Chinul is also well aware of the eventual success in Song-dynasty Chan of the Linji school, which evolved out of the main lineage of the Hongzhou school; indeed, one of the major influences in his own practice derived from the teachings of Dahui Zonggao in the Yangqi branch of the Linji school. (And still later in the Koryŏ dynasty, Korean teachers who have received transmission from Chinese Linji masters will return to Korea bringing that lineage and thereby ensure that the Linji/Imje style of Sŏn will become one of the dominant influences in later Korean Buddhism.) Chinul also presumes that the Heze line was extinguished in China following its brief respite under Zongmi. He is, therefore, considerably more lenient toward the Hongzhou approach and presents the school as offering a fully viable approach to Sŏn practice. Indeed, he quotes from another of Zongmi's works, *Preface to the Fount of Chan Collection*, to demonstrate that both the Hongzhou and Heze schools are included in the third of Zongmi's three

broad categories of Sŏn: “the school that directly reveals the mind-nature” (*chikhyŏn simsŏng chong/zhixian xinxing zong* 直顯心性宗).⁵⁷ Effectively, then, they are the same school, implying that even though the Heze lineage died out in China, its teachings lived on in the guise of the Hongzhou school.⁵⁸

Chinul views the Hongzhou teachings as containing valuable expedients for the development of practice. The Hongzhou kataphatic rhetoric, which portrayed all things positively as manifestations of the buddha-nature, is, moreover, an ideal complement to the apophatic, or negative, discourse of the Oxhead school, which describes all things as being simply void or empty. Its approach would help keep Sŏn students from falling into the error of annihilationism. Hence, Hongzhou practices are valuable for countering the attachment to the mental quiescence that derives from meditation, and in encouraging students to develop the dynamism inherent in the active functioning of the mind.

THE HEZE SCHOOL OF SHENHUI

Throughout the first quarter of the eighth century, the Northern school of Chan reigned supreme in the imperial capitals in the north of China. In 730, however, a relatively unknown monk from the south

of China launched a grand assault on the Chan of Shenxiu's successor, Puji. Advocating a sudden approach to Chan that supposedly derived from the Chan patriarchs themselves, this monk eventually triumphed over all the other schools of his time and established his teacher as the transmitter of the authentic lineage of the Chan patriarchs. For a time, his lineage became the dominant school of Chan in the northern capitals.

The monk who initiated this new movement was Heze Shenhui, a reputed disciple of Huineng, one of the lesser known of the eleven main disciples of Fifth Patriarch Hongren. Challenging the Northern school with the enthusiasm of a prophet, Shenhui made accusations about the Northern school's doctrine and the legitimacy of its lineage that at times bordered on hyperbole and fabrication. By retelling the history of the Chan transmission, Shenhui was eventually able to establish his teacher Huineng as the Sixth Patriarch. And to confirm that the Northern school's gradual approach was a blatant misconstruction of the true teachings of Chan, he produced a collection of sermons by his teacher that vindicated the sudden teaching of his patriarchal lineage. This sudden teaching assumed that, since the mind-nature is always complete and perfect in itself, progressive development of the mind prior to enlightenment through expedient methods of practice is utterly

redundant. What is required instead is a sudden awakening to that nature, which will automatically assure that the mind's operation may continue unimpaired.⁵⁹ Although it seems that a similar teaching was advocated by the Northern school, the branding of that school as an inferior "gradual" teaching that had usurped the rightful instructions of the Chan patriarchs placed it in a defensive position from which it never recovered.

By 745 Shenhui had attracted enough attention to warrant an invitation to reside in a monastery within the precincts of Luoyang itself. Once he took up residence there, the tone of his invective became increasingly strident. Unable to ignore Shenhui's continued attacks, coming then at such close range, the Northern school took action. Their political position, gained through long years of imperial favor, enabled them to convince important officials that Shenhui's motives were subversive. In 753 he was exiled to the remote southern province of Jiangxi.

The exile was short-lived, however. The An Lushan Rebellion created havoc in the capitals and strained the financial resources of the exiled government. To raise money for its military campaigns, the Tang administration set up ordination platforms throughout the country for the purpose of selling monk's certificates. After Tang forces re-took the capitals, the court called Shenhui back to

Luoyang to assist in this fundraising campaign, and his efforts were so successful that the government was considerably strengthened. In recognition of his success, the government ordered that a Chan center be built for him on the site of Heze Monastery 荷澤寺 in Luoyang; accordingly, the school he founded is called the Heze (K. Hat'aek) school 荷澤宗. He remained there until his death in 758. The centers of the Northern school were seriously disrupted during the rebellion and were never able to recover their former stature. Shenhui's so-called Southern school had won the day.⁶⁰

Although Shenhui had been successful in his struggle with the Northern school, his followers were not nearly so adept in maintaining his teachings. He had many disciples, but none achieved the renown of their teacher, and the school fell into decline. Apart from a brief respite under its fifth-generation successor, Guifeng Zongmi, its influence continued to dwindle until it effectively disappeared during the Huichang persecution of 842–845.

Zongmi, the last patriarch of the Heze school, was one of the most incisive theoreticians in the Chan tradition; his writings moreover covered many areas of the doctrinal teachings of Kyo. His attempts to harmonize the views of the doctrinal schools with those of Chan greatly influenced the future development of Korean and even Japanese

Buddhism.⁶¹ Chinul's Kyo predecessor Ŭich'ŏn 義天 (1055–1101) had been impressed by Zongmi's balanced appraisal of the two traditions,⁶² and Chinul was deeply influenced by Zongmi in his own approach to the systematization of the teachings of Sŏn and Kyo. Zongmi's presentation of the Heze teachings in the *Record* portrays them as the basis of both the exoteric sūtra teachings and the esoteric mind-transmission of Sŏn; they are, consequently, uniquely capable of subsuming various perspectives toward dharma and practice held by other Buddhist schools.⁶³

Chinul accepts much of Zongmi's high appraisal of the Heze school, though not uncritically. In fact, in the very first line of *Excerpts*, Chinul alludes to the *Platform Sūtra*'s passage in which the Sixth Patriarch denigrates Shenhui as an “esteemed master of intellectual understanding” (*chihae jongsa/zhijie zongshi* 知解宗師). In making this comment at the very beginning of his text, Chinul is throwing down a gauntlet, showing that he will not be servilely accepting of Zongmi's views of Heze's teachings. Chinul instead sees Shenhui's school as offering an approach to practice that is of real value for many Buddhist practitioners but not as the only valid approach to Sŏn training.

The ontological suppositions of the Heze school as they were interpreted by Zongmi and Chinul

center on the two aspects of the mind that I discussed previously: immutability and adaptability. The absolute basis of all dharmas is the void and quiescent mind. Although this mind is ultimately ineffable, it can be experienced through its inherent sentience, which Heze calls numinous awareness. Whether the individual is enlightened or deluded, this awareness is unaffected either by the machinations of the discriminatory intellect or by the obscuring influence of external sensory objects. Nevertheless, because this awareness cannot be limited or defiled by either internal mental and emotional states or external sensory contacts, it is free to adapt in an infinite variety of ways, depending on the individual's predilections of habit. If a person is deluded and immersed in sensual pleasures, for example, this awareness adapts in such a manner that it is displayed as ignorance, karmic action, and ultimately suffering. But if a person is awakened, this awareness manifests in its basic void and quiescent guise. Hence, in Heze's approach, awakening implies an understanding of these two aspects of the mind: its immutable, absolute essence and its adaptive, relative faculties. Zongmi and Chinul claim that, in contrast to the other schools of Chan that the *Record* discusses, only the Heze approach is perfectly balanced between the immutable and adaptable aspects of dharma.

Through a sudden awakening (*tono/dunwu* 頓悟) to the void and quiescent essence of mind, this awareness is revealed in its fundamental form as free of thoughts (*munyŏm/wunian* 無念) and devoid of all relative signs, or “signless” (*musang/wuxiang* 無相). To maintain this state of no-thought is the primary practice of the Heze school according to Zongmi, and it is through maintaining this state that the remainder of the bodhisattva practices will be consummated. No-thought keeps the mind in a purely receptive state so that it can become gradually infused with the positive states of mind developed through skillful meditative practices and counteractive techniques. It is through this gradual cultivation following awakening that the mind comes to be filled with wholesome qualities that can be used both for the student’s own spiritual development and for instructing others. But by performing these practices in a state of no-thought, students will cultivate while knowing that there is nothing that in fact needs to be cultivated, thus helping them to avoid becoming attached to their practice. Accordingly, practice in the Heze school cannot begin until there is a sudden awakening to the mind-nature, which catalyzes understanding of its immutability and its adaptive functions. Hence, sudden awakening here means a sudden “awakening of understanding” (*haeo/jiewu* 解悟).

Through this awakening, adepts come to understand that they are originally endowed with the nature that is no different from that of all buddhas; in short, they know they are already fully enlightened. With the understanding gained through this awakening, students gradually cultivate the full range of wholesome qualities and counteractive techniques (while recognizing, of course, that there is actually nothing that needs to be cultivated), which generates the final “realization-awakening,” or “confirming awakening” (*chǔngō/zhengwu* 證悟), at which point they are able to fully *act* as buddhas, not just *be* buddhas. The perfect functioning of the numinous awareness is then completely restored; students are free to manifest in an infinite variety of ways the positive qualities that have thoroughly infused their minds in order to help sentient beings of all levels and capacities. This combination—the absolute quiescence achieved through sudden awakening and the dynamic responsiveness gained through gradual cultivation—is the state of buddhahood and the goal of Buddhist training. Hence the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, the path that all the sages and saints of the past are claimed to have followed, is the optimal method for ensuring that Buddhist practitioners attain buddhahood.

Sudden awakening/gradual cultivation is the hallmark of the Heze school and the soteriological

schema that distinguished it from other schools of Chan. Sudden awakening/gradual cultivation is, as well, the schema that is most easily reconcilable with the delineation of the *mārga*, or path, in the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, the pinnacle of the scriptural doctrine in the Korean tradition. There, practice follows a process in which the sudden production of the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*) at the inception of the bodhisattva path is followed by a gradual process of development that culminates in the experience of buddhahood. By advocating sudden awakening/gradual cultivation in Chan as well, Zongmi found a bridge between Chan and the Teachings. In Zongmi's portrayal, the Heze teachings thus emerge as broad enough to embrace not only other Chan schools, but also the doctrinal schools. In Chinul's examination of the Heze school, he demonstrates that a combination of the diametrically opposed teachings of Hongzhou and Oxhead results in the Heze outlook; eventually, through understanding that outlook, all limited views drop away and a broad vision of the true import of Chan and Sŏn is achieved.

Zongmi's interpretation of Heze practice places most of its stress on no-thought. In Shenhui's writings, however, there is also emphasis on the symbiosis between *samādhi* and *prajñā*. *Samādhi*, the quiescent, absolute aspect of the mind, implies

the eradication of thoughts and correlates with no-thought. Prajñā, the dynamic, analytical processes of the mind, refers to a constant awareness of no-thought and the voidness of all phenomena. In passages that recall and often parallel sections in the *Platform Sūtra* of Huineng, Shenhui advocates that samādhi and prajñā are two aspects of the same nondual mind-nature, which cannot ultimately be differentiated.⁶⁴ In a refrain repeated frequently across the tradition, samādhi is the essence of prajñā and prajñā is the functioning of samādhi. These synthetic and analytical tendencies of the mind cannot be bifurcated but should always operate in combination with one another. Chinul covers this theme of what he calls either the “concurrent cultivation of samādhi and prajñā” (*chŏnghye ssangsu/dinghui shuangxiu* 定慧雙修) or “maintaining equally alertness and quiescence” (*sŏngjŏk tŭngji/xingji dengchi* 惺寂等持) in *Excerpts*, but it receives its most detailed treatment in other of his writings, especially his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (*Susim kyŏl*) and *Encouragement to Practice: The Compact of the Samādhi and Prajñā Society*.

Like its supposed nemesis, the Northern school, the Heze school would also not survive the Tang dynasty: its last major exponent, Zongmi, died in 841, and the school effectively came to an end with the Huichang persecution of Buddhism between 842 and

845. For many later Chan adepts, Zongmi's ecumenical approach also seemed to blur the distinctions between the doctrinal teachings and the special transmissions of Chan, earning him much invective from Chan writers of later generations. (Some of this invective may be found in the quotations from the writings of the Linji school exponent Dahui Zonggao, which appear in the "The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation" section at the end of Chinul's *Excerpts*.) The teachings that the Heze school had emphasized—the ecumenical spirit, the sudden awakening/gradual cultivation approach to practice, the balanced development of samādhi and prajñā—commanded comparatively little lasting influence over the further development of Chan in China. But four hundred years later, in Korea, Zongmi's writings found an ardent, though by no means uncritical, admirer in Chinul, who used them as the foundation upon which the epistemological suppositions of a Korean variety of Sŏn were constructed. It was Chinul's cooptation of the teachings of an early school of Chan and their use in reconciling the Sŏn and Kyo schools of his own time that would augur much of the future development of Buddhism in Korea.⁶⁵ Chinul sought to turn the Heze approach into a truly ecumenical teaching, and he broadened its scope so that it could encompass not only the Oxhead and Hongzhou

approaches of the early Sŏn tradition but also the later Hwaŏm and Imje (Ch. Linji) teachings, which for him were the culminating achievements of the Kyo and Sŏn traditions.

Numinous Awareness and Tracing Back the Radiance

One of the primary reasons for both Zongmi's and Chinul's interest in the Heze account of practice was its emphasis on "numinous awareness," (*yǒngji/lingzhi* 靈知) the sentience that is at the core of the mind. Insight into this core quality of sentience is said to occur by tracing back the radiance of the mind (*hoe'gwang panjo/huiguang fanzhao* 迴光返照) to its source. Knowing that numinous awareness through the initial sudden awakening would help the student place all of his or her experience into a proper context, framed now in terms of such valuable doctrinal binaries as essence and function, nature and characteristics, and so on. The clarity of mind generated by this sudden understanding-awakening would help to ensure that the gradual cultivation that followed this awakening was performed optimally, eventually leading to the realization-awakening that brought the final confirmation that one had attained buddhahood.

The concept of numinous awareness harkens back to a celebrated passage in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* where the Buddha declares that the mind is inherently luminous but dimmed by adventitious afflictions.⁶⁶ Heze called this luminous quality of mind

“numinous awareness” or, more fully, “void and quiescent numinous awareness” (*kongjōk yōngji/kongji lingzhi* 空寂靈知). Numinous awareness was adopted by Zongmi and eventually Chinul to refer to the fundamental quality of sentience, which, not so figuratively, “shines” on sense-objects, illuminating them and allowing them to be cognized.⁶⁷ This view that the mind illuminates the sense-realms is found frequently in the writings of Sōn masters; note, for instance, the comments of Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866): “You, O followers of the Way, are right now vividly illumining all things and taking the measure of the world; you give the names to the three realms of existence.”⁶⁸ But this inherent radiance of the mind does not merely illuminate the world of sensory phenomena; as the mind’s natural luminosity is restored through meditation practice, it comes virtually to shine *through* objects, rendering them transparent and exposing their inherent voidness (*sūnyatā*).⁶⁹ Hence, numinous awareness is the quality of sentience, common to all sentient beings, that demonstrates their inherent capacity for enlightenment;⁷⁰ it serves as both the faculty that allows meditation to develop through “tracing back the radiance” and the quality of mind mastered through that meditation.

“Awareness” (*chi/zhi* 知) in this context refers to the capacity of the mind to remain aware of all

sensory stimuli. Chinul provides various descriptions of this capacity, describing it variously as “that mind of outstanding purity and brilliance of all the buddhas of the three time-periods, ... that enlightened nature that is the original source of all sentient beings”;⁷¹ “the mind that has been transmitted successively from the Buddha through the patriarchs”;⁷² or simply “your original face.”⁷³ The precise denotation of this term has been at issue since the beginnings of Zen studies in the West.

In the famous debates between the Chinese exegete Hu Shih (1891–1962) and the Japanese Zen popularizer D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966), these two scholars interpreted the term as “knowledge” and “prajñā-intuition,” respectively. I find both renderings wanting; neither translation properly conveys the sense that “awareness” is the fundamental quality of sentience through which all mental properties, be they “knowledge,” “intuition,” or otherwise, are made manifest.⁷⁴ This quality of awareness is itself formless and free of thoughts and, consequently, is able to adapt without limitation to the full range of human inclinations, whether toward greed and hatred or wisdom and compassion. In all such cases, sentience itself is forever unaffected and remains simply “aware.”⁷⁵ To describe the adaptability of this faculty, Chinul adopts a phrase that he learns from Zongmi and Heze but that ultimately derives from the

Chinese classic the *Laozi*: “This one word ‘awareness’ is the source [alt. gateway] of all wonders.”⁷⁶ As the foundation of sentience, this awareness is fundamentally nondual but remains dynamic enough to manifest its “wonders” in an infinite number of different forms. In looking back on the radiance of the mind, one starts at the level of these wonders—the phenomenal manifestations of the nondual mind—and then traces back those manifestations to their perceptual source: sentience itself, or numinous awareness.

The concept of numinous awareness is closely associated with the meditative practice of tracing the radiance emanating from the mind back to its source. This concept is an essential element of the underlying processes governing all types of meditation practice, as Chinul interprets them. Chinul employs a variety of complementary designations for this aspect of contemplation: “trace the radiance back to one’s own mind” (*panjo chasim* 返照自心); “trace the radiance back to one’s own nature” (*panjo chasŏng* 返照自性); “in one thought-moment, trace the light back and see one’s own original nature” (*illyŏm hoegwang kyŏn chabonsŏng* 一念廻光見自本性); “trace back and observe the qualities and functions of your own mind” (*pan’gwan chasim chi tŏgyong* 返觀自心之德用); “to observe and reflect on your own mind” (*kwanjo chasim* 觀照自心); “reflect on

and view your own mind” (*chogyŏn chasim* 照見自心); “mirror your own mind” (*kyŏng chasim* 鏡自心); or simply “trace back the radiance” (*panjo* 返照), “contemplative reflection” (*kwanjo* 觀照), or even “introspection” or “looking inward” (*naejo* 內照).⁷⁷ Although the term *hoegwang panjo* can be interpreted as “reflection,” “introspection,” “counter-illumination,” or even “meditation,” the more dynamic renderings I adopt here better convey, I believe, a sense of the gnoseological process involved.

Chinul’s Chosŏn-dynasty commentator, Yŏndam Yuil, has given a succinct and precise definition of the term.

To “trace back the radiance” means to use one’s own mind to trace the radiance back to the numinous awareness of one’s own mind; for this reason, it is called “trace back the radiance.” It is like seeing the radiance of the sun’s rays and following it back until you see the orb of the sun itself.⁷⁸

For Chinul, regardless of the specific meditation technique being developed, tracing back the radiance illuminates the path through which the discriminative mind can rediscover its original, nondual source, which is free of conceptualization.⁷⁹ In discussing Hwaŏm contemplative practice, for example, Chinul describes its sole purpose as being to induce students “to look back on the radiance of the Way of this one true *dharmadhātu* that is their own mind’s fundamental Wisdom of Universal

Radiance.”⁸⁰ In this context, to reflect or look back on one’s own mind refers to the immediate realization that one is originally a buddha and that ignorance and its concomitants are all the products of the tathāgatas’ Wisdom of Universal Radiance.

If they [ordinary persons of great aspiration] can follow back the light and trace back the radiance, then the afflictions that have existed on the ground of ignorance for an immense number of kalpas are transformed into the Wisdom of Universal Radiance of all the buddhas. Since the afflictions, the ignorance, and the illusory guises of sentient beings have all arisen from the tathāgatas’ Wisdom of Universal Radiance, if today [ordinary persons of great aspiration] trace back the radiance, they will find that these are all entirely their own essence and are originally not external things. They are like waves that billow up on still water: the waves are the water. They are like [phantom] flowers that appear in the sky: the flowers are nothing more than the sky.⁸¹

Tracing the radiance back to the mind’s source plays a vital role in Chinul’s description of Sŏn meditation as well. In Chinul’s treatment of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, for example, tracing back the radiance functions as the sudden-awakening constituent of the path, enabling practitioners to gain a personal insight into their own enlightened nature. As Chinul says in one of his most popular and widely read works, *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*; “If in one moment of thought he then follows back the light [of his mind to its source] and sees his own original nature, he will discover that

the ground of this nature is innately free of afflictions (*kleśa*), and that he himself is originally endowed with the nature of wisdom that is free from the contaminants (*āsrava*), which is not a hair's breadth different from that of all the buddhas.”⁸² After the recognition (or, perhaps more accurately, “re”-cognition) of that numinous awareness, students then must continue on to discipline their minds through gradual cultivation so that only salutary and beneficial manifestations of that awareness will appear. It is this process of tracing back the radiance that all specific meditation techniques will help to initiate.

***Excerpts* and the Debates Concerning Sudden vs. Gradual Enlightenment**

The preceding consideration of the crucial role that numinous awareness and tracing back the radiance play in Buddhist practice brings us to the main focus of Chinul's *Excerpts*: a dispute that raged in East Asian Buddhism over the correct map of the path, a dispute often referred to as the sudden/gradual debate.⁸³ This debate, which did so much to help forge uniquely East Asian forms of Buddhist thought and practice, receives in Chinul's *Excerpts* one of the most exhaustive and insightful treatments in all of traditional East Asian Buddhist literature. The crux of this debate is how to respond to the question of whether enlightenment is achieved “all at once” (*ton/dun* 頓) in a sudden burst of insight, or whether enlightenment unfolds gradually (*chŏm/jian* 漸) either by following a rigorous course of religious training or as a result of some sort of natural process of soteriological development. The debate as it evolved over time involves intricate doctrinal analyses and exegeses—an endeavor that Chinul, like any good commentator, enthusiastically embraces. But this is no mere scholastic squabble: it goes to the very heart of Buddhism itself and how its religious practice was to be both conceived and carried out. By the

middle of the Tang dynasty, exegetes in virtually all schools of Chinese Buddhist thought were exploring the sudden/gradual issue in great detail, suggesting in turn a number of different soteriological schemata. The Chinese Chan tradition was especially concerned with this issue, and by the mid-ninth century it began to define its own self-identity as an independent school in terms of suddenness, or subitism, even going so far as to call itself the “sudden teaching”; this designation was meant to distinguish Chan from what it disparaged as the “gradual teachings” of the mainstream doctrinal tradition and certain regressive and benighted strands of Chan, such as the Northern school.

The sudden/gradual debate was no less crucial in medieval Korean Sŏn, but it has become a virulent focus of sectarian dispute in modern Korean Buddhism. Chinul treated the sudden/gradual question in a number of his works, offering perspectives on this issue based on solid textual evidence and his personal meditative experience. But Chinul’s most sustained coverage of the issue is in his *Excerpts*, a text that remains at the center of the sudden/gradual debate in Korea even in the contemporary period. Understanding Chinul’s views is thus vital for understanding the subsequent evolution of the Sŏn tradition in Korea and changing outlooks on the tradition’s sense of its own identity.

From his peninsular vantage point, isolated both geographically and temporally from the debate that had been raging in China already for several centuries, Chinul is able to offer something of a detached perspective that can help also to illuminate Chinese treatments of Buddhist soteriology.

Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation: Chinul's Preferred Soteriology of Moderate Subitism

Chinul discusses the sudden/gradual issue in several of his writings, including his earliest work, *Encouragement to Practice: The Compact of the Samādhi and Prajñā Community*, written in 1190, and arguably his most popular treatise, *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, composed between 1203 and 1205. But his most extensive examination of this question appears in his 1209 magnum opus, *Excerpts*, the text translated here. *Excerpts* was intended to present a comprehensive account of earlier analyses of Buddhist soteriology found in Chinese sources associated with both the Sŏn and Kyo traditions. His treatment includes copious quotations taken from relevant sources on the subject, accompanied by an inserted commentary (his “personal notes”) that sought to resolve the discrepancies in those variant interpretations. Chinul’s purpose in *Excerpts* was not solely theoretical, however. Fearing that an improper understanding of the regimen of training might impede spiritual development, his discussion of Buddhist soteriology was meant to serve as a guide to liberation for contemporary students of meditation. Ultimately, Chinul’s explication of this issue was

intended to provide Sŏn practitioners with the firm grasp of the underpinnings of Buddhist soteriology they would need if their practice was to have any hope of succeeding.

As I have mentioned above, the soteriological approach Chinul most consistently advocated in his writings is called sudden awakening/gradual cultivation (*tono chŏmsu/dunwu jianxiu* 頓悟漸修).⁸⁴ In this approach, which Chinul derived from Zongmi, practice was to begin with a sudden, initial insight into the structure of the person's relationship with the world. Chinul explains that the initial sudden awakening is the vision that one's own original nature is no different from that of all the buddhas. The person realizes the "ideal wisdom" (*iji/lizhi* 理智) that exposes the essential voidness of all dharmas and the individual's own lack of a perduring self.⁸⁵ This type of insight was termed "understanding-awakening," the functional equivalent of the "path involving vision" (*kyŏndo/jiandao* 見道, *darśanamārga*) in mainstream Indian path systems. In Indian Abhidharma accounts of *mārga*, the path of vision catalyzes an initial insight into the reality of *nirvāṇa*, which removes forever the three fetters (*saṃyojana*) associated with wrong views (*dṛṣṭi*), that is, views that bind one to the incessant cycle of *saṃsāra*: (1) a mistaken belief in the existence of a self that is connected with the physical body

(*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*); (2) attachment to the efficacy of rites and rituals as a means of attaining liberation (*śīlavrataparāmarśa*); and (3) skeptical doubts about the efficacy of the path (*vicikitsā*). Thus, the path involving vision brings about a similar clarification in one's perspective concerning the true nature of reality as does the understanding-awakening. As Chinul explains it, the understanding-awakening occurs as a result of a thoroughgoing exposure to the mind's real properties, which Chinul, following the Chinese Huayan patriarch Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839), defines as “the clear comprehension of nature and characteristics [in which one has] clearly apprehended the mind-nature.”⁸⁶ But this awakening is not supposed to be mere intellectual knowledge engendered through study or learning; it is, instead, a spiritual experience that draws on doctrinal explanations concerning the void and quiescent numinous awareness to develop the student's own practice of tracing back the radiance⁸⁷ and gain an initial comprehension of one's own true nature. Through the understanding-awakening, adepts will recognize that “your own physical, verbal, and mental states, as well as the distinctions between all your various impulses, arise from the tathāgatas' physical, verbal, and mental states and from the distinctions between their various impulses. They are all devoid of essence or nature, self or person. Since they all

conditionally originated from the nonmanifesting own-nature of *dharmadhātu*, you cannot find that locus where these faculties were originally planted. Their nature itself is the *dharmadhātu*.”⁸⁸ And because this awakening is not achieved through progressive development in specific aspects of religious training but in a single moment of insight, it is called sudden.⁸⁹

At the initial moment of achieving the understanding-awakening, students may then know that they are buddhas; for most, however, their practice would still be too immature for them to consistently act enlightened. Deep-seated proclivities of habit (*sūpki/xiqi* 習氣, *vāsanā*) would continue to infect students’ decision-making, impeding their ability to express the enlightenment they now knew to be inherent in their own minds. These residual proclivities have been acquired since time immemorial (lit., “beginningless” time, *musi/wushi* 無時) and are therefore not so quickly removed. Students must also train themselves repeatedly to apply the understanding they have gained through their initial sudden awakening in the ordinary world and to transform their knowledge into beneficial and appropriate action. Consequently, while making that initial understanding-awakening the basis of their training, students had then to continue on to develop their awakening through “gradual cultivation”

(*chōmsu/jianxiu* 漸修), counteracting the inevitable unsalutary tendencies of mind (e.g., greed, hatred, anxiety), cultivating salutary qualities (e.g., loving-kindness, compassion, tranquillity of mind), and developing the full range of perfections (*pāramitās*) incumbent on the bodhisattva. In the mainstream Indian path schema, gradual cultivation thus corresponds to the “path of cultivation” (*sudō/xiudao* 修道, *bhāvanāmārga*), which follows the path involving vision. Practice along the path of cultivation will remove, over the course of probably several lifetimes of sustained training, the afflictions (*kleśa*) associated with each of the three realms of existence (*traidhātuka*; viz., the sensuous realm, the realm of subtle materiality, and the immaterial realm). In Chinul’s explanation, because this gradual cultivation takes place on the basis of an initial sudden awakening, it cannot be compared to the supposedly inferior gradual practices that East Asian adepts have traditionally attributed to the Northern school of Sōn or the Hīnayāna strand (often called the “Two-Vehicle” teachings) of Kyo.⁹⁰ Instead, in this schema, students eliminate mental afflictions while knowing that there are in fact no such afflictions that need to be eliminated; develop wholesome states of mind while knowing that there are no such states that need to be developed; and continue to practice while knowing that there is actually nothing that needs to

be practiced. Hence, because the content of the awakening experience is not altered in any way by this subsequent training, from an ultimate standpoint the process of gradual cultivation is actually performed in a perpetual state of no-thought. Chinul describes the gradual cultivation that follows sudden awakening as authentic cultivation and authentic purification.⁹¹

Gradual cultivation also entails two distinct forms, which Chinul discusses in detail in his *Excerpts*: a more passive “cultivation of no-thought” (*munyŏm su/wunian xiu* 無念修) and a more dynamic style of “cultivation that is fully engaged” with the conditioned realm (*p’ansa su/banshi xiu* 辦事修). Chinul derives these terms from Yongming Yanshou’s *Mirror of the Source Record*. Chinul’s commentator Yuil explains that cultivation described from the standpoint of the initial awakening is no-thought cultivation, while the dynamic application of that awakening, which enables one to bring an end to unwholesome actions and to develop wholesome actions, is fully engaged cultivation.⁹² In no-thought cultivation, the practitioner experiences the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) and is thus able to remain in a state of harmony with the essential suchness of the self-nature. Because the content of the awakening experience is not altered in any way by this subsequent training, from an ultimate standpoint gradual cultivation is actually performed in

a perpetual state of no-thought. Chinul's commentator Chŏnghye describes fully engaged cultivation as a more dynamic style of practice, in which the awakened mind is trained to function optimally in the conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) realm, learning to react to the things of this world naturally and spontaneously. But because this type of cultivation remains based in the equanimity of the essence of mind, it is able to engage with anything while being itself unmoving.⁹³

As this gradual cultivation matures, there ultimately is nothing further that needs to be either eliminated or developed. At that point, knowledge and action intersect and students experience a culminating realization-awakening or confirming awakening, which authenticates the understanding gained through their initial awakening experience. This realization-awakening is the consummation of the *mārga* and is therefore functionally equivalent to the Indian “path where no further training is necessary” (*muhakto/wuxuedao* 無學道, *aśaikṣamārga*) or the “path of completion” (*kugyŏng to/jiujing dao* 究竟道, *niṣṭhāmārga*), the final stage of the five-path (*pañcamārga*) schema in the traditional Abhidharma and Yogācāra *mārga* structures. At that stage, the person becomes a buddha in fact as well as potential: as Chinul defines it, again following

Chengguan, realization-awakening is “the mind that reaches the arcane ultimate,”⁹⁴ that is, buddhahood.

A distinctive aspect of the sudden awakening/gradual cultivation approach, which attracted both Chinul and Zongmi to it over other soteriological schemata, is that it keeps awakening and cultivation in careful balance so that they support and enhance each other. The sudden awakening at the beginning of students’ practice provides a firm foundation for their training and helps to ensure that they will not backslide in the face of the inevitable trials and tribulations along the road ahead. Since they have direct awareness through their sudden awakening that they are already buddhas, what would ever be able to shake that confidence? Gradual cultivation, in turn, helps students learn how to apply in daily life the understanding gained through the initial awakening, mitigating the compulsion toward quietude and isolation that can result from such an intense interior experience, a result that might prompt indifference to the suffering of others.

Chinul mentions in his *Excerpts* that “the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation ... has been established specifically for ordinary persons of great aspiration.”⁹⁵ Who are such persons and how can one tell that they are engaged in the gradual cultivation that follows awakening? Chinul

offers an interesting account in his first work, *Encouragement to Practice: The Compact of the Samādhi and Prajñā Society*. There, Chinul describes how such ordinary persons of great aspiration are unaffected by the defiled world around them and how their personal clarity of mind remains forever unsullied. Such people would be totally undeceived by the chimeric reality of conditioned things and therefore could interact with the sensory world without generating either greed or hatred, unsalutary mental factors that would entice their minds toward defilement. Their firm faith that their minds are the buddha-mind and their own natures are the dharma-nature assures their total dedication to the inherent “ideal wisdom” while still being able to apply the “phenomenal wisdom” (*saji/shizhi* 事智) of expedients in order to help others. Because they know that their own minds are autonomous and forever free from the afflictions, there is no danger of them backsliding from their initial experience of the understanding-awakening; therefore, they are destined for full enlightenment. Hence, the practice of ordinary persons of great aspiration is resolute, keen, and consistent, for “those who cultivate the mind in this manner possess the highest faculties.”⁹⁶

Chinul uses several similes, many of which he adopts from Zongmi, to describe the process of initial enlightenment followed by subsequent cultivation.

For example, he says that it is like the maturation of an infant who, at the moment of birth (sudden awakening), is endowed with all of the qualities and potential of an adult human being but as yet unable fully to act on that potential without many years of maturation, of growing up (gradual cultivation).⁹⁷ It is also like the sun rising at dawn (sudden awakening), which only gradually evaporates the morning dew or frost (gradual cultivation).⁹⁸ As these similes make clear, authentic cultivation does not even become possible until the initial sudden awakening ushers in the process of practice. Indeed, it is only because bodhisattvas recognize they are already fully enlightened buddhas through the sudden understanding-awakening at the very inception of practice that they could possibly have the courage, even the audacity, to undertake not one, but three “infinite eons” (*asaṃkhyeyakalpa*) of training.

It is clear that if a person does not first awaken to the mind-nature, does not attain the [ideal] wisdom [that understands] the voidness of dharmas, and does not leave behind all conceptions of self and person, then how would one be able, in this wise, on this sea of immeasurable, incalculable kalpas, to practice what is difficult to practice and to endure what is difficult to endure? Deluded and ignorant people today are not aware of this implication and, from the beginning, are depressed that they have to face the difficulties of [mastering] all the manifold supplementary practices of the bodhisattva; [such people] cower as if they were on the brink of a sheer precipice.⁹⁹

Such difficult practices can be mastered only because of the efficacy of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation; for this reason, in a refrain that Chinul repeats several times throughout his works, sudden awakening/gradual cultivation is the approach that has been followed by all the previous sages and saints.

In *Excerpts*, Chinul specifically analyzes the sudden/gradual question in terms of the four Sŏn schools discussed by Zongmi, in order to show that sudden awakening/gradual cultivation is the most appropriate stratagem for the vast majority of Buddhist practitioners. Of those four Sŏn schools, Chinul, following Zongmi, was most partial to the approach of the Heze school. As Chinul notes in the preface to his *Excerpts*, this focus on the Heze approach was intended

primarily so that people who are engaged in meditative practice will be able to awaken first to the fact that, whether deluded or awakened, their own minds are numinous, aware, and never dark (*yŏngji pulmae/lingzhi bumei* 靈知不昧) and their natures are unchanging. Subsequently, when the other schools are reviewed in succession, it will be obvious that their teachings are also deeply imbued with excellent expedients in regard to the [soteriological] aspect of “person.” If, at the beginning, you do not realize the source [viz., numinous awareness], you will be lured by the traces of the words used in the teachings of those [other] schools and fallaciously assume that some should be accepted and others rejected. How, then, will it be possible for you to develop an all-

encompassing perspective (*yunghoe/ronghui* 融會) and take refuge in your own minds?

According to Zongmi and Chinul, it was only the Heze school that both explained the immutability and adaptability of dharmas and provided an accurate description of the optimal course of practice through awakening and cultivation. In Chinul's comprehensive outline of Buddhist soteriology, there must first be an initial understanding-awakening, followed by gradual cultivation of that awakening, and concluding ultimately with a final realization-awakening. While other accounts of Chan and Sŏn practice might be at least partially valid and offered useful expedients in practice, these were appropriate only for certain types of students, at certain stages in their spiritual development. Only the soteriological schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, as championed by the Heze school, was of general application throughout the entirety of a person's practice career.

Because Chinul's preferred soteriological schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation combines the subitism of sudden awakening with the gradual component of progressive practice, I have termed it a "moderate subitism."

GRADUAL CULTIVATION AND THE CONCURRENT CULTIVATION OF SAMADHI AND
PRAJNA

A vaunted meditative technique that is most closely associated with sudden awakening/gradual cultivation is the balanced development of samādhi and prajñā. Chinul's exposure to this technique can be directly traced to his first awakening experience, which was prompted by his reading of the *Platform Sūtra*.¹⁰⁰ From that point on in his career, Chinul taught the value of the “concurrent cultivation of samādhi and prajñā” or “maintaining equally alertness and quiescence.”¹⁰¹ These are common dictums that have their analogues in everything from the Pāli canon to Yogācāra materials.¹⁰²

As Chinul describes it, the simultaneous cultivation of samādhi and prajñā can be interpreted as a relative variety, which he calls “the samādhi and prajñā that adapts to signs” (*susang chŏnghye/xuixiang dinghui* 隨相定慧), and an absolute variety, which he terms “the samādhi and prajñā of the self-nature” (*chasŏng chŏnghye/zixing dinghui* 自性定慧) and ascribes uniquely to the sudden teaching of Sŏn.¹⁰³ The samādhi and prajñā that adapts to signs involves the more conventional approach to their cultivation often found in mainstream doctrinal materials. Samādhi, in its guise of quiescence, or serenity of mind (*chŏk/ji* 寂), is used to counter the inveterate tendency of the mind toward distraction. Prajñā, in its guise of alertness (*song/xing* 惺), is employed to stimulate the mind

from the occasional dullness that obscures its natural inquisitiveness. In their relative form, samādhi and prajñā are expedients to be applied as necessary to counteract any afflictions or mental hindrances (*āvaraṇa*) that might arise.

In the sudden awakening/gradual cultivation approach followed by Chinul, in which awakening precedes cultivation, this interpretation of samādhi and prajñā shifts dramatically. This form, which involves the cultivation of samādhi and prajñā as aspects of the self-nature, was first propounded in the Chan school by Shenhui¹⁰⁴ and was a major focus of the *Platform Sūtra*. In this approach, samādhi and prajñā are viewed as inherent in the self-nature; although each might have its own specific characteristics, they cannot be absolutely differentiated. Samādhi, as quiescence, is here considered to be the essence (*ch'e/ti* 體) of the self-nature; prajñā, as alertness, is here the function (*yong/yong* 用) of the self-nature. Although the ways in which they manifest themselves may be distinguishable, both are ultimately based on the undifferentiated self-nature; hence, samādhi is the essence of prajñā, and prajñā is the functioning of samādhi. Because of this mutual identification, samādhi no longer implies meditative absorption detached from ordinary sense experience; it is, rather, that same absorption during contact with

sensory objects—a dynamic samādhi. Prajñā is not simply a discriminative faculty that critically investigates phenomena; it carries, rather, a more passive sense, in that it operates as the essence of phenomena and manifests as radiance,¹⁰⁵ or awareness. In this conception, both samādhi and prajñā remain always centered in the unmoving self-nature and are, consequently, identified with this absolute, nondual state. Even when the two faculties are operating as quiescence and alertness in the conditioned realm—activities that would seem to parallel those of the relative samādhi and prajñā—they in fact never leave their unity in the unconditioned mind-nature.

Even after the initial sudden awakening to the self-nature exposes the fundamental identity of samādhi and prajñā, however, the residual proclivities of habit will continue to entice the student toward defiled activities. Such afflictions could disturb the original harmony of the self-nature in such a way that one of its aspects, either essence or function, could become distorted. If essence were to predominate, indolence might result from excessive serenity; if function were exaggerated, distraction might develop from excessive alertness. In such cases, “a person should make use of the [relative] samādhi and prajñā that adapt to signs, not neglect the countermeasures (*taech’i/duizhi* 對治, *pratipakṣa*)

that control both dullness and agitation, and thereby access the unconditioned.”¹⁰⁶ Because samādhi and prajñā remain centered in the self-nature throughout the application of such conventional techniques, however, they eventually become implicit in all of one’s conduct.

When activity and stillness both disappear, counteraction will be finished. Then, even while one is in contact with sense-objects, thought after thought returns to the source; even while one is in contact with conditions, every mental state is in conformity with the path. Naturally, in all situations, [samādhi and prajñā] are concurrently cultivated until finally one becomes a person without concerns (*musa in/wushi ren* 無事人). When this is so, this then truly can be called maintaining samādhi and prajñā equally and one will have clearly seen the buddha-nature.¹⁰⁷

Chinul, however, is quick to point out that the terms “samādhi” and “prajñā” are in fact integral parts of a person’s spiritual cultivation at all stages of his or her development. Although samādhi and prajñā might be distinguished as separate practices, they are, in fact, the qualities that vivify all types of meditative endeavor. To explain how samādhi (in its guise as quiescence) and prajñā (as alertness or awareness) apply at all stages of the path of training, Chinul quotes in his *Encouragement to Practice* a section of Zongmi’s *Record* that he does not extract fully in his *Excerpts*. Since only the first two

sentences are included in *Excerpts*, I quote the full passage here.

From the initial activation of the *bodhicitta* up through the attainment of buddhahood, there is only quiescence and only awareness, immutable and uninterrupted. It is only according to the respective stage [along the bodhisattva path] that their designations and attributes are slightly different. At the moment of awakening they are called principle and wisdom. (Principle is quiescence; wisdom is awareness.) When one first arouses the *bodhicitta* and begins to cultivate, they are called *śamathavipaśyanā*. (*Śamatha* brings external conditioning to rest and hence conforms to quiescence; *vipaśyanā* illuminates nature and characteristics and hence corresponds to awareness.) When the practice continues naturally in all situations, they are called *samādhi* and *prajñā*. (Because it fuses the mind in concentration through its efficacy in stopping all conditioning, *samādhi* is quiescent and immutable. Because it generates wisdom through its efficacy of illuminating insight, *prajñā* is aware and undiscriminative.) When the afflictions have been completely extinguished, meritorious practices completely fulfilled, and buddhahood attained, they are called *bodhi* and *nirvāṇa*. (*Bodhi* is a Sanskrit word meaning enlightenment; it is awareness. *Nirvāṇa* is a Sanskrit word meaning quiescent-extinction; it is quiescence.) Hence, you should know that from the time of the first arousal of the *bodhicitta* until the ultimate [achievement of buddhahood], there is only quiescence and only awareness. (Here, when we refer to “only quiescence and only awareness,” this means alertness and quiescence.)^{[108](#)}

Hence, regardless of the technique students might be cultivating, they must always maintain equilibrium between these two elements if that technique is to be successful. And it is precisely because of the

equilibrium that samādhi and prajñā bring to any practice that Chinul regards their balanced cultivation as being so well suited to a sudden awakening/gradual cultivation schema of Buddhist soteriology.

GRADUAL CULTIVATION AND NO-THOUGHT

As I discussed previously in covering Zongmi's depiction of the Heze school's soteriology, no-thought, or nonconceptualization, is at the heart of the practices that students develop during the gradual cultivation that follows sudden awakening. After cultivators have achieved an incipient understanding of their innate buddhahood, most will inevitably still be buffeted by the wind of mental afflictions. As Zongmi says, "Although through sudden awakening one is the same as the buddhas, the residual proclivities (*vāsanā*) that have been built up over many lifetimes are deepseated. The wind ceases, but the waves still surge; the principle appears, but thoughts still invade."¹⁰⁹ Because of the tenacity of these deep-seated predispositions, even after the initial sudden understanding-awakening, students must continue on to develop all the "manifold supplementary practices" of the bodhisattva (*manhaeng/wanxing* 萬行), which will help to mature that comprehension. However,

because of their initial awakening, students will be able to persist with this gradual cultivation without retaining any sense that there is something wholesome that they must cultivate or something unwholesome that they must eliminate; rather, they cultivate all of these practices in a state of no-thought.¹¹⁰ Chinul often quotes Zongmi in this regard: “Although one may prepare to cultivate the manifold supplementary practices [of the bodhisattva during the process of gradual cultivation], no-thought is the origin of them all.”¹¹¹ Thus, the practices one cultivates after awakening may well be identical to the practices one cultivates before awakening, the difference being that one knows now to cultivate without presuming that one is cultivating anything. For this reason, a central feature of any true cultivation is the element of no-thought.

The conceptual apparatus that supports the thought processes is finally annihilated only at the “access of realization” (*chŭngip/zhengru* 證入), that is, direct experiential validation of the student’s innate buddhahood. But the access to realization also is experienced in a state of no-mind,¹¹² Chinul says, indicating that it, too, is nonconceptual. Hence, whether in Sŏn practice or Kyo training, students “must first pass through their views and learning, their understanding and conduct; only then can they enter into realization. At the time of the access of

realization, their experience will correspond to the no-thought of the Sŏn approach.”^{[113](#)} For all practices, then, no-thought is their consummation and serves as the factor that initiates the student into direct realization.

Different Soteriological Schemata

After outlining his preferred approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, Chinul continues in *Excerpts* with a detailed discussion of several different permutations of awakening and cultivation. This coverage involves quoting and analyzing lengthy passages from a number of other important treatises by Chinese Buddhist authors. These include two of Zongmi's other works: *Notes to the Great Commentary to the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*, Zongmi's earliest treatment of the sudden/gradual issue, and *Preface to Comprehensive Expressions of the Fount of Chan Collection*, his third and final extended treatment of this issue in his writings. Chinul therefore quotes and analyzes all three of Zongmi's major iterations of the sudden/gradual issue. In conjunction with this comprehensive coverage of Zongmi's perspectives, Chinul also cites two other lengthy treatments of the sudden/gradual question: that of the Huayan patriarch Chengguan (who was himself Zongmi's teacher) in his *Commentary to the "Original Vows" Chapter of the Avataṃsakasūtra* (*Huayan jing Xingyuan pin shu*), which Chinul usually calls the *Zhenyuan Commentary* after the Tang-dynasty reign period during which this last translation of the

Avataṃsakasūtra was made;¹¹⁴ and finally Yongming Yanshou's *Common End of Myriad Good Deeds Collection*,¹¹⁵ accompanied by extensive ancillary coverage of Yanshou's *Mirror of the Source Record*. Given the range of materials that he cites, Chinul's *Excerpts* offers one of the most extensive analyses of the sudden/gradual question in premodern East Asian literature.

Seven different soteriological schemata are covered by these three masters and discussed in Chinul's *Excerpts*. Since Chengguan's divisions of radical subitism provide the model against which Chinul analyzes all other delineations and are the earliest of the three Chinese masters' treatments, I will focus on these divisions here, as supplemented by related comments from Zongmi and Yanshou.

The differences in the various soteriological schemata are to a large extent dependent on the distinction between the understanding-awakening and the realization-awakening. These differences thus derive in some measure from the vantage point from which a specific soteriological schema views the path: looking forward proleptically from the moment when an adept first accesses the path (the understanding-awakening) or looking retrospectively back at the path from its concluding experience of complete and final enlightenment (the realization-awakening). Soteriological schemata that emphasize

the importance of the understanding-awakening give pride of place to the moment when one first knows for oneself the reality of the path, enlightenment, and/or nirvāṇa; any further cultivation that might be necessary following that experience is simply an expansion of or elaboration on that awakening. Hence, that initial understanding of the reality of enlightenment is the crucial soteriological moment, even if that moment might be fleeting and require further enhancement through gradual cultivation. For soteriological schemata that emphasize the importance of the realization-awakening, the final moment of enlightenment, when the path is truly finished, is the most crucial soteriological moment. In such schemata, claims of initial sudden awakening are suspect if anything remains to be cultivated; hence, an initial understanding-awakening cannot really be called an awakening if residual proclivities remain to be controlled: if enlightenment is potential (understanding-awakening), not actual (realization-awakening), it is not a true awakening.

Let me start by listing the seven schemata that Chengguan delineates, with one additional permutation that only Zongmi mentions. I will also list the two vantage points from which a specific schema views the path: either the understanding-awakening or the realization-awakening. I will also include one of the typical similes used to explain each alternative,

drawn variously from Zongmi, Chengguan, or Yanshou.

The first set of schemata involve at least one gradual component.^{[116](#)}

1. Gradualist schemata

- 1.1. Sudden awakening/gradual cultivation (*tono chōmsu/dunwu jianxiu* 頓悟漸修): This schema is described from the vantage point of the understanding-awakening. Awakening is like the rays of the morning sun; cultivation is like polishing a mirror so that it gleams ever more brightly. Zongmi's similes in his *Preface* are even clearer: the sun rises suddenly at dawn (awakening) but only gradually evaporates the morning dew (cultivation); or, an infant is born all at once with all the inherent capacities of a human being (awakening), but only gradually matures into an adult who can put those capacities to use (cultivation).
- 1.2. Gradual cultivation/sudden awakening (*chōmsu tonol/jianxiu dunwu* 漸修頓悟): Its vantage point is the realization-awakening. Cultivation is like a gleaming mirror; awakening is the reflectiveness of that mirror. Zongmi's simile in his *Preface* is that cultivation is like gradually chopping away at a tree, awakening is the moment when the tree finally falls.
- 1.3. Gradual cultivation/gradual awakening (*chōmsu chōmol/jianxiu jianwu* 漸修漸悟): This schema is described from the vantage point of the realization-awakening. Cultivating is like climbing a tower; awakening is like seeing more and more the higher you climb.
- 1.4. Sudden cultivation/gradual awakening (*tunsu chōmo/dunxiu jianwu* 頓修漸悟): This is an alternative listed only in Zongmi's *Preface*; it is not included in Chengguan's *Zhenyuan Commentary*. The vantage point of this schema is also the realization-awakening,

as Yanshou clarifies in his discussion.¹¹⁷ Cultivation here is like going through the singular motion of shooting an arrow over and over; awakening is gradually learning to hit the bull's-eye consistently. This is also like an apprentice model of learning, where one learns the craft as a whole (sudden cultivation) but only gradually masters it (gradual awakening).¹¹⁸

Of these four, any schema in which cultivation precedes awakening is always suspect, since the Sōn school would suggest it is well-nigh impossible to expect typical neophytes to correctly orient their practice without a preceding awakening. Thus, of these three soteriological schemata that involve an element of gradualism, the Sōn tradition (as with much of East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism) takes seriously only sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation, still a subitist system but one that is more moderate in form. Since I have discussed sudden awakening/gradual cultivation extensively above, I will not cover it again here.

Next are three different permutations involving variant arrangements of sudden awakening and sudden cultivation. Since these schemata do not incorporate any gradual component, I will designate them all as variations of “radical subitism.”

2. Radical subitist schemata

- 2.1. Sudden awakening/sudden cultivation (*tono tonsu/dunwu dunxiu* 頓悟頓修): According to Chengguan, this schema is described from the vantage

point of the understanding-awakening, though Yanshou in his treatment in *Common End of Myriad Good Deeds* claims it is actually the realization-awakening. This is like a mirror that naturally gleams (awakening) without needing to be wiped or polished (cultivation). Zongmi's simile in his *Preface* is that a spool of thread sliced by a single strike of the sword (awakening) will cut through the entire spool instantly (cultivation).¹¹⁹

- 2.2. Sudden cultivation/sudden awakening (*tonsu tono/dunxiu dunwu* 頓修頓悟): This schema is described from the vantage point of the realization-awakening. Cultivation is like taking medicine; awakening is like curing the disease.
- 2.3. Simultaneity of sudden cultivation and sudden awakening (*su'o ilsi/xiuwu yixhi* 修悟一時): This schema is described from the vantage point of both the understanding- and realization-awakenings. Cultivating is like a gleaming mirror; awakening is that mirror reflecting everything in existence.

Finally, Chengguan includes one last alternative.

- 2.4. Simultaneous sudden awakening and sudden cultivation, using slightly different terminology: this schema also encompasses both the understanding- and realization-awakenings. To be originally endowed with all the qualities of buddhahood is awakening; to have all the practices mastered along the path to buddhahood inherent in a single thought is cultivation. In this alternative, cultivation is like drinking ocean water; awakening is like knowing the taste of all the rivers that have ever flowed into that ocean.

Since East Asian exegetes have summarily dismissed gradual soteriological approaches, taking

seriously only the “moderate subitism” of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, I will set these gradual schemata aside and offer here a little more detail on each of these alternative schemata of radical subitism.

Sudden awakening/sudden cultivation (2.1), Chengguan claims, is the schema closest in structure to sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. Like sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, sudden awakening/sudden cultivation in his interpretation also involves an initial understanding-awakening, which Chenguan defines in this soteriological context as a broad, all-encompassing cognition. The sudden cultivation that follows on that awakening means to keep the mind in accord with that enlightenment; it does not involve any forced efforts either to purify the mind through meditative concentration (*samādhi*) or to investigate one’s world with wisdom (*prajñā*). Chengguan describes cultivation in this schema in the following terms: “Neither to examine nor to purify, neither to accept nor to absorb, but to unite oneself fully with the path is called cultivation.”¹²⁰ Chinul correlates this sort of cultivation with what he considers to be the quintessence of Buddhist meditation—nonconceptualization or no-thought—as well as with the practice of letting things follow their natural course (*im’un su/renyun xiu* 任運修), which is commonly associated with the Hongzhou school and

its Linji descendant.¹²¹ Chengguan compares this approach to a mirror, which is naturally reflective without having to be wiped clean. Zongmi's description is rather more evocative, describing cultivation here in terms drawn from his putative dharma ancestor, Heze Shenhui: "When they cut through obstacles, it is like hacking through a whole spool of thread: all its strands are sliced instantly. Their cultivation of meritorious qualities is like dyeing a whole spool of thread: all its strands are instantly dyed."¹²² Sudden awakening thus prompts students to know in a flash the true nature of their minds, which prompts them in turn to be fully endowed with the myriads of wholesome qualities that are inherent in that nature. As there are no series of steps through which students must pass before perfecting enlightenment, this is termed sudden cultivation.

In a statement that will figure prominently in all later appraisals of this schema, however, Zongmi finally concludes that sudden awakening/sudden cultivation is actually nothing other than sudden awakening/gradual cultivation when viewed from the limited perspective of the practitioner's final life: "However, this preceding explanation [of radical subitism] is offered from the perspective of this present life. If we extend our investigation back into past lives, there is only gradualness and no suddenness. Any suddenness seen now appears

through gradual permeation [of one's mind by practice] over many lifetimes."¹²³ Chinul's personal notes examine in considerable detail the implications of Zongmi's appraisal that subitism is ultimately impossible.

Yanshou's treatment of this variety of radical subitism in his *Common End of Myriad Good Deeds* is heavily dependent on Zongmi's. Like Zongmi, Yanshou presumes that sudden awakening/sudden cultivation actually implies the sudden maturation in the present of a progressive regimen begun many lifetimes in the past. Yanshou's specific concern, however, is to demonstrate that people who follow this approach would still remain engaged in eleemosynary activities and other social actions, even though they may have no need for such training themselves. Yanshou explains that from the standpoint of students' personal benefit, they may have no need to cultivate the myriads of bodhisattva practices, just as people who are not sick have no need of medicine. But at the same time, students realize that they must also benefit others and thus willingly cultivate those practices for their own sakes. After all, if bodhisattvas do not cultivate those practices themselves, how would they be able to encourage others to cultivate them?¹²⁴

The converse of this approach, sudden cultivation/sudden awakening (2.2), involves the

realization-awakening, though Zongmi declares that it actually encompasses both types of awakening.¹²⁵ In this approach the student engages in a single, all-inclusive form of practice, which eventually results in awakening. Chengguan compares cultivation here to ingesting a miracle drug, while awakening is the immediate relief that results therefrom.

The last alternative is simultaneous sudden cultivation and sudden awakening (2.3), in which there is not the slightest semblance of progression through a sequence of steps, such as might be implied by sudden awakening/sudden cultivation or sudden cultivation/sudden awakening. In this schema, sudden cultivation means that internally the meditator's mind remains in a state of nonconceptualization; sudden awakening means that externally one's actions are always spontaneous and appropriate. In Chinul's analysis, cultivation in this context involves both the passive cultivation of no-thought and the dynamic, fully engaged cultivation, while awakening involves both the understanding- and realization-awakenings. Zongmi explains how it is that both the understanding- and realization-awakening can be implicit in a single schema.

First, it is like the preceding explanation [2.2, given with reference to sudden cultivation/sudden awakening], which said, "Realization and understanding are nondual." Hence each encompasses the other: realization is understanding and understanding is realization. Second, [the awakening can be]

either that of realization or understanding. Sudden comprehension or sudden pacification ... would be understanding-awakening. Sudden extinction or sudden enlightenment would be realization-awakening.^{[126](#)}

Zongmi, in his *Preface*, provides an interesting simile to describe “sudden cultivation,” which helps to clarify the implications of this sort of practice. In his description of sudden cultivation/gradual awakening, Zongmi compares sudden cultivation to a person training in archery, who time and again goes through the entire motion of shooting an arrow and trying to hit the bull’s-eye. While the aspiring archer may be quite unskilled at the beginning of his training, his proficiency slowly grows until eventually he is able to hit the bull’s-eye consistently. This slow but steady development of the archer’s prowess would be gradual awakening; this proficiency nevertheless comes about through the repetition of the single act of shooting an arrow, that is, through sudden cultivation.^{[127](#)} Sudden cultivation, therefore, need not be temporally faster than gradual cultivation, since it could take as long to perfect as even the most progressive and sustained regimen of training. But it does suggest that the student devotes himself fully to a single act, continually working at it until it becomes second nature; there is no gradual perfection of lesser skills until the person fully masters the craft.

Problems with Radical Subitism

As an advocate of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, Chinul is fairly critical of approaches involving radical subitism, in which cultivation is said to be perfected simultaneously with the insight generated through sudden awakening. In his treatment in *Excerpts* of the four Sŏn schools, for example, Chinul criticizes the Hongzhou school, which is claimed to have advocated a sudden awakening/sudden cultivation soteriology, for encouraging antinomian attitudes among Sŏn practitioners. Chinul presumed that antinomianism might occur because the Hongzhou school's exclusive emphasis on the need to awaken could foster the mistaken notion that cultivation had no role to play in religious training and students could therefore engage in immoral acts with impunity—what the tradition came to call “unconstrained conduct.” After all, if, as the Hongzhou school claimed, all beings are inherently endowed with the buddha-nature and all the afflictions of the ordinary world are inherently void and unreal, there then are in actuality no wholesome qualities to be developed (all qualities being present congenitally), no afflictions to be counteracted (all afflictions being inherently void), and no liberation to be achieved (one having

always been enlightened). Chengguan's taxonomies of soteriological stratagems, which culminates in sudden awakening/sudden cultivation, implied, too, that radical subitism was the supreme approach to practice. Indeed, this view of the superiority of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation is prominent also in the later Chan and Sŏn schools, especially through the influence of teachers in the Linji lineage and its collateral Yangqi line.

To vindicate his preferred schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, Chinul had to refute this lofty appraisal of radical subitism. Indeed, his *Excerpts* provides one of the most detailed critiques of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation found anywhere in East Asian literature. Chinul's acceptance of a soteriological program that involved a gradual component—virtually anathema to the mature Chan and Sŏn schools of his age—eventually would put him on the horns of a dilemma: how to reconcile his preferred soteriological schema of moderate subitism with his embrace later in his life of *kanhwa* Sŏn, a technique grounded in radical subitism. In order to clarify the reasoning he will use to authenticate the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique while still criticizing the legitimacy of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation as a soteriological stratagem, it will be helpful to consider first the main points of Chinul's critique of radical subitism. [128](#)

Chinul's criticism of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation as described in Chengguan's *Zhenyuan Commentary* presumes that Chengguan stressed exclusively a passive form of cultivation—that of no-thought. Chengguan had described the sudden-cultivation component of radical subitism as that which involves neither observation nor purification but which simply remains in harmony with the path. Sudden cultivation Chengguan took as equivalent to the practice of no-thought, in which full attention was given to principle (*i/li* 理). Sudden cultivation therefore refers to the ideal wisdom that produces the fundamental single-practice samādhi (*irhaeng sammae/yixing sanmei* 一行三昧).¹²⁹ In Chinul's view, this emphasis implies that the phenomenal, dynamic aspect of practice, the fully engaged cultivation, is totally neglected. The result of such a stratagem is that the myriads of wholesome qualities inherent in the true nature of the mind remain mere potentialities, those practices having not been perfected in any real sense whereby the individual is free to use them on behalf of other beings, as is the case with buddhas and bodhisattvas. Hence, some sort of progressive cultivation would still be necessary for those qualities to be fully actualized.

Chengguan had also stated in his account of the simultaneity of sudden awakening and sudden cultivation that both the understanding- and

realization-awakenings were perfected through that stratagem. Chinul rejects this claim. In his view, if only passive aspects of practice are completed, then sudden awakening could refer only to the understanding-awakening, not to the final realization-awakening in which both passive and dynamic forms of practice are fully mastered.

Chinul treats Zongmi's description of subitism as being diametrically opposed to Chengguan's. Chinul states that Zongmi's account of sudden cultivation, unlike that of Chengguan, is made from the relative standpoint of the phenomenal wisdom that is able to generate a whole range of expedient kinds of samādhis. In Zongmi's account of the simultaneity of awakening and cultivation, he declares that sudden cultivation refers to the fully engaged cultivation—the dynamic aspect of practice. In such an instance, both the understanding- and realization-awakenings would have been achieved, for the realization-awakening cannot occur until practice is consummated. Despite their obvious differences, both Chengguan's and Zongmi's accounts suggest there is a fatal flaw in subitism: an extreme perspective on practice that emphasizes exclusively either its dynamic or passive aspect.

Sudden cultivation/gradual awakening fares no better as a soteriological program. Sudden cultivation in this context means the ability of the mental

faculties to operate without any internal or external hindrances; it applies the investigative powers of mind to an exhaustive analysis of the phenomenal world. Through this approach there is a gradual opening into awakening—here, the realization-awakening. However, Chinul states that no authentic practice—not even that of sudden cultivation—can begin until after a sudden understanding-awakening. Through that initial understanding-awakening, the mental faculties are sharpened so that practitioners can investigate themselves and their world with wisdom, not simply with conceptually derived understanding. In Chinul's preferred schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, this understanding-awakening is followed by gradual cultivation of the potential inherent in that insight, until that potential is fully “realized” through the realization-awakening. However, perfecting the meritorious qualities of the bodhisattva is difficult enough even after the understanding-awakening, let alone through sudden cultivation/gradual awakening, which begins without the firm foundation for practice that the initial awakening provides. Hence, in this schema too, sudden cultivation is not a viable technique. Finally, Chinul rejects all soteriological stratagems that placed cultivation before awakening, including gradual cultivation/sudden awakening,

gradual cultivation/gradual awakening, and sudden cultivation/gradual awakening.

There was, of course, a polemical purpose behind Chinul's critique of radical subitism: to validate his own preferred soteriological schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. Chinul was seeking a description of the process of religious training that would be directly applicable to practitioners who, however determined to become enlightened in this life, were still ordinary persons unaware of the enlightenment that the tradition assured them was innate. On all accounts, Chinul determined that sudden awakening/gradual cultivation was the schema that practitioners in any school of Buddhism should follow in order to have an optimal chance of success.

As we saw above in Chinul's treatment of Chengguan, Chinul demands that an ideal soteriological stratagem perfect both passive and dynamic types of practice: both no-thought and fully engaged cultivation. Exclusive attention to passive forms of practice could lead to complacency and aloofness, resulting in the student clinging to serenity. This is the principal danger with radical subitism: no provision is made for counteracting the unwholesome proclivities of habit that, Chinul claimed, will inevitably arise even after the initial understanding-awakening. But equally virulent would

be the problem created by presuming that unsalutary character traits and unwholesome mental attitudes must be counteracted and that wholesome states of mind must be developed—positions taken by advocates of radical gradualism (i.e., gradual cultivation/gradual awakening). This approach could sustain the mistaken belief that there were in reality qualities external to oneself that needed be practiced and goals external to oneself that needed to be achieved. Such students would never be able to lessen their grasp on the phenomenal world, for their worldview would be founded on the mistaken belief that dharmas do indeed exist in reality. They also would be unable to advert to their own inherent nature, which was considered to be the vivifying source of all those phenomena. The moderate subitism of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation addressed both concerns.

Ultimately then, Chinul claims, sudden awakening/gradual cultivation is of wider and more immediate application than any other soteriological schema. Exclusively gradualist stratagems were designed for students of inferior spiritual aptitude, who did not have faculties sufficiently advanced to achieve sudden awakening in this lifetime. Conversely, Chinul, unlike Zongmi, finally accepted sudden awakening/sudden cultivation as being a valid description of a soteriological regimen, but one

that was of extremely limited utility. He says in his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, for example, that sudden awakening/sudden cultivation “is the access for people of extraordinary spiritual faculties,”¹³⁰ and in *Excerpts* Chinul concludes that radical subitism was “the practice engaged in by those whose spiritual faculties are fully matured; it is not applicable for the vast majority of ordinary persons.”¹³¹ But even the most deeply committed of students might have had no way of knowing whether their stores of merit and understanding were sufficient to enable them to succeed while following the most extreme forms of subitism. Could they be sure that their spiritual faculties were truly extraordinary? Chinul was concerned to find an approach that would enable an ordinary person to achieve enlightenment in this lifetime if taught an appropriate soteriological stratagem. For Chinul, sudden awakening/gradual cultivation was that stratagem. Chinul gives examples to show that this was the approach that had been followed by both saints of the past and students of the present and would remain appropriate for all religious practitioners in the future as well.¹³² As the optimal approach to practice, sudden awakening/gradual cultivation could be confidently recommended to all, from the least to the most talented of meditators.

Perhaps the most devastating critique that can be made of radical subitism, which Zongmi first raised and Chinul repeats, is that it might actually be nothing more than a truncated vision of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. From the standpoint of the present lifetime only, sudden awakening/sudden cultivation might seem to offer a faultless interpretation of practice. From the standpoint of past lives, however, it is clear that people who have achieved enlightenment in this lifetime through a sudden awakening/sudden cultivation approach must already have experienced the sudden understanding-awakening in a past life. After that initial awakening, they continued to cultivate their insight gradually over additional lifetimes until, finally, in this present life, and perhaps seemingly without any preparation, they suddenly experienced realization-awakening and their cultivation was apparently also perfected instantaneously. But in such a case, sudden awakening/sudden cultivation was in fact nothing more than a mature form of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. For Chinul, there could be no sudden perfection of the phenomenal wisdom that is accrued through sustained practice.

In *Excerpts* (chapter 3, “Radical Subitism Is Valid Only from the Standpoint of the Present Lifetime”), Chinul gives a few examples from the Buddhist

tradition of earlier teachers who achieved complete enlightenment in a single moment of awakening, seemingly without any prior training and without having performed any virtuous acts. These include two monks who had been hunters and committed nothing but heinous deeds throughout their lives until their sudden enlightenments: Shigong Huizang 石鞏慧藏 (d.u.) and Yinfeng 隱峰 of Wutaishan 五臺山 (d.u.), both disciples of Mazu Daoyi in the Hongzhou lineage, the quintessential school of radical subitism. Chinul also refers to a passage from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* that tells the story of five hundred brigands who heard the Buddha speak and immediately generated the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*). But such examples are widely known throughout the tradition, in fact, and are found even in the mainstream Buddhist materials that are better known to a Western audience.

Perhaps the most infamous example within the Buddhist tradition of a thoroughly despicable figure who was instantly reformed was Aṅgulimālya (Garland of Fingers; Pāli, Aṅgulimāla). A fearsome high-wayman (his name refers to his habit of cutting off a finger from each of his victims and adding it to his necklace), Aṅgulimālya nevertheless became enlightened after a single encounter with the Buddha. The Buddha realized through his superpower (*abhijñā*) of telepathy (*paracittajñāna*) that

Aṅgulimālya had the potential to achieve enlightenment but that that potential had diminished due to his serial murders and would vanish altogether if he committed one more killing. Seeking to rescue him from his fate, the Buddha intentionally took the dangerous road that Aṅgulimālya frequented in order to draw out the brigand. Aṅgulimālya began as usual to follow his prospective victim, but no matter how fast he walked, he was unable to catch the Buddha. Breaking into a sprint, he still was not able to keep up with the Buddha, who continued to walk along at his usual measured pace. Puzzled, Aṅgulimālya finally called out, “Why don’t you stop?” The Buddha challenged him, saying, “I have stopped, Aṅgulimālya; you should stop as well.” Intrigued by the monk’s response, Aṅgulimālya accompanied the Buddha back to his residence, and after brief instruction, the brigand became an arhat. (Even enlightenment was not enough to free him entirely from the consequences of his heinous actions, and for the rest of his final life he suffered severe beatings at the hands of the people he had terrorized.) In Aṅgulimālya’s case, he had planted “roots of merit,” or “wholesome faculties,” (*kuśalamūla*) in some past lifetime, but soon thereafter he fell back into a pattern of dissolution due to the inertia of his residual proclivities and forgot all about his previous acts of merit. Nevertheless, as

his roots of merit had already been set in soil, once the appropriate conditions were present for them to mature (i.e., hearing the Buddha's discourse) he had an immediate sudden awakening—seemingly without any preparatory training and despite having engaged in the most heinous of demeritorious actions. (Given his infamous reputation, it is intriguing that Aṅgulimālya comes to be recognized as the Buddhist “patron saint” of pregnant women due to his ministrations to a woman who was suffering a terrible labor. To help ease her pain, Aṅgulimālya uttered this asseveration of truth [*satyavacana*], which drips with intentional irony: “Since my noble birth [viz., as an arhat], I have never intentionally deprived any living creature of its life. By this asseveration of truth, may you be well and may your unborn child be well.” Aṅgulimālya's words have become a popular protective verse [Pāli, *paritta*] in the Southeast Asian Buddhist tradition.)^{[133](#)}

Another classic example of a person who seemed to have suddenly perfected both awakening and cultivation is the story of the nun Kṣemā (Pāli, Khemā), one of the Buddha's two chief female disciples, who was renowned for her wisdom (*prajñā*) and her mastery of the four kinds of analytical knowledge (*pratisamvid*). Kṣemā, who is said to have been one of the most beautiful women in the kingdom of Magadha, was the chief queen-consort of

the Magadhan king Bimbisāra. At her first meeting with the Buddha, the Buddha is said to have conjured up for Kṣemā an exquisite celestial nymph, who suddenly aged and died right before her eyes. The Buddha then recited a verse for Kṣemā on the frailty of beauty, the foulness (*aśubha*) of the human body, and the dangers of attachment. As the Buddha completed the first stanza of his verse, Kṣemā achieved “stream-entry” (*srotaāpanna*), the first stage of sanctity in the early Buddhist path schema; by the time the Buddha completed his verse, Kṣemā had achieved arhatship and thus finished the path. Even though Kṣemā achieved enlightenment seemingly with great ease, the Buddha explained later that she had actually been engaged in practice over several past lifetimes with many previous buddhas and had thus deeply planted the roots of merit. [134](#)

This collapse of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation in one lifetime into sudden awakening/gradual cultivation over many lifetimes is summarized nicely by Chinul in his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, where he confirms his previous judgment that virtually all soteriologies eventually end up being sudden awakening/gradual cultivation.

Although some have advocated sudden awakening/sudden cultivation, this is the access for people of extraordinary spiritual faculties. If you were to probe their pasts, you would see that already for many lifetimes their cultivation has been based on [the insights gained in a previous] awakening. After

sustained gradual permeation, now, in this lifetime, these people hear [the dharma] and awaken: in one instant [their practice is also brought to a] sudden conclusion. But if we try to explain this according to the facts, then this capacity [for sudden awakening/sudden cultivation] is also the result of an initial [sudden] awakening and its subsequent [gradual] cultivation. Consequently, this twofold approach of sudden [awakening] and gradual [cultivation] is the track followed by thousands of saints.[135](#)

Looking at the entirety of practice, then, over a series of lifetimes, the only viable map of the path for the vast majority of Buddhist practitioners is sudden awakening/gradual cultivation.

Radical Subitism and the *Kanhwa* Technique

Despite the critical view Chinul holds of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation in his exposition of Buddhist soteriological regimens, he is rather more favorably disposed toward it in the context of *kanhwa/kanhua* 看話 meditation, a uniquely Sŏn form of practice in which the student examines the meditative “topic” or “keyword” (*hwadu/huatou* 話頭) of a Sŏn “precedent” or “case” (*kongan/gong’an*).¹³⁶ This technique is especially associated with the writings of Dahui Zonggao, a Song-dynasty master in the Yangqi branch of the Linji school, who lived about a generation prior to Chinul. Before writing *Excerpts*, Chinul had never mentioned *hwadu* investigation; in fact, in all his previous works, the only reference to Dahui’s writings is in Chinul’s *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, written between 1203 and 1205. But, tellingly, even in that quotation, Chinul cites Dahui’s criticism of students who have had a sudden awakening but then neglected to develop counteragents (*pratipakṣa*) to the afflictions or hindrances of mind; that is, they neglect, Chinul explains, the gradual cultivation that follows awakening.¹³⁷ Late in his life, however, Chinul’s views were rapidly crystallizing around Dahui’s presentation of *kanhwa* practice, to the point that

Dahui's impact on his writings began to eclipse even that of Zongmi. It is in *Excerpts* that Chinul begins to make this transition: here, for the first time in his writings, he recognizes *kanhwa* Sŏn as an independent system of meditative training and gives it extensive coverage. I have written frequently about the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique, so let me provide only the briefest of overviews here.

If meditation practice were to be brought to consummation, Chinul assumed, typical students would require a foundation in the doctrinal teachings of Buddhism to outline for them the course and goal of practice and to build in students a solid confidence in their innate ability to master that path. For these reasons, in most of his writings Chinul stresses the need for following a regimen, outlined by Zongmi, in which the student develops understanding of the two aspects of dharma (immutability and adaptability) and the two approaches concerning person (sudden awakening and gradual cultivation) while continuing to rely on the teachings of the scriptural tradition of Buddhism. Because of the clarity and comprehensiveness of this approach, it is appropriate for the majority of people of average abilities.^{[138](#)}

Nevertheless, Chinul remained concerned lest the conceptualization inherent in this sort of approach eventually hinder the student's progress toward the

unconditioned state that is enlightenment. Particularly in his last works, Chinul seems to have been increasingly open to alternative approaches, unique to the Sŏn tradition, that would help students overcome this potential attachment to religious and soteriological concepts—the proverbial golden chain of religion. Chinul was clearly fascinated by a new Sŏn technique just then making its way to the Korean peninsula. Called the “Sŏn of examining the *hwadu*,” this technique eschewed all prolix explanations of practice—especially any explanation that deployed doctrinal categories in order to explain the enlightenment experience—in favor of a radical disentanglement of the mind from any form of conceptualization. Chinul’s interest in *kanhwa* Sŏn apparently derived from his third, and final, awakening experience, which was catalyzed through his readings of the *Records* of Dahui, where the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique receives extensive coverage.

Hwadu means simply “topic,” or more technically “meditative topic,” and is virtually synonymous with such terms as *hwaje* (Ch. *huati* 話題, “theme of speech”), *hwabyŏng* (Ch. *huabing* 話柄, “handle, or topic, of speech”), and *hwach’ŭk* (Ch. *huaze* 話則, “rule of speech”).¹³⁹ The term *hwadu* is closely related to the term *kongan* (Ch. *gong’an*, J. *kōan*) and is in fact often synonymous with it. A *kongan* refers to stories and exchanges involving the eminent

Sōn masters of the past, which later teachers began to use to instruct their students and to evaluate the depth of the students' understanding.¹⁴⁰ These stories came to be called *kongan*, originally a legal term that means something rather like a “precedent” or “test case” in law, because they put an end to private understanding (*kong* 公) and matched up with what the buddhas and patriarchs had said (*an* 案).¹⁴¹ Using these cases as “meditative topics” (*hwadu*), Chinul says, produces a “cleansing knowledge and vision (*jñānadarśana*)” that “removes the defects of conceptual understanding so that you can find the living road that leads to salvation.”¹⁴² As this approach allows none of the conventional conceptual supports for practice, it was intended principally either for “those patched-robed monks in the Sōn lineage today who have the capacity to enter the path after leaving behind words,”¹⁴³ or for those who have first matured their practice through other techniques.

Certainly the best known of all these topics is that attributed to Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (778–897), in which a student asks him, “Does a dog have the buddha-nature, or not?” Zhaozhou responds, “Doesn’t have it,” or simply, “No!” (*mu/wu* 無).¹⁴⁴ The renowned Sōn master’s answer is patently wrong: a dog, like any other sentient being, is blessed with the same numinous awareness as that of all the buddhas

and thus does have the buddha-nature. So, why would Zhaozhou have said that a dog “doesn’t have” the buddha-nature when his answer obviously should be that it “does have it” (*yu/you* 有)?¹⁴⁵

In using such an exchange as a meditative topic, Dahui called on students not to undertake any sort of literary analysis or doctrinal unpacking of the “case” (*kongan/gong’an*) as a whole; instead, they were to focus solely on how this answer was an expression of Zhaozhou’s enlightened state of mind. This is what he means by examining (*kan*) the topic (*hwadu*), hence *kanhwa* Sŏn. Investigating these statements of previous Sŏn masters helps to generate a strong sense of inquiry or “questioning,” which the *kanhwa* Sŏn tradition calls the “mind of doubt” (*ŭisim/yixin* 疑心) or the “sensation of doubt” (*ŭijŏng/yiqing*). “Doubt” involves not only the positive connotations of “wondering” and “questioning” generated by the continued inquiry into these seemingly enigmatic statements, but also the negative connotations of “puzzlement” and “frustration” at one’s inability to understand these Sŏn expressions by means of one’s own intellectual powers.¹⁴⁶ Toward the end of *Excerpts*, Chinul, following Dahui, defines doubt as a state of mental perplexity “where the intellect cannot operate and thought cannot reach; it is the road through which discrimination is excised and theorizing ended.”¹⁴⁷ It makes the mind “puzzled,

frustrated, and insipid [lit., “tasteless,” *molchami/moziwei* 沒滋味 or *muwi/wuwei* 無味; viz., lacking intellectual interest]—just as if you were gnawing on an iron rod.”¹⁴⁸ The inability to understand what Zhaozhou could possibly have meant by seemingly giving his student the wrong answer further strengthens the sense of inquiry. By continued attention to this insipid *hwadu*, the student ultimately despairs at making any further attempts at exerting his or her intellect and learning in attempting to understand it. Thought thus comes to an end and only a palpable sensation of doubt remains. The student is then primed to enter the access to realization, namely, the realization-awakening. This continued inquiry creates such intense pressures in the mind—and by extension on the student’s confidence in his or her abilities to understand what Zhaozhou’s state of mind could possibly have been when he said “no”—that the doubt “disintegrates,” or “explodes” (*p’a/po* 破),¹⁴⁹ disintegrating in turn the personal point of view that is the constructed sense of self and restoring the mind’s inherent state of enlightenment. At that point, the student has accessed the same state of mind as had Zhaozhou when he uttered this answer “no,” and he or she will fully understand why Zhaozhou gave this response. That is when Zhaozhou’s mind is, as it were, “stamped” or “sealed” (*in/yin* 印) on the student’s

mind, initiating the student into the mind-to-mind transmission of Sŏn going back to the Buddha himself. Thus, through the continued investigation of the *hwadu*, the student can forgo all the gradual stages of religious development and get to the very root of the problem of saṃsāra: exposing the fallacy of a “personal point of view,” the self (*ātman*), a fallacy proliferated throughout one’s sensory experience through conceptualization and its bifurcating tendencies.^{[150](#)}

Kanhwa Sŏn adepts thus typically assert that the *hwadu* technique entails a sudden awakening/sudden cultivation soteriological regimen. It does not brook even the slightest hint of gradualism, because it focuses exclusively on generating a sudden experience of awakening, with “sudden cultivation” constituting the continued repetition of the single act of investigating the *hwadu*. This radical subitism ascribed to *hwadu* investigation can be vividly seen in a verse by the Chinese Linji teacher Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263–1323), writing two generations after Chinul:

Investigating Chan (*chamsŏn/canchan* 參禪; i.e., investigating the *hwadu*) does not involve any progression,
The absolute essence is free from all extremes and representations.
It is difficult using the limited mind,
To cultivate the unconditioned path.
In one realization, all is realized.

In one flash of cognition, all is cognized.¹⁵¹

Because of this emphasis on generating an instantaneous awakening through continued investigation of the *hwadu*, in which there is no need of developing a sequential series of practices, *kanhwa* Sŏn was considered to be a “shortcut approach” (*kyŏngjŏl mun/jingjie men* 徑截門) to enlightenment. This is the term Chinul typically uses in referring to the technique, following Dahui.

Chinul was the first Korean Sŏn teacher to be influenced by Dahui’s approach, and Chinul’s advocacy of the *kanhwa* technique put Chinul on the cutting edge of Chan’s development on the Chinese mainland. It is possible that Chinul might well have heard about Dahui early in his vocation, perhaps during his stay (ca. 1183–1185) at Ch’ŏngwŏnsa 淸源寺 (a monastery in the southwest of the peninsula near ports catering to trade with the Chinese mainland), when he could have contracted with Koryŏ or Song traders to import to Korea the first copy of Dahui’s *Records*.¹⁵² What we are certain of is that sometime between 1197 and 1200, while Chinul was staying at Sangmujuam on Mount Chiri, he was reading Dahui’s writings and was so profoundly affected by them that they prompted his third and final awakening experience.¹⁵³ Despite the impact that Dahui’s writings obviously had on him, however, the fact that Chinul did not even cite Dahui

in his own writings until his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (written between 1203 and 1205) suggests that he was puzzling over how to integrate the new technique of *kanhwa* Sŏn into his broader soteriological examinations centered on Zongmi. It was not until the very end of his life that the *kanhwa* investigation that Dahui championed began to play a central, and eventually an overriding, role in the larger ensemble of Chinul's thought.

When Chinul introduces the practice of *kanhwa* Sŏn in *Excerpts*, he cautions that *hwadu* investigation "was not advocated by Master Mi [Zongmi],"¹⁵⁴ and then simply appends an extensive set of passages from Dahui's *Records* on the technique. His quotations from Dahui are not accompanied by any interpolations explaining Chinul's own interpretation of these passages, the commentarial approach he takes elsewhere in *Excerpts* when he quotes his predecessors' views. He makes virtually no attempt to connect these passages from Dahui with his earlier discussions of Buddhist soteriological regimens. There is thus little *esprit de synthèse* in *Excerpts* between *kanhwa* Sŏn and the rest of Chinul's text; indeed, the section on *kanhwa* Sŏn looks rather anomalous, even tacked on.

Chinul's inclusion of Dahui's material on *kanhwa* Sŏn is also somewhat vitiated by his remarks in his

“Conclusion” section, where he skirts the issue of *kanhwa* Sŏn being a radical-subitist soteriology and instead places the technique within the sudden awakening/gradual cultivation schema championed by Zongmi.¹⁵⁵ *Kanhwa* meditation is actually intended only for the most advanced of practitioners, he says; the better course for the majority of practitioners is first to frame their understanding correctly by mastering Zongmi’s accounts of the nature and characteristics, primary and ancillary aspects of the mind (the description Chinul typically provides for the initial sudden understanding-awakening, although he does not explicitly state as much here). After putting in place that firm foundation in correct understanding, the *hwadu* should then be used to help students overcome any residual attachment to even those correct views.¹⁵⁶ Zongmi’s teachings would thus help to generate the initial sudden awakening of understanding, and *kanhwa* Sŏn would constitute the gradual cultivation that follows awakening. Hence, Chinul is not willing in *Excerpts* to controvert his preferred soteriological approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, despite his increasing interest in *kanhwa* Sŏn.

In *Excerpts*, Chinul also raises some suspicions about the efficacy of *kanhwa* meditation. Although gifted meditators might be able to gain sudden awakening through investigating the *hwadu*,

awakening for them would merely mean that they were totally absorbed in their interior contemplation and thus free from any conceptual understanding. While they were in that state they might appear to be fully enlightened, but as soon as they withdrew from their meditation and began to use their minds again, they would once again become immersed in conceptualization. Their sensory contacts would then be colored by perceptions, or value judgments (*saṃjñā*), producing in turn passion and anger, and in all respects they would show themselves to be still subject to the defiling tendencies of mind. Hence, their awakening remains deficient in the understanding that should precede cultivation, according to Chinul's preferred course of moderate subitism. This deficiency occurs because *kanhwa* practice was not based on the correct doctrinal understanding generated through the sudden understanding-awakening, which should have initiated a meditator's training. Such mastery of doctrine would have familiarized the student with the true nature of the conditioned world, so that defiling tendencies would not pressure them during their *kanhwa* practice. Hence right view as generated through the initial understanding-awakening remained a crucial factor even for meditators examining the *hwadu*. In fact, Chinul is so intent on incorporating *kanhwa* practice into sudden

awakening/gradual cultivation that he recommends the more conventional techniques of the concurrent cultivation of samādhi and prajñā, which he had discussed earlier in *Excerpts*, to *kanhwa* meditators who find themselves still subject to the mental afflictions. Although the *hwadu* may be a more rigorously subitist technique, these other, more conventional sorts of training could lead to the same rarified stages of the path achieved through *kanhwa* practice.¹⁵⁷

But *Excerpts* posits still another way of interpreting the soteriological process underlying *kanhwa* practice. As a special kind of “shortcut expedient,”¹⁵⁸ the *hwadu* transcends all the soteriological schemata of awakening and cultivation discussed previously in *Excerpts*. *Kanhwa* Sŏn was a supplementary technique, designed to help skilled meditators overcome the conceptual understanding derived from their knowledge of dharmas and attributes, understanding that was a product of the sudden awakening/gradual cultivation approach as taught by Zongmi. While especially adept meditators may be able to work directly on the *hwadu*, in their case the so-called shortcut constitutes an entirely separate approach from the radical subitism presented in the soteriological regimens treated previously in *Excerpts*. *Hwadu* investigation was just too advanced for most people, who would still need

the correct understanding developed through sudden awakening/gradual cultivation if they were to have any chance of overcoming attachments and defilements. Only “truly an outstanding person ... [who is] not pressured by words and speech or by intellectual knowledge and conceptual understanding,” he says, would be able to succeed while examining just the *hwadu*.¹⁵⁹ Chinul even seems to despair at whether practitioners during this degenerate age of the dharma, who are still pressured by their intellectual knowledge and views, would ever be able to truly benefit from investigating the *hwadu*. Hence, despite the affinities Chinul obviously feels for the *kanhwa* technique, he concludes in *Excerpts* that Zongmi’s approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation remains the most appropriate soteriology for helping people find “a way out of saṃsāra.”

Why does there seem to be this ambivalence in *Excerpts* as to how to understand the soteriological regiment of *kanhwa* Sŏn? *Excerpts* is the culmination of a series of treatises Chinul wrote analyzing Buddhist soteriology. In that series of works, which go back to his earlier *Encouragement to Practice* and *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (both written between 1190 and 1205), Chinul sought to prove the superiority of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation as a soteriological stratagem and to demonstrate the

convergence between the Sŏn school's approach to practice and broader outlines of soteriology in the scriptural teachings of Kyo. Despite Chinul's obvious interest in *kanhwa* Sŏn, when he was writing *Excerpts* I believe he was simply not yet ready to jettison his previous work and accept fully the soteriological implications of this new meditative technique. In *Excerpts*, then, just when Chinul seems to be on the cusp of giving *kanhwa* Sŏn pride of place in Buddhist practice, he pivots and returns to Zongmi.

It is in his posthumous publication, *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu* (*Kanhwa kyŏrŭiron*), that Chinul finally takes his own leap off of Zen's proverbial hundred-foot pole¹⁶⁰ and places *kanhwa* Sŏn at the center of the whole panoply of his thought, eclipsing even the influence of Zongmi. *Resolving Doubts* is the first account of *kanhwa* Sŏn written by a Korean. In this last work, Chinul no longer acts as the Sŏn apologist, attempting to defend the Sŏn school by demonstrating its parallelisms with the teachings of the Buddhist scriptures. In this treatise, Chinul emerges as a fervent advocate of *kanhwa* Sŏn, portraying it as a unique style of radical subitism that directly leads to the realization-awakening. The second attitude toward *kanhwa* Sŏn still inchoate in *Excerpts*—*kanhwa* Sŏn as a new technique completely separate

from previous treatments of Buddhist soteriological regimens—is fully formed in *Resolving Doubts* and justified textually. This interpretation is upheld because meditators who are investigating the *hwadu* need not “pass through their views and learning, their understanding and conduct” before achieving realization, as would those following other soteriological approaches.¹⁶¹ Instead practitioners of the shortcut approach of *kanhwa* Sŏn, from the very inception of their meditation, remain “unaffected ... by acquired understanding.”

Straight off, they take up an insipid *hwadu* and are concerned only with raising it to their attention and focusing on it. Consequently, they remain free of ratiocination ... and stay clear of any idea of a temporal sequence in which views, learning, understanding, or conduct are to be developed. In a moment, they unexpectedly activate one instant of realization regarding the *hwadu*, and, as discussed previously, the *dharmadhātu* of the one mind becomes utterly perfect and radiant.¹⁶²

The manuscript of *Resolving Doubts* was discovered among Chinul’s effects after his death in 1210 and was published posthumously (perhaps with a heavy editorial hand) by his successor, Chin’gak Hyesim 眞覺慧諱 (1178–1234), in 1215. As Chinul notes there, most students of his time still needed first to purify their views and conduct through correct understanding (gained through either the doctrinal teachings of Kyo or Zongmi’s interpretation of Heze

Sŏn) before they would have much hope of gaining access to realization. But the Sŏn approach taught by Dahui, Chinul claims, “transcends all standards. Consequently, it is not only students of Kyo who will find it difficult to have faith in it and difficult to access it; *even those in this very school [of Sŏn]* who have lesser faculties and shallow comprehension will be perplexed and unable to understand it.”¹⁶³ Indeed, there are scant few places in his oeuvre where Chinul displays such vehement Sŏn partisanship as is found in the following quote, cited in *Resolving Doubts*: “[Sŏn’s] separate transmission outside the teachings far excels the ‘vehicle of the Teachings’ (Kyo *sŭng* 教乘). It is not something with which those of shallow intelligence can cope.”¹⁶⁴ In such statements, Chinul’s liberal attitude toward the Kyo schools of doctrine and his measured discussion of the value of Sŏn, which characterized his earlier writing up to and through *Excerpts*, have begun to pale. Rather, in *Resolving Doubts*, he has accepted with few qualifications the preeminence of the shortcut approach of *hwadu* investigation, championing its superiority to all other forms of Buddhist practice in purity of technique, speed of consummation, and orthodoxy of outlook.

Chinul’s adoption of the *kanhwa* technique augured the stronger Imje/Linji orientation of later Korean Sŏn teachers like his successor Chin’gak

Hyesim. Hyesim all but abandoned the other meditation techniques taught by his predecessor in favor of *kanhwa* Sŏn with its implicit agenda of radical subitism. As but one example of this move, Hyesim subsumes the concurrent cultivation of samādhi and prajñā, one of the central meditative techniques that Chinul taught throughout his career, into *kanhwa* Sŏn: “The essentials of practice do not go beyond śamatha and vipaśyana, samādhi and prajñā.... But apart from these there is the singular approach of investigating the topic (*kanhwa*), which is the shortest of shortcuts. Śamatha and vipaśyana, samādhi and prajñā, are naturally subsumed within it [*kanhwa* Sŏn].”¹⁶⁵ Hyesim was such a fervent advocate of the *kanhwa* technique that he compiled in 1226 the first Korean collection of *kongan* stories, the *Sŏnmun yŏmsong chip* (Collection of prose and verse commentaries on [the old cases of] the Sŏn School).¹⁶⁶

This posture of Korean Sŏn became particularly pronounced after the return from China of Korean masters like Kyŏngha Paegun 景閑白雲 (1298–1374), T’aego Pou 太古普愚 (1301–1382), Naong Hyegŭn 懶翁慧勤 (1320–1376), and Muhak Chach’o 無學自超 (1327–1405), who brought the orthodox Linji 臨濟 (K. Imje) lineage back with them to Korea.¹⁶⁷ But it would have been much more difficult for late-Koryŏ Buddhism to have coalesced around

the Imje school without these overtures toward *hwadu* investigation first made by Chinul. Hence, in a very real sense, the focus on the Imje interpretation of *kanhwa* Sŏn that dominates the late-Koryŏ Buddhist tradition also has its origins in Chinul. Today in Korea the *hwadu* continues to be the principal technique taught in meditation halls around the country, and the vast majority of Korean masters advocate its use for students from rank beginners to advanced adepts.

THE THREE MYSTERIOUS GATES

Chinul seems ultimately to have despaired about the prospects of regular practitioners in his time succeeding in their contemplation of the *hwadu*. Even at the end of his *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, his most partisan treatment of Dahui's shortcut approach, he laments that "those in whom this realization-wisdom [achieved through investigating the word (*chamgu/canju* 參句) of the *hwadu*] has appeared are seldom seen and seldom heard of nowadays. Consequently, these days we should value the approach that investigates the meaning (*chamŭi/canyi* 參意) of the *hwadu* and thereby produces right knowledge and vision."¹⁶⁸ Investigating the meaning of the *hwadu*, a more discursive inquiry into the question of why Zhaozhou

said “no” when the answer obviously should be “yes,” enables *kanhwa* Sŏn to stand in for the role that Zongmi’s thought had previously played in generating “right knowledge and vision,” Chinul’s and Zongmi’s code for the understanding-awakening. The sustained “investigation of the word” (a term Chinul doesn’t use in *Excerpts*, but that he explains in detail in his *Resolving Doubts*) would then constitute the gradual cultivation that leads to the realization-awakening.¹⁶⁹ Hence, while Chinul may have emphasized the importance of *hwadu* practice later in his life, it never completely supplanted Zongmi’s place in Chinul’s overall synthesis of Sŏn thought.

This conclusion is especially borne out by the fact that Chinul provided an explicit scheme for incorporating *hwadu* investigation into his more conventional outline of soteriological development based on Zongmi. In the final “Conclusion” section of *Excerpts* (and more extensively in his *Resolving Doubts*), Chinul reiterates this accommodation between *kanhwa* Sŏn and sudden awakening/gradual cultivation through reference to the “three mysterious gates” (*samhyŏn mun/sanxuan men* 三玄門),¹⁷⁰ a hermeneutical principle that Chinul deploys to clarify the connection between *kanhwa* Sŏn and the accommodation between Sŏn and Kyo championed by Zongmi and Chinul.

Based on his extensive study of Sŏn teachings over his career, Chinul recognized various levels of description used in the Sŏn teachings, each of which he correlates with a particular style of doctrinal explication and spiritual capacity. Chinul refers to these levels as the three mysterious gates: (1) mystery in the essence (*ch'ejung hyŏn/tizong xuan* 體中玄), (2) mystery in the word (*kujung hyŏn/juzhong xuan* 句中玄), and (3) mystery in the mystery (*hyŏnjung hyŏn/xuanzhong xuan* 玄中玄). These three levels of description help to clarify the differences Chinul saw between more conventional Sŏn approaches, like that of Zongmi, and the shortcut approach of Dahui's *kanhwa* Sŏn. Chinul's general view is that these three stages involve, respectively, (1) conceptual descriptions (of either Sŏn or Kyo tenets), which are intended to shape correct understanding; (2) examination of the *hwadu*, a terse phrase relatively devoid of conceptual content, which is a more direct expression of the truth than are the prolix conceptual explanations of the first gate; and (3) gestures, pauses, and other nonverbal, illocutionary representations of ineffable truth, which are not vitiated by conceptualization.

To summarize these gates briefly, Chinul posits that the most basic level of Sŏn discourse uses concepts similar to those found in the doctrinal schools of Buddhism, such as Hwaŏm, to explain the

fundamental identity between enlightened buddhas and ignorant sentient beings. This first mysterious gate Chinul terms the “mystery in the essence.” When students are investigating the *hwadu*’s meaning (*chamŭi/canyi* 參意) during their inquiry into why Zhaozhou said “no,” they are developing the mystery in the essence. In order to disentangle the student from the concepts employed in the first gate, Sŏn next pushes the student toward investigating just the word or phrase (*chamgu/canju* 參句) of the *hwadu* itself, not its meaning, which keeps the meditator from becoming mired in a purely intellectual level of understanding. This second gate Chinul calls the “mystery in the word.” Because the enigmatic *hwadu* (and especially the *mu hwadu* that is the focus of much of Chinul’s and Dahui’s accounts of *kanhwa* Sŏn) is much more “terse” (*saengnyak/shenglue* 省略)¹⁷¹ and, hence, less dependent on conceptual description than the doctrinal accounts that characterized the first mysterious gate, it is closer to being an authentic portrayal of the unconditioned realm, which is ineffable. Ultimately, though, even the terse concepts employed in the *hwadu* must be abandoned in favor of nonconceptual, illocutionary forms of pedagogy and expression, such as striking, beating, and pregnant pauses. These peculiarly Sŏn forms of expression Chinul terms the “mystery in the mystery.”

Chinul, then, envisions Sŏn instruction as progressing from kataphatic statements about the innate purity of the mind in the first gate, to more apophatic descriptions designed to free the mind from conceptualization in the second gate, to nonverbal expressions of truth in the third gate.¹⁷² These three mysterious gates thus portray *kanhwa* Sŏn as a natural outgrowth of the mystery in the essence—principally Zongmi’s approach to Sŏn, as followed closely by Chinul in all his previous works, but also the investigation of the meaning of the *hwadu*—and culminating itself in the still more iconoclastic, even illocutionary, teaching styles associated with the Hongzhou and Linji lineages. Hence, Chinul continues to incorporate *kanhwa* Sŏn into his preferred system of moderate subitism, while also suggesting how *hwadu* investigation could be viewed as a new and truly innovative form of radical subitism. I will discuss below in my treatment of Paekp’a Kŭngsŏn 白坡亘璇 (1767–1852) the distinctive features of Chinul’s specific coverage of the three mysterious gates in his *Excerpts*.

Contemporary Critiques of Chinul's Moderate Subitism

We might expect that Korean Sŏn teachers with more pronounced Imje/Linji biases would have taken issue with Chinul's description of how *kanhwa* Sŏn might fit into a moderate-subitist regimen of Sŏn soteriology that still retains a place for gradual cultivation. I have found no evidence of any such criticisms in Koryŏ- or Chosŏn-period materials, however. The preponderance of evidence (as I will summarize in the conclusion to this introduction) is that Chinul's preferred soteriological regimen of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation constituted the mainstream of Korean Buddhism throughout the remainder of the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392), as well as the entirety of the succeeding Chosŏn 朝鮮 dynasty (1392–1910) and Japanese colonial period (1910–1945). It was not until the last half of the twentieth century that the first serious challenge to the primacy of Chinul and his moderate subitism began to emerge within the Korean Buddhist tradition. This critique came from T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl 退翁性徹 (1912–1993), the former Sŏn master (*pangjang* 方丈) at Haeinsa 海印寺 and the seventh supreme patriarch (*chongjŏng* 宗正) of the modern Chogyŏ Order of Korean Buddhism (Taehan Pulgyo

Chogyejong 大韓佛教曹溪宗). In his highly learned, but unabashedly polemical, treatise *The Orthodox Road of the Sŏn School* (Sŏnmun chŏngnok), published in 1981, Sŏngch'ŏl sought to methodically demolish Chinul's soteriological analyses in order to debunk any claim Chinul might have of being an authentic Sŏn master.¹⁷³ Sŏngch'ŏl was an erudite advocate of radical subitism and Imje/Linji interpretations of the *kanhwa* technique. Sŏngch'ŏl attributed much that he perceived to be wrong with Korean Buddhism to the pernicious influence on the tradition of Chinul's moderate subitism. Sŏngch'ŏl also denied any claim that Chinul should be viewed as the founder of the Chogye Order, a position advocated by other Korean scholars, and instead traced the order's origins to T'aego Pou, one of the leading figures in introducing the Chinese Linji line to Korea in the fourteenth century.

To summarize Sŏngch'ol's argument very briefly, Sŏn authors like Chinul and Zongmi "who have advocated sudden awakening/gradual cultivation have completely misunderstood the Sŏn of Bodhidharma...."¹⁷⁴ The crux of his criticism is that Chinul's moderate subitism accommodates a gradualist component in Sŏn soteriology, which is antithetical to the sudden teaching of Sŏn. The progression Chinul proposes from a sudden understanding-awakening, through gradual

cultivation, to final realization-awakening is, Söngch'öl argues, “a fiction ... that is diametrically opposed to the orthodox transmission of the Sön school,”¹⁷⁵ by which Söngch'öl effectively means the Imje/Linji school. Söngch'öl makes an exhaustive study of Chan literature in his attempt to demonstrate that authentic Chan and Sön soteriology—the school's “orthodox road,” as he calls it—is sudden awakening/sudden cultivation.¹⁷⁶ Such an interpretation demands, in turn, that Chinul's attempt to incorporate the understanding-awakening into *kanhwa* Sön must be mistaken: as Söngch'öl notes, “The Sön of Bodhidharma means the sudden cultivation in which even one thought does not arise. Advocating that the Sön of Bodhidharma means the gradual cultivation of the understanding-awakening, in which one does not linger in either production or cessation, is, now and forever, a grave mistake.”¹⁷⁷ Söngch'öl thus does not brook any provisional description of enlightenment, such as is noted in the definition of the understanding-awakening, but only the full, experiential confirmation that comes from the final realization-awakening.

The consummate enlightenment of buddhahood also demands such an uncompromising focus on sustained investigation of the *hwadu* that the meditator must learn not only how to continue one's *hwadu* inquiry while awake, but also during dreams,

and finally even in dreamless sleep. Sŏngch'ŏl calls these three stages in *kanhwa* Sŏn the three checkpoints (*samgwan/san'guan* 三關): (1) to maintain a single suchness [with the *hwadu*] during activity or rest (*tongjŏng iryŏ/dongjing yiru* 動靜一如); (2) to maintain a single suchness while dreaming (*mongjung iryŏ/mengzhong yiru* 夢中一如); and (3) to maintain a single suchness in deep dreamless sleep (*sungmyŏn iryŏ/shumin yiru* 熟眠一如). These stages have a long pedigree in both Chinese Chan and Korean Sŏn thought and the basic distinction between maintaining the *hwadu* during wakefulness and sleep (*omae iryŏ/wumei yiru* 寤寐一如) is mentioned repeatedly by Chan and Sŏn teachers from Dahui Zonggao to Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238–1295) to Mengshan Deyi 蒙山德異 (1231–1308) to T'aego Pou.¹⁷⁸ Sŏngch'ŏl correlated these stages with the bhūmi system of the mainstream Mahāyāna mārga: the first and second stages correspond to the seventh bhūmi (when the practitioner might still be subject to backsliding), the third stage to the nonretrogressive eighth through tenth bhūmis and the final ascent to the stage of buddhahood. These three checkpoints are widely known in Korean Sŏn circles today and have emerged as one of the basic yardsticks used by Sŏn meditators to assess the depth of their experience in *hwadu* investigation.

Given the fatal flaws Söngch'öl identifies in Chinul's account of the soteriological process, his conclusion is that Chinul "was not a genuine master (*ponbun chongsa/benfen zongshi* 本分宗師) in a recognized transmission lineage, as is emblematic of the Sön school. The main subject of his thought is Hwaö̃m-Sön,"¹⁷⁹ a pejorative term Söngch'öl uses to describe a bastardized form of Sön—combining Sön meditation practice with Hwaö̃m scholasticism à la Zongmi—that has nothing in common with the orthodox Sön school that derives from Bodhidharma. For this reason, in 1976, Söngch'öl forbade the Haeinsa seminary from teaching Zongmi's *Preface* and Chinul's *Excerpts*, the two texts he considered to be heterodox in the *Fourfold Collection* (*Sajip* 四集), the Sön track in the traditional Korean seminary curriculum. (I will discuss this *Fourfold Collection* later.) These, he replaced with two texts with unassailably subitist credentials: the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* and *The Essential Gate for Accessing the Path through Sudden Awakening* (*Dunwu rudao yaomen lun*) by the Hongzhou master Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 (d.u., ca. eighth century).¹⁸⁰

Söngch'öl was arguably the most influential supeme patriarch of the contemporary Chogyae Order, and his influence has continued unabated since his death in 1993. His perspective on the "orthodox road" of Sön practice currently dominates

Korean Buddhism, and the movement that he started to truncate the Sŏn curriculum so that it focuses exclusively on radical subitism has grown in turn.

Must *Kanhwa* Sŏn Entail Radical Subitism?

Sŏngch'ŏl's criticism of Chinul should not be dismissed as monkish quibbling; it is not a Korean equivalent of medieval Christian debates over how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. On the contrary, his critique goes to the very heart of what it means to be a Korean Buddhist, since so much of that definition for the last eight hundred years has been tied to the perspectives on Buddhist thought and practice that Chinul forged. Hence, we would do well to consider carefully whether Chinul's views are as “diametrically opposed to the orthodox road of the Sŏn school” as Sŏngch'ŏl would make them out to be.

First of all, Chinul's incorporation of the understanding-awakening into *kanhwa* practice is dependent upon the distinction he draws between the two types of *hwadu* investigation: investigation of the meaning and investigation of the word. But Chinul was not making up this distinction from whole cloth: the acceptance of such a provisional level of *hwadu* investigation—the investigation of the meaning—has a long history in both Chinese and Korean traditions of *kanhwa* Sŏn. It may be traced at least as far back as Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–1135) and Dahui Zonggao, two monks in the Yangqi

branch of Linji Chan who played critical roles in the development of the *kanhwa* technique. At one point in his *Blue Cliff Record* (*Biyan lu*), Yuanwu Keqin seems even to suggest that investigation of the meaning is preferable to investigation of the word: “People of today do not understand the ancients’ meaning (*yi* 意). They just go on to chew on the words and gnaw at the phrases (*ju* 句). What chance will they have for comprehension?”¹⁸¹ Since the Linji pedigree of these two monks is unimpeachable, Chinul’s advocacy of these two types of *kanhwa* investigation does not contradict the mainstream Linji/Imje position. In Korea, Hyujŏng 休靜 (1520–1604), the most renowned Sŏn monk of the Chosŏn period, also discusses these two modes of investigation in his *Mirror on the Sŏn School* (*Sŏn’ga kwigam*).¹⁸² And even T’aego Pou, one of the late-Koryŏ Korean monks who introduced the Linji transmission line into Korea from China, accepts the distinction. Pou notes at several points in his extant writings that the purpose of *kanhwa* practice is to examine the question, “How did the idea to say ‘no’ arise in Zhaozhou?”¹⁸³ A poem Pou wrote demonstrates how the investigation of the meaning helps to further *kanhwa* meditation.

The meaning (*i* 意) of why Zhaozhu said “no,”

Should be urgently investigated and examined.

If your investigation reaches [that point where] you comprehend nothing,

Then this [question] will appear as a dense mass.
Where doubt vanishes and sensations are forgotten,
What face will Zhaozhou have?
But if instead you give rise to extraneous thoughts,
The road to Shu will be difficult even though it is right before
your face.¹⁸⁴

While other Sŏn authors may not make the same explicit connection between investigation of the meaning and the understanding-awakening that Chinul does, their interpretations often seem to imply as much.

We also must face the fact that *kanhwa* Sŏn is not always described as sudden awakening/sudden cultivation even in normative Linji literature. In fact, even a brief perusal of Dahui's own writings shows that alternative accounts of the soteriological regimen of *kanhwa* practice abound. At several places in his work, Dahui seems to come out in favor of regarding *hwadu* investigation as a sudden awakening/gradual cultivation technique.¹⁸⁵ Elsewhere, Dahui describes the process of Sŏn practice as analogous to someone learning archery: one simply shoots one's arrows at the target again and again until one is able to hit the bull's-eye consistently.¹⁸⁶ After our perusal of the various soteriological schemata outlined in Chinul's *Excerpts*, we will immediately recognize that this simile has always been used to describe the regimen of sudden cultivation/gradual awakening (*tonsu chŏmo*), not sudden awakening/sudden

cultivation.¹⁸⁷ Hence, while the weight of evidence within Sŏn theoretical writings may support the view that *kanhwa* Sŏn was considered to entail a sudden awakening/sudden cultivation regimen of training, this view was by no means unanimous even within the Imje/Linji tradition itself.

Dahui's intimation that *kanhwa* Sŏn might actually entail sudden cultivation/gradual awakening is telling when we examine the religious careers of Linji monks. Even a cursory examination of the lives of major figures in the Linji school shows that few (if any) practitioners of *kanhwa* Sŏn seem to have perfected practice and enlightenment simultaneously as sudden awakening/sudden cultivation would seem to demand. If their own vocations are any indications, most actually undergo a series of gradual awakenings. As but one example within the Korean *kanhwa* Sŏn tradition, let me discuss the religious career of T'aego Pou, the Imje scion in Korea and an emblematic advocate of radical subitism.

The most comprehensive narrative of T'aego Pou's career appears in his *Account of Conduct* (*Haengjang* 行狀), compiled by his disciple, Yuch'ang 維昌, in 1383. Such accounts are a traditional type of religious biography, written soon after a master's death to preserve accurate material on his life; such an account was typically used as the main source material for preparing his official funerary stele and it

was often appended at the end of a master's discourse records (as it is with Pou's records). When Pou was in his thirteenth year (1313), we are told, he was ordained at Hoeamsa 樾巖寺 under the guidance of the otherwise-unknown Sŏn master Kwangji 廣智 (d.u.), and soon afterward traveled to a monastery in the Kajisan 迦智山 school, a lineage in the Nine Mountains tradition of Korean Sŏn. In his nineteenth year (1319), he began to "investigate a topic" (*chamhwa/canhua* 參話) associated with Zhaozhou Congshen, "all the dharmas return to one; to what does the one return?" but had no clue what to make of it. After seven years preparing for the Hwaŏm doctrinal examinations, Pou decided that continued textual study was "nothing more than a weir and a trap," and "suddenly cutting off all conditioning," he retired to a life of meditation.^{[188](#)}

In the autumn of 1333, Pou entered the monk's hall (*sŭngdang/sengtang* 僧堂) at Kamnosa 甘露寺, in the western suburbs of the Koryŏ capital of Kaesŏng. Disturbed over his lack of progress on this "to what does the one return" *hwadu*, he decided to increase the intensity of his meditation practice by sitting upright for seven straight days. Late one night, while he was dozing at his seat, two green-robed boys appeared, one carrying a pitcher and the other a cup. They ladled out for him a cup of clear soup, which Pou drank, savoring its sweet taste. Suddenly,

he had a realization (*sǒng/xing* 省) and composed an enlightenment poem.

Where “one” also cannot be found,
The stones in my house are stomped on and pulverized.
But looking over, I see no traces of this destruction,
And the person who looks on is also already quiescent.
Bright and clear, this perfection is sheer and steep,
Dark and mysterious, its radiance is luminous and splendid.
The buddhas, the patriarchs, and the mountain streams:
I have no mouth, but I swallow them all.¹⁸⁹

Four years later, in 1337, Pou was standing alone in his room at Pulgaksa 佛腳寺 reading the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra (Yuanjue jing)*. On reaching the passage “When all is utterly extinguished, ... that is called ‘immobility,’”¹⁹⁰ he let go completely of all his acquired knowledge and recited a four-line verse:

In quiescence, a thousand forms appear,
During activity, even one thing does not exist.
No, no: what is it?
After the frost, the chrysanthemums bloom luxuriantly.¹⁹¹

This experience constituted Pou’s second major awakening.

Pou then turned to the investigation of the “no” *hwadu*. That winter, which he passed at Ch’aejung Hermitage 蔡中菴, he reached that state in which [the *hwadu*] was a single suchness during wakefulness and sleep (*omae iryō/wumei yiru* 寤寐一

如). But since he still was unable to shatter the doubt about the word “no,” he had become like a dead man. In cyclical year *muin*, prime month, seventh day (27 January 1338), during the fifth night-watch (3–5 a.m.), his mind suddenly opened widely into a great awakening (*hwaryŏn taego/huoran dawu* 豁然大悟) and he thereupon composed a verse.

That old buddha Zhaozhou,
Sits blocking the road of a thousand saints.
Face to face with [a sword sharp enough to cut] a wind-blown
hair,¹⁹²
There is no hole where I can hide my body.
Foxes and hares have no place to hide,
Turning around, a lion appears.
After breaking down the prison door,
A refreshing breeze blows on T'aego.¹⁹³

This was Pou's third awakening experience.

Returning to his natal home in the third month of that same year to care for his aged mother, Pou began to work assiduously through all the 1,700 traditional *kongans*. Although he became stuck on one *kongan* for a while, he finally conquered them all and said, “How many people under heaven have comprehended the very last word?”¹⁹⁴ This fourth and final awakening, which came when Pou was thirty-eight years old, was the consummation of nearly twenty years of practice, investigating several different *hwadu*. Eight years later, in the spring of 1346, Pou decided to travel to Yuan-dynasty China to

seek sanction (*in'ga/yinke* 印可) from a teacher in the Chinese Linji line. This confirmation he received in 1347 from Shiwu Qinggong 石屋清珙 (1272–1352). Pou stayed with Qinggong for two weeks before returning to the Yuan capital, where he became a favorite of the imperial family. When Pou returned home to Korea in the spring of 1348 with the Imje/Linji lineage, he became a strong advocate of *kanhwa* Sŏn and particularly the investigation of the *mu hwadu*.

It is crucial to note that Pou's account of his own personal development in *kanhwa* meditation involved a pronounced gradualist element. He did not have one ultimate awakening in which both awakening and cultivation were instantly perfected—the epitome of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation—but four distinct awakening experiences spread out over a five-year period, and preceded by well over a decade of *kanhwa* meditation before his initial awakening. Pou's meditative career, like that of so many other quintessentially Imje/Linji monks, calls into question whether sudden awakening/sudden cultivation is a legitimate soteriological program: even Imje supporters of radical subitism acknowledge achieving their enlightenments at the culmination of a progressive series of insights.

Given these suggestions that *kanhwa* Sŏn may involve soteriological regimens other than sudden

awakening/sudden cultivation, we may reasonably ask if there really is anyone in the Sŏn school who has achieved enlightenment instantaneously via sudden awakening/sudden cultivation. While many Sŏn masters hedge their answers, there is at least one who unequivocally responds no. That teacher is Zongmi. Although Zongmi lived before the creation of the *kanhwa* technique, he was strongly critical of radical-subitist schemata like that advocated by *kanhwa* adepts, rejecting them as subterfuges for long processes of gradual development in past lives, which prepared the way for whatever sudden experiences may occur in the present lifetime. As I discussed previously, Zongmi notes in his *Preface* that sudden awakening/sudden cultivation is only applicable “from the perspective of this present life. If we extend our investigation back into past lives, there is only gradualness and no suddenness. Any suddenness seen now appears through gradual permeation [of one’s mind by practice] over many lifetimes.”¹⁹⁵ Chinul discusses this passage extensively in his *Excerpts*. Chinul is rather more charitable than Zongmi toward such subitist soteriologies. But while Chinul admits (as Zongmi would not) that there may well be a few talented practitioners who would be able to make use of such radical approaches as sudden awakening/sudden cultivation, even he concludes that such adepts are

extremely rare. Because of what he claims is its superior utility in practice, Chinul therefore promotes the moderate subitism of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation and seeks a way to accommodate the radical subitism of *kanhwa* Sŏn within his more moderate soteriology.

But even were sudden awakening/sudden cultivation to be recognized on theoretical grounds as offering a valid soteriological strategy (a controversial position in itself), this need not imply that it would be any faster in generating enlightenment than are the much-maligned gradual approaches. While the experience of awakening might in principle occur in a single instant, “sudden cultivation” may still require a long time (dare I say “in practice”?) before one has fully prepared oneself for that subitist experience, just as it might take decades for an apprentice to learn the whole of a craft before truly mastering it or an archer years before being able to hit the bull’s-eye consistently (to use two of the common similes for sudden cultivation). By also placing *kanhwa* Sŏn within his preferred schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, Chinul was able to bypass such qualms about the applicability of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation and outline a soteriological regimen for this technique that he could claim was of value in theory as well as practice.

Söngch'öl's criticisms of Chinul have led to a spirited debate in contemporary Korean Buddhism between himself and several other Buddhist scholars and monks, including the Chinul specialist Professor Yi Chongik 李鍾益 (1912–1991) and Kusan Suryön 九山秀蓮 (1909–1983), the past Sön master at Songgwangsa, the monastery that Chinul founded in the early thirteenth century. (In the interest of full disclosure, I should note that I was re-ordained into the Chogye Order at Songgwangsa with Kusan *sūnim* as my sponsor, so my Korean colleagues are not always convinced that I am an unbiased recounter of these debates.) I would submit, however, that Chinul's embrace of the *hwadu* technique late in his life is what enabled the Imje/Linji interpretation of *kanhwa* Sön, with its emblematic radical subitism, to gain a toehold in Korea and, eventually, to dominate late-Koryŏ Buddhism. It is only a slight exaggeration, then, to say that without Chinul, there could be no Söngch'öl.

***Excerpts'* Legacy in Korean Buddhism**

As I discussed previously, hints of Imje-style exclusivism made their first appearance in Korea in Chinul's posthumous work on *kanhwa* Sŏn, *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, the first exposition of the *kanhwa* technique written by a Korean monk. Chinul's own successor, Chin'gak Hyesim, was an even more avid promoter of *kanhwa* Sŏn than his teacher; he also compiled the first indigenous *kongan* collection in Korea in order to imbed the technique more deeply in Korean meditative training. Thanks to Hyesim's influence, Korean Buddhist practice began to coalesce around *kanhwa* Sŏn, to the detriment of Chinul's ecumenism. Within another hundred years, the formal Imje/Linji lineage—which was closely associated with *kanhwa* Sŏn—was introduced into Korea from Yuan 元 dynasty (1271–1368) China, which led to a rather drastic narrowing of the scope of the Korean Buddhist tradition. Such Korean monks as Kyŏngha Paegun, T'aego Pou, Naong Hyegŭn, and Muhak Chach'o had all practiced the *kanhwa* technique in Korea before traveling to China to seek certification and transmission from recognized masters in the Linji school.¹⁹⁶ For example, Pou, whose practice career I covered above, sojourned in China and eventually

received transmission from Shiwu Qinggong in the Linji school, one of the predominant strands of Yuan-period Chinese Buddhism. ¹⁹⁷ At the end of the dynasty, the ecumenism Chinul had promoted earlier during the Koryŏ was eclipsed, at least temporarily, by this imported Imje school, a more exclusivist interpretation of Buddhist training deriving from a single strand of Chinese Chan.

But even these very same late-Koryŏ Sŏn monks who introduced quintessentially Imje orientations to Korea were thoroughly familiar with Chinul's views and even incorporated them into their own accounts of Sŏn practice. As but one example, T'aego Pou, the Imje teacher whom Sŏngch'ŏl regards as the legitimate founder of the Chogyŏ order, correlated *kanhwa* Sŏn with Chinul's seminal concept (via Zongmi) of the void and quiescent numinous awareness. The term "numinous awareness" had been excoriated by Chinese Linji teachers because it evoked Zongmi's discredited gradualism; even Dahui quotes approvingly the statement of a fellow Linji master that Zongmi's numinous awareness "is the gateway to all calamities."¹⁹⁸ But Pou is much more accommodating to this alternative perspective on Chan and Sŏn practice than were his Chinese counterparts. As Pou writes to one of his lay students, when you are investigating the *hwadu* and

the *hwadu* is pristine, production and cessation then come to an end. That point where production and cessation have come to an end is called quiescence. The absence of the *hwadu* amid this quiescence is what is called blankness (*mugi/wuji* 無記, *avyākṛta*?). A *hwadu* that is brilliant [lit., “not dark,” *pumae/pumei* 不昧] amid this quiescence is what is called numinous awareness. It is this void and quiescent numinous awareness where nothing decays and nothing is extraneous. If you work in this manner, then before long you will succeed. Your body-and-mind and the *hwadu* will fuse into a singularity (*t’asōng ilp’yōn/dacheng yipian* 打成一片); there will be nothing on which you can rely and nowhere for your mind to go.^{[199](#)}

This passage adeptly fuses the distinctive *kanhwa* Sōn meditative argot of the Imje school with Chinul’s emblematic terminology describing the true nature of the mind and sentience.

After the Chosōn dynasty shifted its allegiance from the Mongol Yuan to the Chinese Ming 明 dynasty (1368–1644), Korean Buddhists began to turn away from this imported Imje lineage and toward their own indigenous traditions. This shift was hastened by restrictions the Ming dynasty placed on foreigners traveling to the Chinese mainland, travel restrictions that encouraged Koreans to turn inward for inspiration rather than outward to China.^{[200](#)} Korean Buddhist intellectuals began to look once again at Chinul. One example is the monk Hamhō Tūkt’ong, also known as Kihwa, a disciple of the Imje master Muhak Chach’o, Korea’s last state preceptor. Like his teacher, Kihwa lived during the transition

from the Koryŏ to the Chosŏn, and is perhaps best known for his lively debates in defense of the Buddhist faith with the Confucian ideologue and anti-Buddhist polemicist Chŏng To-jŏn 鄭道傳 (1324–1398).²⁰¹ Kihwa was familiar with Chinul's writings and, like his distinguished predecessor, placed Sŏn at the very center of his thought and practice even as he maintained an accommodating attitude toward Kyo doctrinal study. Kihwa drew heavily from Chinul's Buddhist ecumenism in his attempts to defuse Confucian criticisms of Buddhist thought and practice and to demonstrate possible points of convergence between Buddhism and its rival.²⁰² Because of the intermittent Confucian persecutions of Buddhism that raged during the Chosŏn dynasty, the entire period is sometimes portrayed as a benighted dark age of Korean Buddhism. But as Kihwa's own case demonstrates, Korean Buddhists were no mere passive victims of a virulent anti-Buddhist polemic; they continued to learn and practice their tradition and defend it against any and all comers. In fact, Buddhist institutions endured, and both Sŏn meditation practice and Kyo doctrinal study continued throughout the dynasty, though often from mountain fastnesses rather than bustling city centers.

There was an efflorescence of Buddhist scholarship in Korea following the withdrawal from the peninsula of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's 豊臣秀吉

(1536/37–1598) Japanese invasion forces at the end of the sixteenth century. Chinul's writings, and especially his *Excerpts*, once again took center stage. One of the scions of Buddhism during this tumultuous period in the middle of the Chosŏn dynasty was Ch'ŏnghŏ Hyujŏng 清虛休靜 (1520–1604).²⁰³ Given the turbulent times in which he lived, Hyujŏng sought to compile an accessible outline of the cardinal teachings of Sŏn Buddhism that could be used as a brief handbook for Sŏn training. Hyujŏng's *Mirror on the Sŏn School* (Sŏn'ga kwigam) was the result. In this text, Hyujŏng builds upon the accommodating attitude toward Sŏn practice and Kyo doctrinal study advocated by Chinul, especially the way in which Hwaŏm doctrine was to serve as an underpinning for Sŏn meditation; but he adroitly combined this ecumenical frame with explicitly Imje interpretations of *kanhwa* Sŏn. Hyujŏng's *Mirror on the Sŏn School* drew heavily on Chinul's iteration of Buddhism in its outline of training. Hyujŏng clearly knew *Excerpts* well and he drew from it at least six times in his discussion.²⁰⁴ Hyujŏng was deeply influenced by Chinul's preferred soteriological schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. The principal focus of his practice was the *kanhwa* Sŏn that Chinul championed, especially Dahui's interpretation of the technique as Chinul had outlined it in his *Excerpts* and in greater detail in his

posthumous *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*. Hyujŏng, for example, cites the extensive discussion of the ten maladies of *hwadu* investigation that appears in Chinul's *Excerpts*, showing that he was personally familiar with Chinul's distinctive treatment of this topic.²⁰⁵ From Hyujŏng's time onward, Chinul remained front and center in Korean treatments of Sŏn Buddhist thought and practice.

Perhaps catalyzed by the resurgence of interest in Chinul's works prompted by the Hyujŏng, Chinul's *Excerpts* begins to be the focus of sustained study and research in Korean Buddhist monasteries. Starting in the late sixteenth century, *Excerpts* was reprinted in successive xylographic editions in monasteries across the peninsula, probably for use by students in monastic seminaries. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries alone, these printings include a 1570 edition made at Sin'gwangsa 神光寺, a 1588 edition from Unmunsa 雲門寺 (now one of the principal Buddhist seminaries for nuns), a 1608 edition from Chinul's own monastery of Songgwangsa, and other monastery editions from 1635, 1647, 1681, 1686. The frequent printings of the text during this period demonstrate how tightly *Excerpts* was being woven into the fabric of the Korean seminary curriculum.²⁰⁶

This growing circulation of Chinul's *Excerpts* is mirrored in the scholarly record. The efflorescence of

Korean Buddhist scholarship that started in the seventeenth century soon led to the publication of important commentaries on Chinul's *Excerpts*. Two of the first Korean commentaries on *Excerpts* were written at the very beginning of that century. Around 1701, the Kyo specialist Sangbong Chŏngwŏn 霜峯淨源 (1627–1709) wrote a *Schematic Analysis of "Excerpts"* (*Chŏryo punkwa*, also titled *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo kwamun*). This text is described in his *General Preface to a Schematic Analysis of "Preface" and "Excerpts"* (*Tosŏ Chŏryo punkwa ch'ongsŏ*), which includes the full text of Chŏngwŏn's exegesis of Zongmi's *Preface*.²⁰⁷ Almost contemporaneously, Sŏram Ch'ubung 雪岩秋鵬 (1651–1706), a Sŏn adept who was a successor of Wŏlchŏ Toan 月渚道安 (1638–1715), wrote his own *Personal Notes to the "Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record"* (*Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo sagi*). Yuil (whom I will discuss just below) mentions this commentary in his own *Preface to Personal Notes to "Preface" and "Excerpts"* (*Sŏ To Yo ki sŏ*), but it is unfortunately not extant.²⁰⁸

But there were two important commentaries on Chinul's *Excerpts* written during the eighteenth century that remained widely used in the Korean seminary study: one by the Kyo scholiast Hoeam Chŏnghye, titled the *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo sagi hae* (alt. *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo sagi*

hwajok); the second by the Sŏn master and exegete Yŏndam Yuil, who wrote the *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo kwamok pyŏngip sagi*.²⁰⁹ These commentaries include the two exegetes' explanations of the meanings of specific passages in *Excerpts*, as we would expect to find in any commentary worth its salt. But both offer more than line-by-line exegeses. Chinul's *Excerpts* is, after all, a commentary to Zongmi's *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* and is itself a dense thicket of lengthy excerpts, copious quotations, and extensive commentary, all combined with Chinul's personal notes, and presented with nary a hint of a section break or a topic heading. Because of this complex structure, Chŏnghye's and Yuil's commentaries seek to tease apart these different components of *Excerpts* by providing detailed segmental analyses (*kwap'an/kepan* 科判) of the text as a whole, mapping out the structure of the text and the connections between its different sections. Such analyses help to bring the text's various parts together into an interpretative whole, allowing its complete narrative to be visualized.²¹⁰ Although these scriptural cartographies may at times seem almost as intractable to comprehend as the text they are designed to help interpret, I have consulted both of them in adding sections headings to the translation of Chinul's *Excerpts* that follows.

Chinul's distinctive approach to Sŏn constituted the mainstream of the Korean Buddhist tradition through the remainder of the Chosŏn dynasty. Late in the dynasty, preeminent Sŏn teachers like Paekp'a Kŭngsŏn and Ch'oŭi Ŭisun 草衣意恂 (1786–1866) continued to be heavily influenced by Chinul in their portrayal of the broader Sŏn tradition.²¹¹ The late-Chosŏn Sŏn tradition posited four broad varieties of Sŏn training: (1) reasoned, or theoretical, Sŏn (*ŭiri* Sŏn/*yili* Chan 義理禪), (2) tathāgata Sŏn (*yŏrae* Sŏn/*rulai* Chan 如來禪), (3) patriarchal Sŏn (*chosa* Sŏn 祖師禪), and (4) unprecedented (lit., “surpasses-[all]-precedents”) Sŏn (*kyŏgoe* Sŏn/*gewai* Chan 格外禪). The “standard account transmitted in monasteries since of old”²¹² correlated these four varieties of Sŏn with the two broad doctrinal categories that Chinul raises early in *Excerpts*, through which he evaluated the legitimacy and utility of different Buddhist schools: the two aspects concerning dharma (the ontological categories of immutability and adaptability) and the two approaches concerning person (the soteriological categories of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation).²¹³ The traditional view at the time was that “reasoned Sŏn” and “unprecedented Sŏn” corresponded to the two aspects of dharma; “tathāgata Sŏn” and “patriarchal Sŏn” corresponded to the two approaches regarding person.²¹⁴ In this

view, then, “reasoned Sŏn was in fact tathāgata Sŏn, and unprecedented Sŏn was in fact patriarchal Sŏn.”²¹⁵ But Paekp’a rejected this equivalency between reasoned Sŏn and tathāgata Sŏn, since it improperly gave reasoned Sŏn a far more exalted status than it deserved and unfairly tainted tathāgata Sŏn as being purely intellectual.²¹⁶ Paekp’a therefore reduced these four varieties of Sŏn to three, in ascending order: reasoned Sŏn, tathāgata Sŏn, and patriarchal Sŏn. Unprecedented Sŏn subsumed the latter two.

In Paekp’a’s *Compact of the Cultivating Sŏn Religious Society* (*Susŏn kyŏlsa mun*), this teacher specifically correlates these three varieties of Sŏn with Chinul’s account in *Excerpts* of the three mysterious gates (*samhyŏn mun/sanxuan men* 三玄門):²¹⁷ the mystery in the essence (*ch’ejung hyŏn/tizong xuan* 體中玄), the mystery in the word (*kujung hyŏn/juzhong xuan* 句中玄), and the mystery in the mystery (*hyŏnjung hyŏn/xuanzhong xuan* 玄中玄). The three mysterious gates had long been identified as a distinctive teaching of Linji Yixuan and his eponymous Linji school,²¹⁸ and Paekp’a accepts this traditional identification. But Chinul’s writings, in fact, offer two rather different treatments of the three mysterious gates. In the “Conclusion” section of his *Excerpts*, Chinul discusses them briefly in relation to the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique, and it is this

interpretation that Paekp'a later connects to Linji teachings. There, Chinul connects the mystery in the essence to correct conceptual understanding of the buddhadharma, such as that generated through studying Heze and Zongmi. The mystery in the word refers to the *kanhwa* technique, which clears away the defects of conceptual understanding and gives oneself "complete mastery over the realm of birth and death." And it is by perfecting both the first and second mysteries that the third, "the mystery in the mystery ... will naturally come to exist therein" without requiring any specific development.

Chinul's coverage of the three mysterious gates is rather more extensive in his two posthumous treatises, *Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood* (*Wöndon söngbullon*) and *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*.²¹⁹ In those treatises, Chinul discusses the three mysterious gates in terms, respectively, of (1) correct conceptual knowledge; (2) "the cleansing knowledge and vision" typically associated with the terse words of the *hwadu*; and (3) illocutionary styles of pedagogy used in Sŏn, such as shouting and beating, that were deployed to help remove any remaining attachment even to the *hwadu*. He also explicitly denies the connection of these three mysterious gates to Linji and clarifies that his interpretation there derives

instead from the second-generation Yunmen teacher Jianfu Chenggu 薦福承古 (970–1045).²²⁰

In Paekp'a's analysis, which generally corresponds to Chinul's treatment in *Excerpts*, reasoned Sŏn, the most basic variety, is equivalent to the Heze school as described in Zongmi's *Preface* and Chinul's *Excerpts*. Soteriologically, it correlates with the first mystery, the mystery in the essence.²²¹ This style of Sŏn was intended to establish correct conceptual understanding of the buddhadharma, which would provide a solid foundation for all subsequent practice. It therefore corresponds to the initial sudden understanding-awakening, the inception of practice in Chinul's soteriological system.

Paekp'a's second variety of Sŏn, tathāgata Sŏn, corresponds to the Caodong, Weiyang/Guiyang, and Fayan houses of the five houses of classical Chinese Chan. Soteriologically, it correlates with the second mystery, the mystery in the word, and is equated with the investigation of the word (*ch'amgu/canju* 參句) in *kanhwa* Sŏn. Paekp'a quite uniquely connects the investigation of the word with both no-thought practice and the balanced maintenance of alertness and calmness, an alternative formulation of the concurrent cultivation of samādhi and prajñā as taught in the *Platform Sūtra*; both no-thought and the joint cultivation of alertness and calmness constitute distinctively Heze descriptions of the stage of gradual

cultivation that follows the initial sudden awakening. As Paekp'a says, "This void and quiescent wisdom is itself also void and quiescent. In this wise, in the midst of this void-quiescence of no-thought, you need just raise the one thought [of the *hwadu*] that is manifesting then and there in your mind and investigate the live word (*hwalgu*) that is insipid and is without precedent (*kyögoe/gewai* 格外). This, then, is jointly maintaining alertness and calmness."²²² Hence, in Paekp'a's analysis, *kanhwa* Sön constituted the stage of gradual cultivation in Chinul's schema of moderate subitism.

Paekp'a's third variety of Sön, patriarchal Sön, corresponded to the Linji and Yunmen houses of the five houses of classical Chan. Soteriologically, it constituted the third mystery, the mystery in the mystery. This mystery is not associated with any specific type of practice, but is the inevitable culmination of the process mastered through the first two mysteries, just as it is for Chinul in *Excerpts*. Paekp'a calls the mystery in the mystery that ultimate place of sanctuary where the adept is able to "settle his body and lodge his life" (*ansin immyöng/anshen liming* 安身立命).²²³ It therefore corresponds to the final realization-awakening in Chinul's system. Paekp'a's analysis thus brings these three mysterious gates, a teaching that he considers to be emblematic of the Linji school, directly within the

purview of Chinul's moderate subitism and connects its explicitly to Chinul's coverage in *Excerpts*.

By the twentieth century, Chinul's influence had even extended beyond the mainstream Korean Buddhist traditions to new religious reform movements that were then flourishing across the peninsula. Chinul found a particularly strong proponent in Pak Chungbin 朴重彬 (1891–1943), better known as Sot'aesan 少太山, the founder of the Korean new religion of Wŏnbulgyo 圓佛教 (Consummate Buddhism). This indigenous religion was profoundly influenced by mainstream Korean Buddhism and early in its history even called itself the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma (Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe 佛法研究會). Chinul's teachings played a seminal role in framing Sot'aesan's view of religious training, and Sot'aesan included Chinul's *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* in his *Essential Scriptures of the Buddha and Patriarchs* (*Pulcho yogyŏng*), a collection of Buddhist texts that he recommended his followers read and carefully study.^{[224](#)} *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, Chinul's most popular work, focuses on Chinul's preferred soteriology of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. This text, written just a few of years before *Excerpts*, provides the rationale for his moderate subitism, which Chinul will then expand on substantially in his magnum opus. Sot'aesan is deeply familiar with

Chinul's discussions of soteriology, and he takes up the sudden/gradual issue explicitly in a discussion of the prospect of radical subitism. Sot'aesan acknowledges, as had Chinul before him, that there have been examples among previous buddhas and adepts of people who have mastered awakening and cultivation simultaneously; but Sot'aesan concludes that this subitism in this lifetime was a result of extensive training over many previous lifetimes to complete "thousands of steps." Sot'aesan even provides his own analogy for the experience of radical subitism: "It is like daybreak: darkness recedes unnoticed and daylight arrives unnoticed."²²⁵ Sot'aesan recognized thousands of differences in the spiritual capacities of his followers, but he categorizes these into the three typical capacities described in the mainstream Buddhist tradition—superior, average, inferior—with only those of superior spiritual capacity being able to understand suddenly.²²⁶ Sot'aesan's account of practice also begins with an authentic awakening to the truth of the *irwŏn* 一圓, the single circle, which in Wŏnbulgyo is the equivalent of the *dharmakāya* or buddha-nature of Kyo Buddhism, and the mind-seal of Sŏn.²²⁷ After this initial awakening to the truth of *irwŏn*, students were then to continue to model themselves on the *irwŏn* and progress through a series of ranks and stages, culminating in the sixth and last rank, that of

the “greatly enlightened tathāgata” (*taegak yŏrae wi* 大覺如來位): that is, adepts who were fully able to display great compassion toward all beings and who would never again stray into sensory attachments or discriminative thought.^{[228](#)} Sot’aesan’s outline of religious practice is thus a sudden awakening/gradual cultivation schema, which is heavily beholden to Chinul’s moderate subitism. Chinul’s preferred soteriology continued to influence indigenous forms of Korean religious practice throughout the remainder of the Japanese colonial period.

***Excerpts* and the *Fourfold Collection* of the Monastic Curriculum**

At around the same time that Chŏnghye and Yuil were writing their early commentaries to Chinul's *Excerpts* in the eighteenth century, Korean Buddhist seminaries began to feature *Excerpts* prominently in a new collection of texts that came to constitute the core of the traditional monastic curriculum: the so-called *Fourfold Collection* (*Sajip* 四集).²²⁹ After finishing the admonitory curriculum for novices, which focused on the rules and regulations of monastic conduct and decorum, the curriculum shifted to a consideration of the foundations of Sŏn practice and the connections between Sŏn and the broader Buddhist tradition. This was the *Fourfold Collection*, which was comprised of the following four texts (using the usual Korean abbreviations of their respective titles):

1. The *Letters* (*Sŏjang/Shuzhuang* 書狀), a collection of the correspondence of the Song-dynasty Linji master Dahui Zonggao (K. Taehye Chonggo), which was the Song-dynasty clarion call to the practice of *hwadu* investigation.²³⁰ The sixty-five letters in the collection comprise essentially the last four rolls of Dahui's longer *Discourse Records* (*Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu*).
2. The *Essentials of Chan* (*Sŏnyo/Chanyao* 禪要) by the Linji master Gaofeng Yuanmiao (K. Kobong Wŏnmyo), a text that

the Koreans had used as a primer of *kanhwa* Sŏn since at least the fifteenth century.²³¹ It focuses especially on techniques for generating the sensation of doubt and is especially renowned for its treatment of the three essentials (*samyo/sanyao* 三要) of *kanhwa* practice: the great faculty of faith (*tae sin'gŭn/da xin'gen* 大信根), great fervor (*tae punji/da fenzhi* 大憤志), and the great sensation of doubt (*tae ŭijŏng/da yiqing* 大疑情).²³²

3. Zongmi's *Preface* (*Tosŏ/Duxu* 都序) to his *Fount of Chan Collection*, which provides a broad overview of the Chan/Sŏn tradition and its associations with specific strands of Kyo doctrine and practice.
4. Chinul's *Excerpts*.

Three of these four texts are by Chinese Buddhist figures. Chinul's *Excerpts* is the only work in the collection composed by a Korean, even though it of course is a commentary on materials originally composed in China. Chinul certainly knew well Dahui's *Letters* and Zongmi's *Preface* and cites extended passages from both texts in his *Excerpts*; he even concludes *Excerpts* with a lengthy series of quotations from Dahui on the practice of *kanhwa* Sŏn. (Chinul obviously is not familiar with Gaofeng's *Essentials of Chan*, which would not be compiled for another couple of centuries, but Gaofeng's coverage of *kanhwa* Sŏn conforms closely to the distinctive Linji/Imje treatment pioneered by Dahui.) Chinul's *Excerpts* marks the first attempt in the history of the Chan and Sŏn traditions to combine the moderate subitism of Zongmi with the radical subitism of

Dahui's *kanhwa* Sŏn. It is an indication of Chinul's enduring significance in Korean Buddhism that the very texts he drew upon in pursuing this accommodation anticipate the materials that became the core of the monastic curriculum during the Chosŏn dynasty.

Pyŏksong Chiŏm 碧松智巖 (1464–1534) was among the first to allude specifically to the four texts that came to be included in the *Sajip* as constituting a coherent approach to Buddhist training. In a biography of his religious career written in 1560 and titled the *Record of the Practice of the Rustic Gaffer Pyŏksong* (*Pyŏksongdang Yaro haengnok*), Chiŏm is portrayed as a master capable of moving freely between the characteristic styles of Sŏn and Kyo in instructing his students. Important for our discussion here, in guiding his students, Chiŏm is said to have drawn specifically from the four texts that would come to constitute the *Sajip*.

Sometimes, the master [Chiŏm] overturned the waves of the great sea with his tongue of Kyo. At other times, he struck down the packs of fox spirits with his sword of Sŏn. His gate of propagation opened wide; it was truly inconceivable. In guiding neophytes, he first would establish in them the knowledge and vision that accords with reality through the [*Preface to the*] *Fount of Chan Collection* and the [*Excerpts from the Dharma Collection and*] *Special Practice Record*; next, he would sweep away the malady of intellectual understanding through [Gaofeng's] *Essentials of Chan* and [*Dahui's*] *Records* [alt. title,

Letters] in order to point out the living road [of *hwadu* investigation].²³³

Note, too, that Chiŏm draws specifically on Chinul's language in his description of the shortcut approach's unique ability to remove "the malady of intellectual understanding."

It is around the same time that Korean monasteries begin to print the texts of the *Sajip* together as a group, as for example in a 1575/76 publication from the monastic printing house at Ansimsa 庵心寺 in the southwest of the Korean peninsula.²³⁴ We thus have solid evidence that Korean Buddhists were beginning to conceive of these four texts as a single curricular unit for teaching Sŏn practice by at least the middle of the sixteenth century.

One of Hyujŏng's students, Chewŏl Kyŏnghŏn 霽月敬軒 (1542–1632), offers in his *Records* (*Chewŏltang taesa chip*) an account of the curricular relationship between these four texts that is almost identical to that of Chiŏm. When students would ask Kyŏnghŏn about the course of study they should undertake to prepare themselves for practicing as Sŏn monks, he would tell them, "First, through the *Preface* and the *Excerpts*, ascertain the knowledge and vision of the buddhadharma, thereby establishing a firm foundation [for understanding and practice]. Next, through the *Essentials of Chan* and

the *Letters*, smash to smithereens the malady of intellectual knowledge of the buddhadharma.”²³⁵

It is also telling that Chinul’s two major commentators Chŏnghye and Yuil, whom I mentioned above, wrote exegeses not only of *Excerpts* but also of most of the other texts that came to be included in the *Sajip*. Chŏnghye, as a Kyo adherent, wrote exegeses of both the *Preface* and *Excerpts*, the most “doctrinal” in style of the four texts. But Yuil, a master and exegete of Sŏn, wrote commentaries on all four. These exegetical activities demonstrate that, during the middle of the Chosŏn dynasty, the *Sajip* as a collection had become a focus of sustained scholarly study in Korean Buddhism.

The order in which Buddhist seminaries studied the four texts of the *Sajip* seems to have been fairly fluid. Chiŏm and Kyŏnghŏn’s statements quoted just above both seem to suggest that students begin by mastering Zongmi’s and Chinul’s ecumenical overviews of Sŏn doctrine and soteriology before moving on to Gaofeng’s *Essentials of Chan* (which is about as close to a primer of *kanhwa* Sŏn as is found in the literature) and winding up their formal study of Sŏn with Dahui’s *Letters*. This sequence conforms to the catchphrase “relinquish Kyo and enter into Sŏn” (sa-Kyo ip-Sŏn 捨教入禪) that we begin to see used during the mid-Chosŏn period by monks such as

Pyöksong Chiöm, Puyong Yönggwan 芙蓉靈觀 (1485–1571), and Puyong’s disciple Hyujöng. This phrase was deployed to describe this transition from the study of Zongmi and Chinul’s more accommodating approach to Sön training to full-blown Imje-style *kanhwa* Sön practice.²³⁶

We get a rather different picture of the *Sajip*’s ordering, and its place in the comprehensive monastic curriculum of the seventeen century, in a set of verses by a contemporary of Kyöngöhn’s. These verses were composed by Yöngwöl Chönghak 詠月情學 (1570–1654), a disciple of Hyujöng, and matter-of-factly titled “The *Fourfold Collection, Fourfold Doctrine, Transmission of the Lamplight, Prose and Verse Commentaries, and Avatamsaka*” (“*Sajip Sagyo Ch’öndüng Yömsong Hwaöm*” 四集四教傳燈拈頌華嚴), essentially cataloguing its contents.²³⁷ His verses offer brief synopses of the gist of each constituent in the monastic curriculum of his time. Chönghak’s verses on the curriculum begin with the four Sön texts that constitute the *Sajip*, in the following order:

1. Gaofeng’s *Essentials of Chan*
2. Dahui’s *Letters*
3. Zongmi’s *Preface*
4. Chinul’s *Excerpts*

This listing essentially inverts the order suggested in the records of Chiöm and Kyöngöhn, starting the

students off with full-blown *kanhwa* Sŏn, before stepping back to provide broader context on the relationship between Sŏn and Kyo drawn from Zongmi and Chinul. In Chŏnghak's account, Chinul's *Excerpts* serves as a transition between Sŏn practice and the Kyo doctrinal study that follows in the curriculum. This next module in the curriculum involves the intensive study of Mahāyāna sūtras:

5. *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*
6. *Diamond Sūtra*
7. *Śūraṃgamasūtra*
8. *Lotus Sūtra*
9. *Flower Garland Sūtra (Avataṃsakasūtra)*

After mastering first Sŏn and then Kyo materials, the final module of the curriculum described by Chŏnghak ends with the study of two massive Sŏn collections:

10. *The Transmission of the Lamplight Record from the Jingde Era (Jingde chuandeng lu)*, a doxographic record of Indian and Chinese Chan lineages
11. *Collection of Prose and Verse Commentaries to the [Old Cases of the] Sŏn School (Sŏnmun yŏmsong chip)*, the earliest indigenous *Korean* kongan collection, compiled by Chinul's disciple Chin'gak Hyesim

It is probably no coincidence that the culminating texts, listed as numbers 9, 10, and 11 above, constituted the central curriculum for the state monastic examinations administered during the

fourteenth and fifteen centuries: the *Avataṃsakasūtra* for the Kyo examinations, the *Transmission of the Lamplight* and the *Sōnmun yōmsong chip* for the Sōn exams.^{[238](#)}

To give a sense of how Chōnghak describes these respective texts, here is his outline of Chinul's *Excerpts*, written in the “regulated verse” (*yōlsi/lüshi* 律詩) form of classical Chinese poetry, with eight lines of seven Sinographs apiece.

Entering first the exalted and luminous courtyard of Heze,
All the [Sōn] schools are comprehended equally, laying out the
route ahead.

Where the *maṇi*-jewel is suspended, its blue and yellow colors
are distinguished,

When holding up a bronze mirror, essence and function are
illuminated.

On sudden awakening's bed, one smites the benighted dream,
Through gradual cultivation's gate, one masters correct
decorum.

Finally, raising Sōn's double-edged sword with its frosty blades,
One cleaves utterly the route ahead, and the bamboo and trees
become sentient.^{[239](#)}

Much of this description should by now be familiar. Chōnghak's coverage focuses on the utility of the Heze perspective on Sōn practice, with its moderate subitism of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. Even within the fixed constraints of this rigid verse form, Chōnghak is able to describe the main simile of Zongmi's *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*, the simile of the wish-fulfilling gem, which

ultimately derives from the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*, the first text in the Kyo curriculum. Finally, his verse concludes, as does Chinul's *Excerpts*, with raising "Sŏn's double-edged sword" of the *hwadu* technique, which smites all conceptions of the path and finally brings even plants to life.

The study of the four texts of the *Sajip* thus alternates between the study of Imje-style *kanhwa* Sŏn and the more ecumenical approaches to Sŏn training found in Chinul and Zongmi. Although, as I have noted, there is considerable variation in the order in which these texts were studied, one alternating order that becomes standard in the modern period starts with (1) Dahui's *Letters* on the practice of *kanhwa* Sŏn; reverts back to (2) Zongmi's *Preface* to provide a broad perspective on the connections between Sŏn and Kyo; returns to (3) Gaofeng's *Essentials of Chan*, which the Korean tradition used as a practical primer of *hwadu* investigation; and culminates with (4) Chinul's *Excerpts*, which combines Zongmi's ecumenical vision of Sŏn and Kyo with the more exclusivist perspective of Imje-style *kanhwa* Sŏn.²⁴⁰ Other iterations of the monastic curriculum from the early-twentieth century invert the two sets of texts, giving the following list: (1) Zongmi's *Preface*, (2) Dahui's *Letters*, (3) Chinul's *Excerpts*, (4) Gaofeng's

Essentials of Chan. Yi Nŭng-hwa in his 1918 *Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism* (*Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa*) recounts that the *Sajip* curriculum was a two-year course in either a ten- or eleven-year-long seminary curriculum.^{[241](#)}

Whatever the order in which these four texts were studied—and it obviously varied widely—the very structure of the *Sajip* collection as a whole codifies the unique combination of Heze and Linji perspectives on Sŏn practice first explored by Chinul. In compiling the four texts that comprise the *Sajip*, the concept of numinous awareness from Zongmi, via Heze, is the foundation on which the soteriological schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation is constructed. To this foundation is attached the radical subitism of *kanhwa* Sŏn practice. In the case of *Excerpts*, *hwadu* practice is simply appended to Chinul's analyses of Buddhist soteriological schemata and his championing of the moderate subitism of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, with little *esprit de synthèse* at that early stage. In the *Sajip* collection as a whole, however, this unique combination first broached by Chinul is codified across a much wider swath of Chan and Sŏn materials and made the foundation of the Korean Buddhist tradition.

The *Sajip* itself, and the unique doctrinal and soteriological approach endorsed in these four texts,

is thus a uniquely Korean compilation. The four books in this collection, more than any other work, provide a comprehensive overview of the underpinnings of mature Korean Buddhist thought and practice. It is only in Korea that these four books were compiled into a single collection and systematically studied as a unit into the modern period. Elsewhere in East Asia, it is really only Dahui's *Letters* that continued to be widely read and cited. There were occasional resurgences of interest in Zongmi, and his distinctive approach to Chan, in China during the Northern Song 北宋 dynasty (960–1127) and in Japan during the Kamakura 鎌倉 period (1185–1333), though in both cases this interest was largely channeled through Yongming Yanshou's *Zongjing lu*, which was heavily derivative of Zongmi.²⁴² There is also some tantalizing evidence that the indigenous Zen tradition of the Tangut Xixia 西夏 kingdom (1038–1227) in the northwest of China may have derived from Zongmi.²⁴³ But by the thirteen century, even these brief resurgences of interest were over and Zongmi fell into obscurity. Zongmi's *Chan Preface* was not included on the roster of texts printed in the Song or Koryŏ Buddhist canons, even though its close cousin, Yanshou's *Mirror of the Source Record*, was. There are xylographic prints of the *Chan Preface* made in Japan in the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, but none afterward, and

the text essentially vanishes from that tradition until it was rediscovered by Japanese scholars during the middle of the twentieth century.²⁴⁴ The brief efflorescence of Zongmi's Chan in Xixia came to an abrupt end with the destruction of the kingdom in 1227 by the forces of Genghis Khan and the expanding Mongol empire. Zongmi's only enduring influence was in Korea. Gaofeng Yuanmiao's treatment of *kanhwa* Sŏn in his *Essentials of Chan* was rather derivative of that of other, better known Chan teachers, such as Dahui, and his text also languished, barely read. About the only feature of Yuanmiao's teachings that remained widely known to the broader East Asian Zen tradition is his categorization of the "three essentials" of *kanhwa* Sŏn practice: great faith, great fervor, and great doubt. But, tellingly, this categorization is typically known not through Yuanmiao's work directly, but through its citation (with attribution) and discussion in the Korean Sŏn master Hyujŏng's primer of Sŏn practice, the *Mirror on the Sŏn School*.²⁴⁵ By compiling these four texts together into the *Fourfold Collection* and using this anthology as a systematic guide to Buddhist training, Koreans ensured that they would all continue to thrive as part of the living tradition of at least one strand of the East Asian Buddhist tradition.

The *Sajip* has also been central to the Korean monastic curriculum because it serves to prepare monks and nuns for the transition from studying about meditation to actually practicing it. A distinctive feature of the Korean Sŏn tradition is that it offers students this extensive grounding in the theory and practice of *kanhwa* Sŏn before sending monks and nuns into intensive training in the meditation hall. This grounding provides the firm foundation meditators will need to sustain themselves through the inevitable moments of difficulty and despair that accompany religious training. Indeed, through the discussion on the mechanism of “doubt” that Chinul initiated in his *Excerpts*, which is expanded on in greater detail in Dahui’s *Letters* and Gaofeng’s *Essentials of Chan*, the *Sajip* offers the student valuable guidance and specific instructions on how to turn those very difficulties into grist for the mill of training. The four books of the *Sajip* thus play a crucial role in maturing the understanding of Korean monks and nuns so as to prepare them to endure the rigors that accompany intensive meditation practice.

Even though the authors of three of the books may be Chinese by heritage, the *Sajip as a collection* is therefore a distinctively Korean Buddhist compilation. Nowhere else are modern editions, translations, and study guides to the *Sajip* as a whole still published. This sustained Korean research on

the *Sajip* has helped to ensure that the insights of all four of these authors have been kept alive and systematized as central constituents of a distinctively Korean approach to Buddhist thought and practice.

Chinul's preferred soteriology of moderate subitism has maintained its hegemony in Korean Buddhism well into the modern period. It is not an exaggeration to say that sudden awakening/gradual cultivation constituted the mainstream—really, the only stream—of Korean Buddhism for most of the last eight hundred years. But the criticisms that Sŏngch'ŏl *sŭnim* raised in the middle of the twentieth-century against Chinul and Zongmi have taken their toll. The gauntlet Sŏngch'ŏl threw down turned the sudden/gradual debate into a heated arena for polemical criticism and ideological battle. This battle was initially waged in the 1970s between Songch'ŏl at Haeinsa and the monastic family at Songgwangsa, the monastery that Chinul had founded in the thirteen century. But Sŏngch'ŏl's challenge planted seeds of doubt within the broader Korean tradition concerning Chinul and Zongmi's approach to Sŏn practice—and specifically their accommodating stance toward the scriptural teachings of Buddhism and their preferred moderate subitism. These internal institutional clashes led to a series of dueling academic conferences and rival research institutes that were intended to build

support for their respective positions. This controversy has continued unabated into the twenty-first century.

Now that the flood gates are open, some seminary leaders have begun to question the value of the traditional curriculum itself, noting, for example, that the apparent inconsistency between the moderate-subitist schema of Zongmi and Chinul and the radical subitism of Dahui and Gaofeng is all but impossible for seminary neophytes to reconcile. Others have gone even farther and suggested wholesale revisions of both the Kyo and Sŏn curricula, moving away from the standard texts that had been used in Korean seminaries since the Chosŏn dynasty—for example, the *Śūraṃgama* and *Consummate Enlightenment* sūtras for Kyo and the *Sajip* for Sŏn—and toward a range of Mahāyāna and Chan materials that are more typical of the coverage found in contemporary Buddhological scholarship: for example, the *Lotus* and *Vimalakīrti* sūtras for Kyo and the *Platform Sūtra* and *Gateless Checkpoint* (*Wumen guan*) for Sŏn. Other seminaries have put discretion before valor and, rather than trying to address the debate head on, have quietly revised their curricula and simply stopped teaching Chinul's *Excerpts* and Zongmi's *Preface*. Dahui's *Records* and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Gaofeng's *Essentials of Chan*, the traditional primers of *kanhwa*

Sŏn, still remain part of the curriculum in many seminaries. However, in 2006 even the Education Department of the Chogyŏ Order recommended dropping the entire *Sajip* curriculum except for Dahui's *Letters* and supplementing that one text with study of the *Platform Sūtra*.²⁴⁶ But to demonstrate the ambivalence that remains about how to proceed, central ecclesiastical and research institutions of the Chogyŏ Order continue to publish completely new, often exquisitely produced, editions of the full *Sajip* collection in the twenty-first century, sometimes with extensive scholarly apparatus and accompanying vernacular Korean translations.²⁴⁷ The traditional curriculum may be under siege, but after a good three centuries of consistent use, it is not going down without a fight. Chinul's *Excerpts* in particular has shown remarkable resiliency over the last eight hundred years, and there is no reason to think it has sung its swan song.

***Excerpts'* Pivotal Place in the Korean Buddhist Tradition**

Despite these contemporary challenges to the *Sajip* curriculum, there is no denying the crucial importance the *Fourfold Collection* has played in Sŏn training in Korea for the last three centuries. But it is Chinul's *Excerpts* that serves as the pivotal text of the entire collection and thus of the Korean Buddhist tradition more broadly. Based on the evidence I have marshaled above, I believe a strong case can be made that Chinul's *Excerpts* is the single-most influential work ever written by a Korean author. *Excerpts* is the intersection between Zongmi's *Preface* and the *kanhwa* Sŏn of Dahui's *Letters* and Gaofeng's *Essentials of Chan*, but it is also the transition from Zongmi's moderate subitism to the radical subitism of *hwadu* investigation. *Excerpts* looks back to Zongmi and his accommodating perspective on Kyo and Sŏn, which was so central to Chinul's ecumenical vision of Buddhism, but anticipates the importance that Imje-style *hwadu* investigation will have in the Korean Sŏn tradition after Chinul's time. *Excerpts* thus serves as the intersection between two competing accounts of Sŏn soteriology, a competition that has become even more virulent in the contemporary era: that between

the moderate subitism of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation and the radical subitism of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation. The soteriological approach that Chinul champions in *Excerpts*—sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation—is a schema that can be tailored, he suggests, to accommodate both the progressive mārga regimens of mainstream Buddhist scriptures and the shortcut approach of *kanhwa* Sŏn. *Excerpts* is thus not only a fitting culmination to the *Sajip* collection as a whole, but it is also a definitive model for practice in the mature Korean Buddhist tradition: *kanhwa* Sŏn practiced within the context of the moderate subitism of sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation. *Excerpts*, more than any other text, deserves to be considered Korean Buddhism's authoritative guide to liberation.

Part II.

Translation

**Chinul's *Excerpts from the
"Dharma Collection and Special
Practice Record" with Inserted
Personal Notes: An Annotated
Translation***



Translator's Note

This translation is made from the definitive contemporary edition of Chinul's *Chŏryŏ* that appears in the *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism (Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ)*.¹ For ease of reference to the Sinographic text, I embed in my translation the page numbers from that edition in brackets. Chinul's wrote his text without chapters, section breaks, or headings; I have added my own section headings to make his discussion easier to follow. These headings are informed by, but not beholden to, the complex schematic diagrams of *Excerpts* that his Chosŏn-dynasty commentators developed. Generally, I have found more germane the sections proposed by Han Chŏng-sŏp in his Korean vernacular translation of *Excerpts*.² Internal cross-references to *Excerpts*, and citations from it in the annotation, are cited by the chapter and section headings that I have added (e.g., *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "The Role of Numinous Awareness in Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation"). For a listing of these sections, see the appendix, "Complete Table of Contents of Chinul's *Excerpts*."

I have generally not tried to annotate the plethora of mainstream Buddhist terms (e.g., contaminants [*āsrava*], proclivities [*vāsanā*], etc.,) and numerical

lists (e.g., five precepts, ten wholesome ways of action, etc.) that Chinul uses throughout his text. For these, I typically provide the Sanskrit equivalencies at their first appearance and encourage the interested reader to consult one of the standard references for further information. I recommend Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*.

Because of the technical nature of much of the material, I have included detailed annotation to the text. In preparing the annotation, I have drawn substantially on the commentaries of the Chosŏn-dynasty scholiasts Hoeam Chŏnghye 晦菴定慧 (1685–1741) and Yŏndam Yuil 蓮潭有一 (1720–1799); of the two, I have found Yuil’s discussions to be especially illuminating.³ My interpretation of the text has also benefited from the extensive annotation to *Excerpts* made by Ven. Yi Chi-gwan while he was the head lecturer at Haeinsa, in his compilation *Sajip sagi* (pp. 378–509). Finally, I have called out in the annotation the few, all very minor, alternate readings of the text that I have adopted based on Chosŏn-dynasty xylographic editions of *Excerpts*.⁴

EXCERPTS FROM THE “DHARMA COLLECTION
AND SPECIAL PRACTICE RECORD” WITH
INSERTED PERSONAL NOTES (PŎPCHIP

PYŎRHAENG NOK CHŎRYO PYŎNGIP SAGI 法集
別行錄節要並入私記)

*by Chinul, the Śramaṇa from Chogyŏ Mountain in
Haedong*

I Chinul's Preface [741a]

I, Moguja (The Oxherder), said:

Heze Shenhui was an esteemed master of intellectual understanding.⁵ Although he was not the direct heir to Caoxi [the Sixth Patriarch Huineng],⁶ his awakening and understanding were lofty and brilliant and his discernment clear. Because Master [Zong]Mi inherited his teachings, [Zongmi] explained them extensively in this [*Dharma Collection and Special Practice*] Record so that they could be clearly comprehended. Now, for the sake of those who can awaken to the mind through the aid of the Teachings (Kyo/Jiao 教),⁷ I have abbreviated [the text's] prolix verbiage and extracted its essentials so that it can serve as a vade mecum⁸ for contemplative practice.

I have observed that people today who are cultivating their minds do not depend on the seminal points of the written words but straightaway assume that the path is found in the successive transmission of the esoteric intent [of the Sŏn school].⁹ They then sit around dozing with their minds in a haze,¹⁰ their labors all in vain, or else they lose their presence of mind in agitation and confusion during their contemplative practice. For these reasons, one should follow words and teachings that were expounded in accordance with reality in order to

determine what is primary and what subsidiary in regard to awakening and cultivation. Once you mirror your own mind, you then will be engaged in contemplative reflection (*kwanjo/guanzhao* 觀照) at all times, without wasting any of your efforts.

Furthermore, the reason why the entries in this *Record* were arranged with the schools of Shenxiu [the Northern school] and the others at the beginning was because the text progressed from the shallow toward the profound, clearly elucidating each of their strengths and shortcomings. Here, I instead have brought the extracts on the Heze school to the front, primarily so that people who are engaged in meditative practice will be able to awaken first to the fact that, whether deluded or awakened, their own minds are numinous, aware, and never dark and their natures are unchanging.¹¹ Subsequently, when the other schools are reviewed in succession, it will be obvious that their teachings are also deeply imbued with excellent expedients in regard to the [soteriological] aspect of person.¹² If, at the beginning, you do not realize the source [viz., the numinous awareness of the Heze school],¹³ you will be lured by the traces of the words used in the teachings of those [other] schools and fallaciously assume that some should be accepted and others rejected. How, then, will it be possible for you to

develop an all-encompassing perspective and take refuge in your own minds?¹⁴

Furthermore, because I fear that meditators who are not yet able to forget the passions and keep [their minds] empty and bright might become bogged down in theoretical interpretations, at the end [of my exposition],¹⁵ I will briefly quote some statements by genuine masters in our tradition who followed the shortcut approach [of *kanhwa* Sŏn; *kyŏngjŏl mun/jingjie men* 徑截門].¹⁶ My primary purpose there will be to remove [741b] the maladies of their knowledge and vision (*jñānadarśana*) so that they can find the living road that leads to salvation.¹⁷

Nowadays, those who propagate Sŏn and the Teachings are preoccupied solely with learned understanding based on the letter of the scriptures, so they will never be able to immerse themselves in transcending the world through meditation.¹⁸ Although the dissemination of the buddhadharma may vary with the passage of time, nevertheless, in the mind everyone uses every day, which is clear and capable of awareness, the nature of the afflictions (*kleśa*) is void (*śūnya*) and the sublime functioning is autonomous: this is simply the way things are. So, what does it matter if the times change? The patriarch Aśvaghoṣa said, “The word ‘dharma’ means the mind of sentient beings.”¹⁹ How could it be that he was deceiving people? If you just

keep your faith firm, wholeheartedly devote yourself to contemplative reflection, and thereby accumulate pristine actions (*karman*), then, even though you may not achieve an acute awakening in this lifetime, you will not have lost the right cause for the achievement of buddhahood.

When we think about it, for beginningless kalpas we have been submerged in birth and death and have endured immeasurable suffering. Now, we have been fortunate enough to receive a human body; we have been fortunate enough to have encountered the buddhadharma and to be free of worldly entanglements. But if we allow ourselves to backslide or to indulge in indolence (*kausīdya*) and if we do not cultivate our meditative practice but spend our days idly, then, following that moment when our lives have come to an end and we have fallen into baleful rebirth destinies [*durgati*, viz., as animals, hungry ghosts, or denizens of the hells], even though we might wish to listen to a phrase of the buddhadharma and would be willing to reflect on it with right mindfulness, how would it be possible? Consequently, I always admonish you, my resident friends on the path, to engage in meditative practice as much as you are able and to vow to sustain the life force of the buddhas and patriarchs. I hope that all of you accomplished people will together attest to this.

II Excerpts from the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*

THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE FOUR CHAN/SŌN SCHOOLS

The *Record* states:

The crux of the Sōn approach involves looking inward (*naejo/neizhao* 内照). It cannot be narrated by the writing brush or expressed through words. Although words may not apply, we can still force the use of them; but where the brush's description cannot reach, it is indeed hard to put down the words. I write now only because there is no other alternative. I hope that you will reflect on these words in your hearts and will not become bogged down in the letters.^{[20](#)}

The Heze School's Basic Premise^{[21](#)}

The basic premise of the Heze school is as follows. All dharmas are like a dream;^{[22](#)} this is what all the saints have taught. Consequently, deluded thoughts are originally quiescent and the sense-spheres are originally void. This void and quiescent mind: its numinous awareness is never dark. In fact, this void and quiescent mind is the pure mind that was previously transmitted by Bodhidharma. [741c] Whether deluded or awakened, the mind is fundamentally self-aware. It does not come into existence through dependence on conditions; it does not arise with sense-objects as its cause. When deluded, it is subject to the afflictions, but this awareness is actually not those afflictions. When awakened, it

can manifest magic and miracles,²³ but this awareness is actually not that magic or those miracles.

Even so, this one word “awareness” is the source of all wonders.²⁴ Because of delusion concerning this awareness, the mark of self arises; and by assuming that there is “I” and “mine,” liking and disliking inevitably appear. According to these feelings of liking and disliking, one performs wholesome and unwholesome [actions]; and, as retribution for these actions, one receives a body in one of the six rebirth destinies (*gati*).²⁵ Hence, generation after generation, life after life, the cycling [through *samsāra*] continues interminably.

If we happen to receive the instructions of a spiritual mentor (*sōnu/shanyou* 善友, *kalyāṇamitra*) and suddenly awaken to this void and quiescent awareness, that quiescent awareness becomes free of thoughts and formless. Who then would assume that there are any signs of a “self” or a “person”? Upon awakening to the fact that all signs are void, the mind naturally becomes free of thoughts. If we are aware of a thought at the moment it arises, by being aware of it, it will vanish.²⁶ The sublime approach to practice lies only in this.

Consequently, even though we cultivate all the manifold supplementary practices, they all have no-thought (*munyōm/wunian* 無念) as their source.²⁷ If we can only maintain no-thought, then liking and disliking will naturally fade away and compassion and wisdom will naturally grow in brightness; immoral actions will naturally be eliminated and meritorious deeds will naturally be augmented. As for our understanding, we perceive that all signs are signless; as for our practice, this is called the cultivation that cultivates nothing. When the afflictions have finally dissipated, birth and death will cease. With the cessation of production and cessation, a quiescent radiance will manifest itself and our responsiveness will be unlimited.²⁸ This is called buddhahood.

*The Northern School’s Basic Premise*²⁹

The basic premise of the Northern school is as follows. All sentient beings are inherently endowed with the nature of enlightenment in the same way that a mirror has the nature of reflectivity, but just like a mirror obscured by dust, the afflictions cover [that nature] so that it does not appear. If we rely on the words of the teachings and put to rest all deluded thoughts, then the nature of the mind will awaken as those thoughts dissipate and there will be nothing of which it is unaware. It is like polishing a mirror: once all the dust has been removed, the surface of the mirror will be bright and clean and there will be nothing that it cannot reflect.

[Zongmi's] Critique:

This [school] is simply characterized by its view that maculated and pure states are produced by conditions; its approach is to go against the current [of saṃsāra] and resist the proclivities of habit (*vāsanā*). [742a] But it does not recognize that deluded thoughts are originally nonexistent and the nature of the mind is originally pure. Since its awakening still lacks acumen, how can its cultivation be considered authentic?

*The Hongzhou School's Basic Premise*³⁰

The basic premise of the Hongzhou school is as follows. The arising of mental states, the activity of thought, snapping the fingers, shifting the eyes, and indeed all actions and activities, are in their totality the functioning of the buddha-nature. As there is no functioning that occurs apart from it, the totality of greed, hatred, or delusion, the performance of wholesome and unwholesome actions, and their corresponding consequences of pain or pleasure are all the buddha-nature. It is like preparing a wide variety of foodstuffs from flour: each of them is just flour.³¹

To explain these implications further, the four great elements that comprise this body of bones and flesh, together

with the throat, tongue, molars, and incisors, the eyes, ears, hands, and feet, are absolutely incapable of talking, seeing, listening, or acting on their own. At the instant when life has ended and the body has not yet begun to decompose, the mouth cannot speak, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear, the feet cannot walk, and the hands cannot act. Consequently, we know that what is capable of speech and activity perforce is the buddha-nature. Moreover, if we examine carefully each of these four great material elements³² that compose this body of bones and flesh, it is obvious that none of them knows how to be greedy, hateful, or deluded. Hence, the afflictions of greed and hatred are also the buddha-nature.

The essence of the buddha-nature is free from all differentiations but can produce the whole range of differentiations. That its essence is free of differentiations means that this [buddha-]nature is not profane or sacred, cause or effect, wholesome or unwholesome. It has neither form nor sign; it neither goes nor stays, and, ultimately, it is neither buddha nor sentient being. “It can produce this whole range [of differentiations]” means that this nature is in fact the functioning of the essence. Consequently, it has the potentiality to be profane or sacred, cause or effect, wholesome or unwholesome; it manifests forms and manifests signs; it can become either a buddha or a sentient being; and, ultimately, it even has the potentiality to become the afflictions of greed, hatred, delusion, and so forth.

If we closely examine the nature of that essence, we will see that ultimately it is not something that can be perceived or experienced, in the same way that the eye cannot see itself, and so on. If we extend our examination to its responsiveness, we will realize that all action and activity is the buddha-nature; there is no other dharma that can act as the realizer or the realized. This is the premise of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, which says, “The tathāgatagarbha [womb of the buddhas] is the cause of both wholesome and unwholesome actions. [742b] It can produce all the [six] rebirth destinies and the [four] modes of birth, where the pain or pleasure that is received will be

commensurate with the causes put in place.”³³ In another passage, it states, “The buddhas say that the mind is the origin.”³⁴ And finally, “Or, there is a buddha-realm where raising the eyebrows, shifting the eyes, laughing, yawning, coughing, and all other actions are the activities of the Buddha.”³⁵

Since the principles understood through awakening are all impeccable and natural, the principles by which we cultivate should accord with them. We should not generate a state of mind that intends to eliminate evil and cultivate good, but neither should we generate a state of mind that seeks to cultivate the path. The path is the mind; you cannot use the mind to cultivate the mind. Evil, too, is the mind; you cannot use the mind to eliminate the mind. One who neither eliminates evil nor cultivates good, who is completely natural and autonomous in all situations—this is called a liberated person. There is no dharma that can bind, no buddha that can be produced. The mind is like space, which can be neither supplemented nor diminished. How can we presume to add to it? And why is this? There is not a single dharma to be found that is external to the mind-nature; hence, cultivation means simply to give free rein to the mind.

[Zongmi’s] Critique:

The Hongzhou school and the preceding [Northern] school are diametrically opposed to one another. The preceding [Northern school] presumed that, from dawn to dusk, discriminative activities are all unreal. This school presumes that, from dawn to dusk, discriminative activities are all real.

*The Oxhead School’s Basic Premise*³⁶

The basic premise of the Oxhead (K. Udu; Ch. Niutou 牛頭) school is as follows. All dharmas are like a dream; fundamentally, nothing is of any concern. The mind and the

sense-spheres are originally quiescent; they have not become void just now. Deluded about this fact, we presume [this world] exists, and we experience such things as prosperity and decline, nobility and ignobility. Since such things may be agreeable or disagreeable, they arouse passions like love and hate, and once passions are aroused, we become entangled in all manner of suffering. But when [this world] is created in a dream and experienced in a dream, what gain or loss can there really be? The wisdom that can comprehend this is also the dreaming mind. And, ultimately, even if there were a dharma that surpassed nirvāṇa, it, too, would be like a dream or a conjurer's trick.³⁷ If we discern that originally nothing is of any concern, this principle should enable us to surrender ourselves and relinquish our passions. When passions are relinquished, we remove the causes of suffering and we then transcend all suffering and distress.³⁸ Hence, the practice of this school involves the relinquishment of passion. [742c]

[Zongmi's] Critique:

The preceding [Hongzhou school] posits that the awareness that all thoughts are completely authentic is awakening and giving free rein to mind is cultivation. This [Oxhead] school considers awakening to be [the state of] nothing being of any concern and cultivation to be the relinquishment of passion.

*Zongmi's Critique of the Three Deficient Schools*³⁹

As for the differences in the views and understanding of these three houses: the first regards everything as unreal (the Northern school); the second regards everything as authentic (the Hongzhou school); the last regards everything as nonexistent (the Oxhead school). Now, considering their respective definitions of practice: the first defines it as subduing the mind and eliminating the unreal (the Northern school); the second defines it as having the faith to give free

rein to the nature of the passions (the Hongzhou school); the last defines it as pacifying states of mind so that they do not arise (the Oxhead school).

Now, for me, Zongmi, my nature is such that I like to corroborate things. After examining each of these schools, [I have concluded that] their basic premises are as set out above. But if I were to take these descriptions and ask their students about them, not one would accept them. If I asked in terms of existence (*bhava*), they would reply in terms of voidness (*śūnyatā*); if I argued for voidness, they would point to existence. Or else they might say that both alternatives are wrong, or that everything is ineffable, or that it does not matter whether you cultivate or not, or other such answers. They respond in this way because they are always afraid of being trapped by words and letters; and since they are perpetually afraid of languishing in their attainments, they dismiss any sort of verbal description. I would only give detailed instructions to teachers and students willing to take refuge in their own minds, so that they will be able to contemplate and reflect at all times and mature their practice and understanding.

Chinul's Exegesis of the Four Schools

Personal [Note by Chinul]: In a later passage [of the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*, Zongmi] says,

The Hongzhou school consistently advocates, “Greed and hatred, loving-kindness and wholesome actions are all the buddha-nature; how could there be any difference between them?” It is like someone who only notices that the wetness [of water] never changes but does not realize the immense difference between the success of a boat that crosses over that water and the failure of a boat that capsizes in it.⁴⁰ Consequently, although this school comes close to the

approach of sudden awakening, it does not quite reach it; but as far as the approach of gradual cultivation is concerned, it is completely off the mark. Since the Oxhead school has already comprehended voidness, it halfway understands the approach of sudden awakening; since it advocates the relinquishment of passion, it has no shortcomings in regard to the approach of gradual cultivation. Because the Northern school is nothing more than gradual cultivation and completely lacks any conception of sudden awakening, even its cultivation is incorrect. For the Heze school, there first must be a sudden awakening and one then cultivates while relying on that awakening.⁴¹

According to this passage, Hongzhou came close to the approach of sudden awakening but did not quite reach it, whereas Oxhead half understood it. For this reason, [Zongmi claims here that] it is crucial that ordinary practitioners put their faith only in Heze, not in the other schools.⁴² [743a]

While this may be the case, if we examine the basic premises of the two schools of Hongzhou and Oxhead as they are recorded here, they can be deep and wide-ranging, extremely abstruse and arcane. They enable people who are cultivating their minds to see clearly for themselves into their own speech and activities. How could there be a more recondite objective than this? I am not yet completely certain whether Master Mi's intention was to deprecate the premises of these two schools or to praise them! Nevertheless, he restrained latter-day students' clinging to verbal explanations and prompted them

toward a consummate awakening to the knowledge and vision of the tathāgatas; hence, he would not have intended either to deprecate or praise these two schools.

How do we know this? In [Zongmi's] *Preface to Comprehensive Expressions of the Fount of Chan Collection* (*Chanyuan zhuquan ji [du]xu*),⁴³ there is a review of these three schools. Briefly, he states,

The first [tradition of Chan] is the school that dissipates the spurious in order to cultivate the mind (*singmangsusim chong/xiwang xiuxin zong* 息妄修心宗) (the Northern school).

Second is the school that teaches total annihilation without a support (*minjöl mugi chong/minjue wuji zong* 泯絕無寄宗) (the Oxhead school). It explains that profane and sacred dharmas are like a dream or a conjurer's trick. All those who have but cursorily examined this Sōn principle might claim that these words are the ultimate; but they are not aware that this school does not just consider such words [alone] to be the dharma.⁴⁴

Judging from this [statement], how could Master Mi not have been aware that the path of the Oxhead [school] was comprehensive and all-inclusive? When he said that [Oxhead] only half understood, it was because he wanted those who recognized only the principle of void-quietude as being the ultimate to know that the mind of numinous awareness—the original functioning of the self-nature—will then lead to an all-encompassing understanding.

Third is the school that directly reveals the mind-nature (*chikhyŏn simsŏng chong/zhixian xinxing zong* 直顯心性宗) (the Hongzhou and Heze schools). It teaches that all dharmas, whether existent or void, are just the true nature. The revelation of the mind-nature is of two types. The first [the Hongzhou school] explains, “That which now enables you to speak and act, to experience greed and hatred, loving-kindness and forbearance, and so forth is precisely your buddha-nature. If at all times and in all places you merely put karma to rest, nurture the spirit, and mature the embryo of sanctity,⁴⁵ then this will manifest the natural, divine marvel.” This is in fact authentic awakening, authentic cultivation, and authentic realization. The second [viz., the Heze school] says, “All dharmas are like a dream: this is what all the saints have taught. Consequently, deluded thoughts are originally quiescent and the sense-spheres are originally void. This void and quiescent mind: its numinous awareness is never dark. That is your true nature.”⁴⁶ Even so, since these two houses both aim to amalgamate all signs and return to the nature, they are consequently the same tradition.

Even though the preceding three [743b] schools may have many differences, each is involved in practicing the twofold benefit [of self and others] and employing appropriate expedients; none of them is in error. The principle on which these traditions are founded does not involve any duality.⁴⁷

For this reason, we should know that Master Mi was not unaware that Mazu’s explanations of dharma [in the Hongzhou school] directly revealed the mind-nature and were deeply imbued with skillful expedients for practicing the twofold benefit. When he said that “although this school comes close to the approach of sudden awakening, it does not quite reach it,” he only meant that he was afraid students

would accept only the verbal description and languish in the [mind's] adaptive functioning and thus never quite achieve an awakening to its quiescent awareness. For this reason, people who are cultivating the mind in this degenerate age of the dharma should first critically examine the nature and characteristics, essence and functioning, of their own minds according to the teachings presented by Heze. They should not become trapped in void-quiescence or languish in adaptability. After they have experienced an authentic understanding, they should review the basic premises of the two schools of Hongzhou and Oxhead. If it turns out that they complement each other, how could people erroneously presume that they should be either accepted or rejected? Therefore, it is said [in Zongmi's *Preface*]: "If any of the three dots [constituting the Siddham letter i] are out of place, the letter i cannot be constructed. If the three schools are in divergence, how could they possibly enable anyone to achieve buddhahood?"⁴⁸ This is what I mean here.

Previously it was said that "as far as the approach of gradual cultivation is concerned, Hongzhou is completely off the mark." But it was later said that [Hongzhou] engaged in "authentic cultivation and authentic realization." It would seem that these statements are contradictory. [The Hongzhou school]

may be completely off the mark from its perspective that there is nothing that needs to be cultivated or counteracted because the principles understood through awakening are impeccable and entirely natural; but it may be called authentic cultivation from the standpoint that it nurtures the spirit in all situations and manifests divinely sublime practices. Consequently, both interpretations have their rationale and are not mutually contradictory.

You who are cultivating the mind: do not rise to thoughts of doubt! You should know that the primary purpose in looking into a mirror is to appraise the beauty or ugliness of one's own face. How can you languish in the writings of others, spending your day in idle controversy, and not examine your own mind or cultivate right contemplation? The ancients said, "The value of the buddhadharma lies in putting it into practice, not in endless rhetoric."⁴⁹ Keep this in mind! Keep this in mind!

A COMPARISON OF THE FOUR SŪN SCHOOLS

*The Approaches of Dharma and Person*⁵⁰

[Zongmi's *Record* continues:]

Above, I have recounted each individual school. Now I will assess their profundity and shallowness, strengths and shortcomings.

The mind links together [743c] the myriads of dharmas; the tastes of its attributes are boundless. All the Kyo teachings are elaborations and amplifications [of doctrinal principles]; the Sōn school is instead their condensation and abridgment. In regard to dharmas, this abridgment has reduced them to the two attributes of immutability (*pulbyōn/bubian* 不變, *nirvikāra*) and adaptability (*suyōn/suiyuan* 隨緣, *yathāpratyaya*); in regard to persons, it has divided them into the two approaches of sudden awakening (*tono/dunwu* 頓悟) and gradual cultivation (*chōmsu/jianxiu* 漸修). When these two attributes are clarified, we will know the seminal points of all the sūtras and śāstras in the entire canon. When the two approaches are initiated, we can see the tracks of all the sages and saints. It is here that we will find the meaning of Bodhidharma's profound intent.

*The Relationship between Immutability and Adaptability: The Simile of the Jewel*⁵¹

First I will discuss the immutability and adaptability of dharmas. However, since abstract principles are difficult to comprehend when expounded directly, I now will use similes as a means of comparison [lit., “scale and mirror,” *hyōnggyōng/hengjing* 衡鏡] in order to specify the strengths and shortcomings of each school and to assess [whether their basic premises concerning] one's own mind are authentic or inauthentic. On your first perusal, simply read through the similes in their entirety. Once you have understood their primary and secondary points, then consult the annotation to assess their principles in detail.

[The mind] is like a *maṇi*-jewel that is perfectly round, pure, and lustrous, and untarnished by any shade of color.⁵²

The monistic, numinous mind-nature is void, quiescent, and ever aware. It is originally free from any

differentiations and any notion of wholesome or unwholesome.

As its substance is lustrous, when it comes into contact with external objects it can reflect all the different shades of color.

Because [the mind's] essence remains always aware, when faced with any conditioned situation, it can differentiate the various shades of right and wrong, liking and disliking; it can even produce or create all the various manners of mundane and supramundane phenomena. This is the attribute of adaptability.

These shades of color may have individual differences, but the lustrous jewel is never altered.

Foolish and wise, wholesome and unwholesome, are each distinct; sorrow and happiness, hatred and love, arise and cease of themselves. But the mind that is capable of awareness is never interrupted. This is the attribute of immutability. [744a]

Although there are hundreds and thousands of different shades that the jewel may reflect, let us consider the color black, which is diametrically opposed to the innate brilliance of the lustrous jewel. This will serve to illustrate the fact that, although the numinous and bright knowledge and vision is the exact opposite of the darkness of ignorance, they are nevertheless of the same single essence. (The dharma and the simile are now complete.) This means that, when the jewel reflects the color black, its entire substance becomes completely black and it is no longer lustrous. If ignorant children or country bumpkins then happen to see it, they will immediately presume it is a black jewel.

When the mind of numinous awareness is present in an ordinary person, it is completely foolish, deluded, greedy, and lustful. Hence a deluded person simply assumes that

he is obviously an ordinary person. The preceding is a simile for all the sentient beings in the six rebirth destinies.

If someone were to tell them [i.e., the naïve and ignorant], “This is a lustrous jewel,” you can be sure they would brazenly distrust him. They might even get angry at him or accuse him of trying to deceive them. And even if he were to explain all his reasons, they would never listen to or take them seriously.

I, Zongmi, have frequently encountered this type of person. If you tell them, “That which right now is clear and capable of awareness is your buddha-mind,” they brazenly disbelieve you. They are unwilling even to consider this prospect, but instead simply say, “I, so-and-so, am ungifted [lit., “of dull faculties,” *ton’gŭn/dun’gen* 鈍根, *mṛdvindiyā*] and really cannot comprehend this.” This is the usual perspective among people who cling to characteristics in the dharma-characteristics [schools, viz., Yogācāra and Abhidharma] of the Greater and Lesser [Vehicles] and in the teaching of humans and divinities [i.e., the moral teaching on karmic retribution].

[Chinul’s] Personal Note: Not being cowardly or timid in regard to this [matter], having firm faith in their own minds, relying on the practice of tracing back the light of the mind (*hoegwang* 廻光), and appreciating for themselves the taste of the dharma: this is the understanding-awakening [achieved by] people who cultivate their minds. Those who make no serious effort to trace back the mind’s radiance (*panjo* 返照) but simply nod their heads and say, “That which right now is clear and capable of awareness is your

buddha-mind”: such people have certainly not grasped the idea.

The Northern School's View

Even though they might want to believe your explanation that this is a lustrous jewel, their eyes see that it is black and they say, “The jewel is shrouded and obscured by the black color; only after it has been cleaned and polished and the blackness removed will it show its luster.” Only then will they say that they see for themselves the lustrous jewel. [744b]

The view of the Northern school is like this.

Personal Note: I hope that those who are cultivating the mind will examine [this simile] in detail so that they will not succumb to such a view. You do not have to leave behind the spurious in order to search for what is authentic; you also should not presume that the spurious is the authentic. Rather, if you understand that deluded thoughts originate from the nature, then their origination is in fact their non-origination and, at that point, they are quiescent.⁵³ How could there then persist this view of a dichotomy between the authentic and the spurious?⁵⁴

The Hongzhou School's View

Furthermore, there is another type of person who points out, “In fact the blackness is the lustrous jewel. The substance of that lustrous jewel itself can never be seen; so if you want to know [what its substance is], it is in fact that blackness, or

various different shades of blue or yellow.” [Such a position] prompts fools who have firm faith in these words either to focus just on that shade of black or to recognize all the different shades as being the lustrous jewel. At other times, if they should see a black soapberry,⁵⁵ or blue beads made of rice gum,⁵⁶ or even beads of dark amber or creamy quartz, they would say, “These are *maṇi*-jewels.” On a different occasion, if they see a [genuine] *maṇi*-jewel when it is not reflecting any color and only its lustrous, clear luminosity is visible, they fail to recognize it, because they do not see any of the colors that can be apprehended. For this reason, they have doubts about the jewel’s lustrous luminosity.

The view of the Hongzhou school is like this. “Fools” refers to descendant students of this school. “At other times, if they should see a black soapberry” refers to the thoughts of greed, craving, hatred, and conceit that appear in the mind when it is immersed in the mundane world and discriminates the objects in the coarse sense-spheres. “Dark amber and creamy quartz” refers to thoughts of loving-kindness, virtue, humility, and reverence. “When it is not reflecting any color” refers to the mental state that is free from all thoughts. “Only its lustrous, clear luminosity is visible” refers to no-thought, which is thoroughly aware in and of itself. “They have doubts” means such people saying that their presumption is that they will only accept what they can apprehend.

Personal Note: If people who are cultivating the mind comprehend that the nature of both the wholesome and unwholesome is void and utterly unascertainable, then, even though they may be acting all day long, they constantly maintain a state of no-mind (*musim/wuxin* 無心) for themselves and

do not succumb to the view of these fools. [744c] On the other hand, when the no-thought that is thoroughly aware in and of itself is not in contact with external conditions, should people give rise to any further intellectualization, the net of views will become even more tightly meshed.[57](#)

The Oxhead School's View

There is another type of person who, hearing the explanation that these different colors are all illusory and utterly void to their very core, presumes that the jewel itself is also utterly void. He then says, "Cling to nothing and you will be an accomplished person. Acknowledge that even one dharma exists and you still will not understand." Such a person has not awakened to the fact that at the very point where all shades of color are void, there still exists the brilliant luster of the jewel, which is not void.

The view of the Oxhead school is like this. When its adherents hear voidness described in the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras, they assume that the original enlightened nature is also void and unascertainable. Hence, it is clarified here that the mind's voidness refers to the absence in the true mind of discriminative thoughts like greed, hatred, and so forth; it does not mean that there is no mind. "No-mind" means only that we eliminate the afflictions in the mind. Consequently, we know that Oxhead only eliminates what is not; it has not yet revealed what is.

Personal Note: Although this sort of account is offered so that people who are cultivating the mind

will not succumb to empty oblivion, what fault is there if, in order to cure the mental blindness of those who still tend to cling to verbal explanations, it is explained that the nature of original enlightenment is also unascertainable?

A simile illustrating Heze's view follows.

The Heze School's View

Why can it not be stated straight out that just its brilliant, clear, and perfect luster is the substance of the jewel?

[The mind-essence] is just void and quiescent awareness. If we only explain void-quiescence without revealing that awareness, then how would it differ from empty space? It would be like a brilliant and clear sphere of porcelain, which may be clear, but lacks luminosity. How can that be called a *maṇi*-jewel? How would it be able to reflect anything?

All the reflected colors—black, as well as all the shades of blue, yellow, and so forth—are illusory. Hence, at the very moment when black is seen, that black is not inherently black: it is that [jewel's] reflected luster. Blue is not inherently blue: it is just that same luster. Red, white, yellow, and so forth are exactly the same: they are all just its luster. [745a] Therefore, if you regard each and every shade as being simply that brilliant, clear, and perfect luster, you will not be confused about the jewel.

Everything is void; the mind alone is immutable. Even when [the mind] is deluded, it is still aware, for awareness is inherently undeluded. Even when thoughts arise, it is still aware, for awareness is inherently free of thoughts. For that matter, whether the mind is sad or

happy, joyful or angry, loving or hateful, in each of these cases it is always aware. Awareness is inherently void and quiescent. To be aware while remaining void and quiescent is the point at which one is clear and unconfused about the mind-nature. This preceding [description] is significantly different from all the other schools.^{[58](#)}

If you simply are unconfused about [the real nature of] the jewel, then black is not black: that blackness is in fact the jewel. It will be the same with all other colors. At that point it no longer matters whether [colors] are present or not, for [the jewel's] luster and the blackness are completely interfused; what further obstruction could there be between them?

“Black is not black” is the same as Oxhead. “Blackness is in fact the jewel” is the same as Hongzhou. If one has seen for oneself that lustrous jewel [viz., the Heze approach], the profound will perforce subsume the shallow.^{[59](#)}

Summation of the Jewel Simile

If you do not recognize that the [jewel's] essence, which is able to reflect [all colors], is eternally unchanging [the Heze school's view], but insist instead that black and so forth are the jewel [Hongzhou's view], or that one must try to remove the black in order to recover the jewel [the Northern school's view], or that luminosity and blackness are both nonexistent [Oxhead's view], then in these cases you have not yet seen the jewel.

Personal Note: Previously [in Chinul's preface, *Excerpts*, chap. 1] it was said that “[Heze's] awakening and understanding were lofty and brilliant

and his discernment clear.” This is exactly what is meant here.

*The Relevance of Numinous Awareness*⁶⁰

Question: The explanations of the ideal nature given throughout the Mahāyāna sūtras, in the teachings of every past and present school of Sōn, and even in the Heze school, all say the same thing: [the ideal nature] is unproduced and unextinguished, unconditioned and signless; neither profane nor sacred, neither right nor wrong; ineffable and unascertainable. It is enough now just to rely on this [perspective]. What need is there to bring up the idea of numinous awareness?

Answer: These are all examples of apophatic discourse;⁶¹ they are not yet capable of exposing the essence of the mind. If we do not point out that the clear, constant awareness that is present now, never interrupted and never dark, is your own mind, then what do we speak of as being unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*), signless (*alakṣaṇa*), and so forth? For this reason, you must understand that all the various teachings [745b] simply explain that it is this awareness that is unproduced (*anutpāda*, *anutpanna*) and unextinguished (*aniruddha*, *anirodha*), and so forth. Consequently, Heze pointed out the knowledge and vision present within that void and signless state so that people would acknowledge it and comprehend that their own minds pass from one lifetime to another, generation after generation, interminably, until eventually they achieve buddhahood. Furthermore, Heze was able to refer to various terms like unconditioned, unabiding, even ineffable, and so forth, by simply referring to them all as the void and quiescent awareness in which everything is subsumed. Voidness (*śūnyatā*) means that it is devoid of all signs; it is still an apophatic term. Quiescence (*śānti*) is the

immutable attribute of the real nature; it is not the same as empty nothingness. Awareness refers to the attribute that exposes the thing itself;⁶² it is not the same as conceptual discrimination (*vikalpa*). Only this, then, is the innate essence of the true mind. Therefore, from the initial arousal of the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) up through the attainment of buddhahood, there is only quiescence and only awareness, immutable and uninterrupted. It is only according to the respective stage [along the bodhisattva path] that the designations and attributes [of quiescence and awareness] are slightly different. (The remainder [of this passage] has already been quoted in the *Society Compact*, so I do not record it here.)⁶³

How Hongzhou and Heze Differ

Question: Hongzhou also referred to numinous attention, gleaming reflection (*kamjo/jianzhao* 鑑照), and so on. How are these any different from awareness?

Answer: If we were to reveal the one essence through its many different attributes, then, since the myriads of dharmas are all this one mind, how could we be limited solely to [such terms as] attention, reflection, and so on? But if we were to point directly to that very essence itself, then the mind-nature of the foolish and the wise, the wholesome and the unwholesome, even that of the birds and beasts, would, in all these cases, be naturally clear and constantly aware, and accordingly different from [the insentience of] trees and rocks.

Such terms as attention and awareness are not all-inclusive. For instance, if we say that a person is deluded, it means that he is unenlightened; if we say that a person is foolish, it means that he lacks wisdom. When the mind is blank,⁶⁴ it cannot be called gleaming, reflective, and the like. Hence, how can these states be identical to the mind-nature that is constantly aware by its very nature? For this reason, the

chief of the Hwaōm commentators said in his *Epistle on the Essentials of the Mind (Xinyao jian)*, “The essence of the unabiding mind is the numinous awareness that is never dark.”⁶⁵ Although Hongzhou referred to numinous attention, it was just to indicate that sentient beings have this [quality]. It is like inferring they all have the buddha-nature but without directly pointing it out. For them, pointing it out means simply to infer that it is that which is capable of speech and so forth. But if they try to ascertain exactly what [mind-nature, buddha-nature, and so forth] are, all they will be able to say is that “these are all provisional names, not conclusive dharmas.”⁶⁶

To sum up, the teachings involve the two approaches of apophasis [the school that teaches absolute annihilation] and kataphasis [the school of direct revelation],⁶⁷ and if we try to ascertain their real import they refer respectively to true voidness (*chin’gong/zhenkong* 真空) and sublime existence (*myoyu/miaoyou* 妙有). If we probe the original mind, we find that it subsumes both essence and function. Now, the Hongzhou and Oxhead schools presume that [745c] wiping all traces away is the be all and end all (*chigǔk/zhiji* 至極); this involves only the apophatic teachings and the attribute of true voidness. Although they may master essence, they overlook function, for their approach is deficient regarding the kataphatic teachings and the attribute of sublime existence.

The Hongzhou School Only Infers the Reality of the Buddha-Nature

Question: Since Hongzhou revealed the mind-nature through its capacities for speech, action, and so forth, it corresponds to the revelation teaching. As these capacities are identical to the functioning of the mind-nature, what deficiency is there here?

Answer: The original essence of the true mind contains two types of function (*yong* 用). First, there is the innate function of

the self-nature (*chasŏng ponyong/zixing benyong* 自性本用). Second, there is the adaptive function that accords with conditions (*suyŏn ũngyong/suiyuan yingyong* 隨緣應用). These can be compared to a bronze mirror: the bronze material corresponds to the essence of the self-nature; the reflectivity of the bronze corresponds to the function of the self-nature. The images reflected thereby are the adaptive function that accords with conditions. Under suitable conditions, images can be reflected and will be displayed in thousands of different ways; but the reflectivity itself is ever bright. That this reflectivity has but a “single flavor” (*ilmi/yimi* 一味) serves as a simile for the constant quiescence of the mind; this is the essence of the self-nature. The mind’s constant awareness is the function of the self-nature. The capacity of this awareness for speech, discrimination, and so on is the function that adapts to conditions. Now, in pointing to this capacity for speech and the like, Hongzhou is only [highlighting] the function that adapts to conditions, overlooking the function of the self-nature.

Furthermore, the revelation teaching also involves the two approaches of revelation through inference (*piryang/biliang* 比量, *anumāna*) and revelation through direct perception (*hyŏllyang/xianliang* 現量, *pratyakṣa*). Hongzhou notes that the mind itself cannot be pointed to; it is through its capacity for speech and so forth that we can verify [its existence] and become aware of the presence of the buddha-nature. This is revelation through inference.⁶⁸ Heze straightaway says that since the mind’s essence is the capacity for awareness, that awareness is in fact the mind. To reveal the mind in terms of this awareness is revelation through direct perception.

My narration of the two attributes of immutability and adaptability is completed as above.

Chinul’s Exegesis of School Controversies

Personal Note: Premier Pei [Xiu 裴休 (791–864)] writes in a letter addressed to Sōn Master Mi, “Adherents of the Sōn [lineages] all diverge from one another; they criticize and slander each other and are unwilling to come to any kind of accord.”⁶⁹ The Master [Zongmi] also said, “‘Fools’ refers to descendant students of this school.” [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Hongzhou School’s View” *supra*.] Now, it is clear that all those who discriminate between the virtues and shortcomings [of the different schools] are adherents who have wrongly inherited the [Sōn] school’s directives and lost its true meaning. Hong Juefan [Juefan Huihong], [746a] in his *Forest Records (Linjian lu)*, sharply rejects this master’s [Zongmi’s] judgments and supports the premises of Hongzhou and Oxhead.⁷⁰ This is because he fears that the shortcomings discussed by this master [Zongmi], which seem to implicate the founders of these traditions, might confuse the minds of their descendant students. When teaching people of different capacities, each past teacher used his own particular set of skillful expedients; hence we cannot mistakenly hold views favoring this or that approach based solely on their words. Instead, we should use this gleaming mirror to illuminate our own minds. Discerning what is spurious and what authentic, let us cultivate samādhi and prajñā simultaneously and quickly realize bodhi.⁷¹

SUDDEN AWAKENING AND GRADUAL CULTIVATION

Next, I will elucidate the two approaches of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation.⁷² The principle of true suchness does not involve either buddhas or sentient beings, let alone a transmission from master to disciple. Nevertheless, since there has been a patriarchal succession starting from the Buddha onward, we can be certain that, from the standpoint of the person, there are still preserved approaches that involve cultivation, realization, approach, and access. If this approach is discussed in regard to the person, there then [are still distinctions between] delusion and awakening, ordinary person and saint. Awakening from delusion is sudden; transforming an ordinary person into a saint is gradual.

Sudden Awakening

What is “sudden awakening”? Due to beginningless delusion and corrupted thinking (cf. *viparyāsa*), you presume that the four great material elements (*mahābhūta*) are the body, deluded thinking is the mind, and these together are the self. But if you come across a spiritual mentor who explains as above the import of [these concepts of] immutability and adaptability, nature and characteristics, and essence and function, you can abruptly awaken to the fact that the numinous, bright knowledge and vision are your own true mind. That mind is originally ever quiescent and devoid of nature or characteristics; it is in fact the *dharmakāya*. This nonduality of body and mind is the true self, which has not the slightest difference with that of all the buddhas. Consequently, it is called sudden.⁷³

An Analogy for Sudden Awakening

Suppose a high courtier dreams he is in prison, his body locked in a cangue, suffering all kinds of anxiety and pain and thinking of a hundred different ways to escape. [Suppose that] someone then happens to call out and wake him up. Suddenly awakened, he would then see that his body had always been in his home and that in his ease and happiness, wealth and rank, he is no different from any of the other magistrates at the imperial court.

The “high courtier” is a metaphor for the buddha-nature, the “dream” for delusion, and the “prison” for the three realms of existence (*trāidhātuka*). The “body” represents the *ālaya*-consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*, the storehouse consciousness) and “the cangue” stands for greed and attachment. “Suffering all kinds of anxiety and pain” [746b] refers to karmic retribution. “A hundred different ways to escape” corresponds to inquiring about the dharma and eagerness in cultivation. “Someone then happens to call out and wake him up” refers to spiritual mentors. “Suddenly awakened” corresponds to the opening of the mind upon hearing the dharma. “He would then see that his body” refers to the true self, the *dharmakāya*. “Had always been in his home” refers to the [Vimalakīrtinirdeśa] scripture’s statement “the ultimate void and quiescent house.”⁷⁴ “In his ease and happiness” refers to the happiness of nirvāṇa. “Wealth and rank” means that the essence is originally endowed with meritorious qualities and sublime functions as numerous as the sands of the Ganges (*Gaṅgānadīvālukā*). “No different from any of the other magistrates at the imperial court” means that he has the same true nature as all the buddhas.

Since each correspondence in this dharma-analogy is clear, you can easily ascertain that, although the original source of the body and mind during dreams and during the waking state is identical, when it comes to discussing their characteristics

and functions there is a drastic difference between what is distorted and what is correct. Once [the man in the analogy] has awakened, he will never willingly return to being the courtier in the dream. Hence the analogy shows that although the source of the mind is one, delusion and awakening are drastically different. Thus to be a grand minister⁷⁵ in a dream (to gain through one's practice [rebirth in] such high states as the divinity Mahābrahmā and so forth while remaining deluded) is not as good as to become a superintendent of employees⁷⁶ in the waking state (the initial access to the first level of the ten stages of faith after having awakened). To possess the seven jewels (*saptaratna*) in a dream (to cultivate the innumerable meritorious actions while remaining deluded) is not as good as having a hundred coins in the waking state (to keep the five precepts [*pañcaśīla*] and to develop the ten wholesome ways of action [*daśakuśalakarmapātha*] after having awakened). In all these cases, one is spurious and the other authentic; consequently, they cannot be compared. (This is what is meant in the [sūtra] teachings when it is said that "to make offerings with all the seven jewels in the trichiliocosm is not as good as listening to one line of a gāthā [of this *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*].")⁷⁷ Now, since there is an ongoing transmission from master to disciple, we must distinguish clearly between what is distorted and what is correct.

Chinul's Exegesis of Sudden Awakening

Personal Note: I hope that all who are seeking the path will evaluate this approach of sudden awakening from every perspective. Since the dharma analogy is clear, confirm it for yourself anytime. If you have had no point of awakening or understanding, how can you say that your cultivation is authentic?⁷⁸

I have noticed that students of Kyo succumb to explanations appearing in the provisional teachings (*neyārtha*) and, clinging to the differentiation between the authentic and the spurious, they make themselves backslide. Others chat with their mouths about the unimpeded interpenetration between phenomenon and phenomena (*sasa muae/shishi wu'ai* 事事無礙) but do not cultivate contemplative practice. Because they do not believe that there are esoteric acroamata for gaining access to awakening to their own minds, even though they hear about seeing the nature and achieving buddhahood in Sōn, they think this means nothing more than the principle of ineffableness as described in [the Kyo interpretation of] the sudden teaching.⁷⁹ Nor are they aware of the full implications [of the account] that in an all-encompassing awakening to the original mind, immutability and adaptability, nature and characteristics, essence and function, ease and happiness, and wealth and rank are the same as that of all the buddhas. How can such people be considered wise?

I have also noticed that some students of Sōn believe that only people of exceptional [746c] capacities can directly ascend to the stage of buddhahood without having to progress through all the steps. They do not believe in the text of this *Record*, which teaches that after achieving

awakened understanding one accesses the ten levels of faith [the preliminary stage of the path].⁸⁰ Consequently, even if they develop their own minds to some extent, they are unaware of the depth and shallowness of understanding and practice or of the production and cessation of tainted proclivities of habit. They are full of conceit regarding the dharma, and the words they utter exaggerate their level of achievement. [Li Tongxuan's] *Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra (Huayan jing lun)* states, "When, in the cause that is faith, an ordinary person of great aspiration meshes without the slightest degree of error with all the qualities of the fruition of buddhahood, faith will then be achieved."⁸¹ If we are aware of this tenet, we will, without being self-denigrating or haughty,⁸² know the meaning of cultivating the mind.

The explanation of gradual cultivation that follows refers to gradualness [from the perspective] of the consummate [teachings]; reflect on it carefully.⁸³

Gradual Cultivation

Next, I will elucidate gradual cultivation. Even though you may suddenly awaken to the fact that the true mind, the *dharmakāya*, is entirely the same in all the buddhas, for a multitude of kalpas you have mistakenly grasped at the four great elements as being the self. Since your proclivities of habit have become second nature, it is extremely difficult to abandon them suddenly. For this reason, while continuing to

rely on your awakening, you must cultivate gradually. If you reduce [the afflictions] and reduce them again⁸⁴ until you have nothing left to reduce, you could be said to have achieved buddhahood. Outside this mind, there is no buddhahood that can be achieved. Nevertheless, even though you must cultivate gradually, you have previously awakened to the fact that the afflictions are originally void and the nature of the mind is originally pure. While eradicating the unwholesome, therefore, you eradicate without eradicating anything; while cultivating the wholesome, you cultivate without cultivating anything. This is authentic cultivation and eradication.

An Analogy for Gradual Cultivation

Question: As to this cultivation that is undertaken after awakening: relating it to the previous analogy of the dream, would it not be the same as if, after the courtier has awakened, he were still to try to escape from prison and free himself from the cage?

Answer: That was only an analogy concerning the aspect of sudden awakening, not an analogy for the aspect of gradual cultivation. Indeed, the dharma has an infinity of meanings, but mundane matters have just one.⁸⁵ Therefore, although the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* discusses only the buddha-nature, it presents eight hundred similes,⁸⁶ each with its own application; they cannot be applied at random.

Here is an analogy to explain gradual cultivation:⁸⁷ Suppose an expanse of water is disturbed by the wind [747a] and heaves with wave after wave; one is then in danger of floating away or drowning. Or suppose the cold air freezes it into a sheet of ice; its capacity for irrigating or washing is then blocked. Nevertheless, the wetness of water remains unchanged whether turbulent or placid, frozen or flowing.

“Water” is a metaphor for the true mind. “Wind” stands for ignorance and “waves” stand for the afflictions. “Floating away or drowning” stands for wandering between the six rebirth destinies. “Cold air” refers to the proclivities toward ignorance, craving, and sensuality. “Freezes it into a sheet of ice” stands for tenaciously clinging to the four great material elements until their paired [personal and impersonal] forms are obstructed.⁸⁸ “Its capacity for irrigating or washing is then blocked”: “irrigating” is a metaphor for the expression “it rains a great rain of dharma,” which benefits all living things and nourishes the sprouts of the path;⁸⁹ “washing” refers to removing the afflictions; and, as all this is impossible so long as delusion remains, it is “blocked.” “Nevertheless, the wetness of water remains unchanged whether turbulent or placid, frozen or flowing” means that when you are greedy or angry, you are aware; when you are loving and altruistic, you are also aware; whatever your emotional state—sorrow or joy, grief or happiness—you are never unaware. Hence, I said “unchanged.”

Now, the sudden awakening to the constant awareness of the original mind is like cognizing the immutable wetness of water. Since the mind is then no longer deluded, there is no ignorance; it is as if the wind had suddenly stopped. After awakening, mental disturbances naturally come to a gradual halt, like waves that gradually subside. By suffusing both body and mind with *śīla* [morality], *saṃādhi*, and *prajñā*, you gradually become self-reliant until you are unhindered even in displaying magic and miracles and can universally benefit all sentient beings. This is called buddhahood.

III Chinul's Exposition

FOREBEARS' ASSESSMENTS OF THE SUDDEN/GRADUAL ISSUE

Chengguan's Zhenyuan Commentary

I, Moguja, said:

There are several complex interpretative taxonomies regarding the suddenness and gradualness of cultivation and realization, but if we were to select their most pivotal schema, it would be sudden awakening and gradual cultivation as these are explained in this *Record* [of Zongmi]. If we examine carefully what all the masters have taught, there are differences in their rosters of designations and attributes and in whether they open them up [for analysis] (*kae/kai* 開) or combine them together [into a synthesis] (*hap/he* 合).⁹⁰

As the *Zhenyuan Commentary* [of Chengguan] says,⁹¹

Fifth,⁹² the assessment of the shallowness and profundity of [the various approaches to] cultivation and realization. Even though, from beginning to end, the entire text of this one sūtra [the *Avataṃsakasūtra*] elucidates cultivation and realization, I fear that the text is overly prolix and so have selected only its essentials.

Since the great master's dharma-eye was dimmed beneath the twin trees [at the time of the Buddha's parinirvāṇa], all the saints have transmitted the lamplight; its radiance has never been interrupted. The sacred teachings [of Kyo] [747b] have been regarded as a vade mecum. The mind-covenant [of Sōn] has been considered a covert seal; as [Bodhidharma] said, "The transmission from mind to mind does not involve words and letters."⁹³ If you have comprehended what is represented by the words, then why would you have any further worries about the text?

Examining the import of this passage, [it is clear that if we] rely on the cultivation and realization described throughout the whole of the *Avataṃsakasūtra* and the mind is covertly "sealed," then it will be the same as the Sōn school's directive to "see the nature" (*kyōnsōng/jianxing* 見性). The following is an extensive elucidation [of this correlation]. You should examine it carefully.

Ever since the adulteration of the single taste [of the dharma] and its separation into southern and northern currents,⁹⁴ "description" and "described" have become the two trainings in samādhi and prajñā.⁹⁵ The training in prajñā, furthermore, is subdivided between nature and characteristics. The training in samādhi includes differences as to sudden and gradual. The two trainings in nature and characteristics are to be understood as explained previously;⁹⁶ but now I will briefly explain the differences between sudden and gradual.

When we refer to "gradual" we mean that one examines the mind, cultivates purity, and comprehends the sūtras through expedients (*upāya*). It may entail either sudden awakening/gradual cultivation or gradual cultivation/sudden awakening. When we refer to "sudden," we mean that there is

a direct pointing to the essence of the mind. This may entail either the sudden elimination of language, sudden awakening/sudden cultivation, or no cultivation/no awakening. Although these [sudden and gradual] are not the same, they both seek to recognize the mind and are both devoted to perceiving the principle.

There is a difference in his taxonomy of sudden and gradual [compared to Zongmi's treatment *supra* in the *Record*; see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, "Sudden Awakening and Gradual Cultivation"].⁹⁷ An explanation follows.

In regard to the object of awakening, if we say that the essence of the mind is separate from thought, or that the original nature is pure and free from both production and cessation, these descriptions mainly involve gradualness. If we say instead that [the mind-essence] is the nonabiding void-quiescence in which there is authentic awareness and the elimination of signs, or that mind is Buddha, or that it is neither mind nor Buddha, all these involve a sudden approach. But none of these [descriptions] are distinct from the nature and characteristics of the mind, so they can be employed concurrently.⁹⁸

In regard to the catalysts of awakening, there are thousands of approaches through which to access the dharma, but none of them are separate from samādhi and prajñā. Why is this so? The mind is like water or fire. If it is purified [like water] or concentrated [like fire], its application will be thoroughgoing. But if it is stirred up [like water] or scattered [like fire], its application will be debased. Accordingly, when waves are stirred up [a lack of samādhi], reflections are ripply; when water is murky [a lack of prajñā], reflections are obscured. But if that water is clear, pure, still, and clean [the presence of samādhi], then both large and small things [the discriminative powers of prajñā] will be reflected in it. To be bereft of both

samādhi and prajñā is to be depraved [prajñā without samādhi] and stupid [samādhi without prajñā]. To be inordinately disposed toward cultivation of just one of these approaches [747c] is to be very close to a gradualist position. But if [samādhi or prajñā] are either both put into operation or mutually stilled, then this is the right approach that produces the holiest of two-legged creatures [a buddha]. [Practice] cannot but be done in this manner.⁹⁹

If one advocates that not giving rise to mental states is cultivation of the path, this is an approach via samādhi. If one advocates examining the mind, observing the mind, seeking the mind, or refining the mind, this is an approach via prajñā. To remain free from thoughts and from cultivation or to wipe away all traces of phenomena in order to reveal the principle—[both] are approaches via samādhi. Awareness of the mind's void-quietude and the knowledge and vision that are free from thoughts—[both] are approaches via prajñā. Quietude within reflection and awareness within no-thought are combined descriptions of samādhi and prajñā. If it is said that cultivation means understanding that raising the eyebrows and blinking the eyes are the path, then this subsumes both attributes. First, since it creates awareness that what meets the eye [viz., sensory contacts] is the path, it is an approach via prajñā. Second, since it frees the mind from sensory contacts, it is an approach via samādhi. We know that any other standpoint, if examined in a similar manner, will not be separate from samādhi and prajñā.

Correlating Chengguan's Kyo Views with Sōn

I, Moguja, am often vexed by scholar-monks who do not study the Sōn dharma. Having read Chengguan's *Zhenyuan Commentary*, I was happy to find that [this Kyo scholar's] careful assessments of the

approaches of cultivation and realization accord with the basic premise of Sŏn. For this reason, I have recorded it here. Its explanations of the object of awakening—the nature and characteristics of the mind—and the catalysts of awakening—the two approaches of samādhi and prajñā—are not the same assessments or imperatives of [Zongmi's] *Record*. Nevertheless, as I fear that students of Kyo will wholeheartedly accept the Sŏn dharma only when it is explained in accordance with the perspectives of this text, I will briefly assess its strengths and shortcomings so that those students may give rise to right faith.

The explanation of samādhi and prajñā given in the section on the catalysts of awakening says, “The mind is like water or fire. If it is purified [like water] or concentrated [like fire]...,” this is the primary meaning of the dharma practice done on the causal ground [viz., prior to awakening] by the buddhas and patriarchs. However, the Sŏn approach also uses the cultivation of counteragents (*pratipakṣa*) with both the catalysts of awakening and the object of awakening, which is associated with the gradual school's [interpretations of] samādhi and prajñā, in which they are intended to remove taints. It also includes the approach via the mind-ground (*simji/xindi* 心地; *cintābhūmikā*), which is free from both ignorance and confusion and is separate from

the subject-object bifurcation. This is called the sudden school's samādhi and prajñā of the self-nature. Since the characteristics of these practices differ, it is appropriate to distinguish them clearly before beginning their practice. [748a]

It was also quoted that, in the Sōn approach, “to remain free from thoughts and free from cultivation, or to wipe away all traces of phenomena in order to reveal the principle” involves a samādhi approach; “one examines the mind, cultivates purity” are prajñā approaches; “quiescence within reflection and awareness within no-thought” are combined descriptions. In the Sōn approach, however, only the samādhi and prajñā of the Northern school have any semblance of gradualness or sequence. If the sudden school is utterly devoid of any sign of cultivating [samādhi or prajñā] singly, then how would an approach that wipes away all traces of phenomena in order to reveal the principle possibly have any traces remaining of such terms as samādhi and prajñā? It is not that Qingliang [Chengguan] was unaware of this; rather, he used the traces of words to differentiate the [two terms] so that ordinary students would understand that practice involves nothing other than samādhi and prajñā.

Now, “mind” involves the distinction between dharma and its attributes. Eminent Chan masters rely on dharma and leave words behind. Through words

that are devoid of all traces, they prompt people to stop their clinging so that the source will be made manifest. This is what [Zongmi] meant when he said, “Once traces [of words] are eradicated at the mental-consciousness base (*manendriya*), the principle manifests in the fount of the mind.”¹⁰⁰ If, due to a master’s stimulus, a student suddenly awakens to the one dharma, the attributes and functions of the mind will spontaneously appear. Hence, in the approach that brings clinging to an end so that the source will be made manifest, no explanations are given that involve the attributes of either samādhi or prajñā. Finally, the approach that offers a combined description of samādhi and prajñā merely refers to quiescence within reflection and awareness within no-thought, and so forth. It is, therefore, difficult for those engaged in mind-cultivation to gain access [to awakening] by relying on this [approach].¹⁰¹ I will now briefly expand [on this account] in order to clarify it.

The Joint Cultivation of Samādhi and Prajñā: A Gradualist Interpretation

Moreover, the approach to mind-contemplation in the gradual school initially controls the thought processes with quiescence and subsequently controls dullness with alertness.¹⁰² Although there is a sequence to the practice, alertness and quiescence

must still be kept in balance. But even though they are kept in balance, they are still practices that cling to quietude. Caoxi [the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng] said,

I say that all dharmas are not separate from the self-nature. To expound the dharma apart from this essence would only deceive your nature.... For me, the mind-ground that is free of wickedness is the morality of the self-nature. The mind-ground that is free of ignorance is the *prajñā* of the self-nature. The mind-ground that is free of distraction is the *samādhi* of the self-nature. People who are training on the path should take this to heart. Do not say to develop *samādhi* first and then generate *prajñā*, or to develop *prajñā* first and then generate *samādhi*. For one who has this view, the dharma is marked by dualities.^{[103](#)}

Furthermore, he said,

The practice of self-awakening [748b] does not involve quietude. If you insist that either *samādhi* or *prajñā* must be practiced before the other, you are deluded. By not eradicating gain and loss, you give rise to the views of dharma and self and cannot leave behind the four [mistaken] conceptions [of a perduring soul].^{[104](#)}

Consequently, we know that although the gradual school advocates maintaining a balance between alertness and calmness (*sǒngjǒk tǔngch'i/ xingji dengchi* 惺寂等持), these two factors both involve the approach of merit making (*punya*). Thus, they involve implications of sequence and gradualness and are practices that cling to quietude. For this reason, they

do not leave behind the craving for dharmas or the signs of person and self.

*The Joint Cultivation of Samādhi and Prajñā:
A Subitist Interpretation*

The cultivation of samādhi and prajñā in the sudden school involves two attributes of the self-nature; it does not involve any perception of subject or object. As it is only the practice of self-awakening, it does not involve a sequence. As it does not involve a sequence, it is free from either activity or quietude. As it is free from either activity or quietude, it does not grasp at either dharmas or self. As it does not grasp at either dharmas or self, it can be termed “an authentic practice.”¹⁰⁵ To practice in this manner is the right approach, which reproduces a balanced saint who is the holiest of two-legged creatures. It is not the view and practice of those who tend to validate names or grasp at appearances.

The Sōn school’s [use of the illocutionary] gesture of raising the eyebrows or blinking the eyes was also cited, and such activities were said to combine the two attributes, namely, samādhi and prajñā.¹⁰⁶ If we were to explain this statement from the standpoint of their attributes and functions in an approach that involves merit making, then samādhi and prajñā are the primary constituents of the cultivation-cause

[*su'in/xiuyin* 修因 , viz., practices that lead to enlightenment] of all the saints and the overarching premise of all the sūtras and śāstras. However, the ability of adepts in the Sōn school to manifest the path by raising their eyebrows or blinking their eyes is fundamentally not something that can be transmitted through ratiocination. When accomplished persons meet one another, their seeing of each other is beyond words: it is the functioning of the mind-to-mind transmission. As a previous master [Xiangyan Longdeng] said,

The sublime premise [of Sōn] is swift—
Express it in words and it is already too late.
Though you may gain understanding in accordance with the
words,
You deceive your divine faculties.
If [the master] raises his eyebrows when asked a question,
The questioner will be joyful.
What state is this?
When you and the path are the same, you will know.^{[107](#)}

As this verse explains, if someone were to meet an accomplished person but did not understand the premise of the transmission of mind that is outside the teaching and that master were to say “this is samādhi” or “that is prajñā,” then how would those statements not inevitably drive that person to think about this rationally and cause him to become deluded as to his divine faculties? Qingliang was obviously aware of this implication, so he must

instead have wanted to induce those who are confused as to the creed [of Kyo] and who have lost the true import [of Sŏn] to engage in the wholehearted cultivation of samādhi and prajñā.

Nonconceptualization in Yanshou's Mirror of the Source Record

Furthermore, the Sŏn school also posits an approach to practice—"nomind that conforms to the path"—that is exclusive of the cultivation of samādhi and prajñā.¹⁰⁸ [748c] I will briefly record it here so that students of the teachings will be aware of the one approach that surpasses all precedents and will be able to generate right faith with regard to it.¹⁰⁹ As [Yongming Yanshou's 永明延壽 (904–975)] *Mirror of the Source Record (Zongjing lu)* states,

As was explained previously, in the approach to practice that pacifies the mind, the immediate communion [with the mind-essence] does not require the initial [cultivation of] samādhi or prajñā.¹¹⁰

First samādhi and prajñā will be elucidated; then no-mind will be discussed.

Samādhi is the essence of one's own mind. Prajñā is the function of one's own mind. Since samādhi is in fact prajñā, the essence is not separate from the function. Since prajñā is in fact samādhi, the function is not separate from the essence. If either of the two is obscured, then both vanish. If either of the

two is illuminated, then both persist. Since essence and function complement one another, they are not impeded by being either obscured or illuminated. These two approaches of samādhi and prajñā are the essentials of practice; they are the primary creed of the buddhas and patriarchs and are described in all the sūtras and śāstras.

Now, according to the teaching of the patriarchs, there is one additional approach that is the most concise of all. It is called “no-mind.” What is that? If there is mind, one has no peace; if there is no-mind, one is content. The gāthā of a previous master [Luoshan Daoxian] says,

Don’t make friends with the mind.
In no-mind the mind is at peace in and of itself.
If you make friends with the mind,
Whenever you act, you will be deceived by the mind.^{[111](#)}

Hence, Ānanda grasped at existence, but there was nothing there to depend on; he was utterly lost in the seven alternatives.^{[112](#)} The Second Patriarch was at peace with himself upon realizing no[-mind], and by hearing the words [of Bodhidharma] he achieved the path.^{[113](#)} If you do not have direct comprehension of the import of no-mind, then, although you counteract and suppress [unwholesome mental states], irritations will constantly appear. If you understand no-mind and thus are facing no obstacles along the course [of training], there is not then a single sense-object to which you will have to react. Why then would you waste your efforts in effacement? As there would not even be one thought producing passion, you would not need to waste your time forgetting all conditioning.

From this [passage] we know that the “no-mind that conforms to the path” of the patriarchs’ school [of Sŏn] is not bound by samādhi and prajñā. Why is this? The training in samādhi accords with principle

and focuses all types of distraction; hence it involves the power that can forget conditioning [by reducing the entrancement with sense-objects]. The training in prajñā investigates dharmas and contemplates their voidness; hence, it involves the effort of effacement [by exposing the deluded processes of conceptualization]. Now, in the direct cognition of no-mind that frees your training course of obstructions, [749a] the unhindered wisdom of liberation manifests before you and not a single sense-object or a single thought can enter from outside. They are nothing special; so why waste your effort on them?¹¹⁴ If even the [sudden teaching's] samādhi and prajñā of the self-nature is a course that involves obstructions [in the explanations of their] attributes and functions, how could the [gradual teachings'] approach that is concerned with removing taints avoid this shortcoming? For this reason, the *upādhyāya* (preceptor, *hwasang/heshang* 和尚) Shitou [Xiqian], said, "My approach to dharma has been passed down by the previous budhas. It does not discuss samādhi or energetic effort; it simply penetrates to the knowledge and vision of buddhahood."¹¹⁵

No-mind that conforms to the path is also the access employed by the shortcut approach [of *kanhwa* Sŏn]. The expedients of examining the *hwadu* and receiving instruction from a master are both sublime and recondite; they cannot be fully

delineated. It is rare indeed to meet someone who is well acquainted with them [lit., “appreciates the tone,” *chiö̃m/zhiyin* 知音].

Immediately following is a definitive appraisal of the variant aspects of the suddenness and gradualness of awakening and cultivation.

Chengguan’s Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual

[Chengguan’s *Zhenyuan*] *Commentary* says, [116](#)

If we explain the characteristics of awakening, they are of only two kinds. The first is the understanding-awakening (*haeo/jiewu* 解悟), which is the clear comprehension of nature and characteristics. The second is the realization-awakening (*chũngo/zhengwu* 證悟), which is the mind that reaches the arcane ultimate. But if we delineate sudden and gradual there are many approaches. [117](#)

[1. Gradual Schemata]

[1.1.] Sudden awakening and gradual cultivation. This is from the vantage point of the understanding-awakening. This means that after having expansively apprehended the mind-nature, one trains in gradual cultivation in order to come into full conformity with it. Awakening is like the sunshine that suddenly illuminates the myriads of dharmas; cultivation is like polishing a mirror so that it will gradually gleam ever brighter.

[1.2.] Gradual cultivation and sudden awakening. This means that, having initially absorbed the sense-spheres so that there is only mind, one moves on to contemplate the mind’s fundamental purity until the mind and the sense-spheres are both quiescent. There is then no arising for even an instant, and the limits of past and

future are eradicated; [the mind] is placid like the calm sea and as vast as empty space. Awakening here means the realization-awakening. Cultivation is like a gleaming mirror; awakening is that mirror's reflectiveness.

[1.3.] Gradual cultivation and gradual awakening. This also involves the realization-awakening. Cultivation and awakening are like climbing a tower—as one gradually climbs ever higher, one's range of vision gradually broadens.¹¹⁸

[2. Subitist Schemata:] Sudden awakening and sudden cultivation. This includes three aspects.

[2.1.] Initial awakening followed by subsequent cultivation. This means there is a broad and sudden cognition, which is called awakening. Neither to examine nor to purify, [749b] neither to accept nor to absorb, but to unite oneself fully with the path is called cultivation. This involves the understanding-awakening.¹¹⁹ As this is a samādhi approach,¹²⁰ it is like a mirror that gleams naturally, without wiping or polishing.

[2.2.] Initial cultivation followed by subsequent awakening. This means that one cultivates while relying on the preliminaries until one suddenly sees the mind-nature, which is called awakening. This involves the realization-awakening. Cultivation is like taking medicine; awakening is like the malady being cured.¹²¹

[2.3.] Simultaneous cultivation and awakening. This means that when no-mind is shining in equanimity [sudden cultivation] and we effortlessly remain quiescently aware [sudden awakening], then samādhi and prajñā are operating concurrently. No-mind is like a gleaming mirror that instantly reflects the myriads of images. Thus, awakening here encompasses both the understanding and realization [awakenings].¹²²

[2.4.] Furthermore, it is also said that the fact that we are originally endowed with all the qualities of buddhahood

is called awakening; the fact that one thought-moment fully contains the ten pāramitās and the manifold supplementary practices is called cultivation. Hence cultivation is like drinking sea water; awakening is like knowing the taste of the hundreds of rivers [that flow into that sea]. This also encompasses both the understanding and realization [awakenings].^{[123](#)}

The passage recorded above gives Qingliang's explanations of the meanings of the suddenness and gradualness of cultivation and realization. These two approaches, sudden and gradual, each involve three different schemata, as explained previously. Here, although sudden awakening and gradual cultivation share exactly the same appellation as found in this *Record*, their interpretation is utterly different. Why is this so? It is because Qingliang considered them from the standpoint of the gradual school where awakening follows cultivation, whereas Guifeng [Zongmi] considered them from the standpoint of the sudden school where cultivation follows awakening. Each has its own implications and they are not necessarily contradictory. If awakening is an acute awakening, how can it be obstructed by gradual cultivation? And if cultivation is authentic cultivation, how can it be separate from awakening? For these reasons, we know that it is essential to leave behind the wording of the text, grasping the full implications rather than languishing in appellations and words.

Qingliang adopted the sudden school's term "sudden awakening" and considered it from the standpoint of the gradual approach; but it does not refer to the sudden awakening that results from maturing the efficacy of gradual cultivation. Nor does it involve the sudden awakening that occurs in the case of ordinary people of ordinary faculties. [749c] Rather, it is merely the faith and understanding (*śraddhādhimukti*) that the defiled mind is originally endowed with the enlightened nature. It is as if one were to be firmly convinced that a mirror has the nature of reflectiveness. This would be called the understanding-awakening. If he had meant something else, then how could Qingliang—while claiming that the gradual approach comprises the authentic awakening and understanding that the afflictions are fundamentally void—have still said [regarding 1.1, sudden awakening/gradual cultivation] that "cultivation is like polishing a mirror so that it will gradually gleam ever brighter"?

*Zongmi's Preface to the Fount of Chan Collection:
Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation as a Subitist
Schema*

Guifeng [Zongmi] adopted the gradual school's explanation of gradual cultivation, but he included it instead in the sudden approach. But this was neither

the gradual cultivation that entertains the view that there are afflictions to be eradicated, nor the gradual cultivation that presumes that the efficacy of the cultivation of no-thought (*munyōm su/wunian xiu* 無念修) cannot be brought to a sudden conclusion. The implications of this approach to gradual cultivation, as explained previously in his *Record*, are extremely profound; but Guifeng's explanations of the meaning of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation in his *Fount of Chan Collection* [*Chanyuan zhuquan ji*] are much more thorough.¹²⁴ As [its *Preface*] says,

If one suddenly awakens to the fact that one's own mind is fundamentally pure, inherently free from the afflictions, and originally endowed with the nature of uncontaminated wisdom (*anāsravajñāna*), then this mind is in fact a buddha—ultimately there is no difference between them. Cultivating while relying on this [awakening] is Supreme-Vehicle Sōn. This is also called the pure Sōn of the tathāgatas, the single-practice samādhi, or the samādhi of true suchness. It is the foundation of all samādhis; if we can cultivate it thought-moment after thought-moment, then naturally we will gradually obtain hundreds of thousands of samādhis.¹²⁵ This is the Sōn that has been developed and transmitted in the school of Bodhidharma.¹²⁶

Present-day practitioners of Sōn do not reflect thoroughly from beginning to end on the implications of this passage. Relying on the fundamental absence of affliction and the nonestablishment of cultivation and realization, they surmise wrongly that the practice of the ancients consisted in this alone.

Finally, they succumb to the erroneous impression that regular people have no share [in the buddha-nature]. This is entirely due to the fact that they do not investigate these two aspects, awakening and cultivation, which seem to be opposites but are actually in full conformity with one another.^{[127](#)}

A Comparison of Chengguan and Zongmi

If we think deeply and carefully about the import of this passage, we see that the approach of cultivation after awakening has [750a] two implications. First, the passage beginning “cultivating while relying on this [awakening]” is based on the premise that our minds are originally free from affliction; one is “neither to examine nor to purify, ... but to unite oneself fully with the path” [*Zhenyuan Commentary*, schema 2.1]—that is, the cultivation of effortlessness (*im'un haeng/renyun xing* 任運修). Hence this [type of cultivation] refers to the fundamental single-practice samādhi and is the same as sudden cultivation as proposed by Qingliang.^{[128](#)} Next is the passage beginning “if we can cultivate it thought-moment after thought-moment.” Since all practices originate from this fundamental samādhi where the quiescent awareness is effortless, compassion and vows can then complement each other. Through cultivation from one thought-moment to the next, we

will gradually be able to display at will hundreds and thousands of samādhis, as well as the [ten] bodies, [ten] wisdoms, [ten] supercognitions, and [three] radiances.¹²⁹ Finally we will universally benefit all types of sentient beings and will be identical to Vairocana Buddha. This is exactly what is meant in this *Record* by gradual cultivation: it is gradualness [from the perspective] of the consummate teachings [viz., sudden awakening/gradual cultivation], not consummateness [from the perspective] of the gradual teachings [viz., gradual cultivation/sudden awakening].¹³⁰ This is because it is not separate from either the all-embracing cultivation of the fundamental object of awakening—the authentic *dharmadhātu* of our own minds—or the fully engaged cultivation (*p’ansa su/banshi xiu* 辦事修) that involves the cultivation of no-thought.

This is not just the explanation of the *Fount of Chan*; this *Record*, too, contains these two aspects of cultivation. As the school of Heze taught [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Heze School’s Basic Premise”],

If we happen to receive the instructions of a spiritual mentor and suddenly awaken to this void and quiescent awareness, the quiescent awareness becomes free of thoughts and formless. Who then would assume that there are any signs of a “self” or a “person”? Upon awakening to the fact that all signs are void, the mind naturally becomes free of thoughts. If we are aware of a thought at the moment it arises, by being aware of it, it will vanish. (“Vanish” here means that its essence has

been understood; vanish does not mean [that thoughts] disappear.) The sublime approach to practice lies only in this.

This is indubitably the cultivation of no-thought that follows awakening. Continuing, the *Record* says, “Even though we cultivate the manifold supplementary practices, they all have no-thought as their source. If we can only maintain no-thought, then liking and disliking will naturally fade away, and compassion and wisdom will naturally grow in brightness.... Our responsiveness will be unlimited. This is called buddhahood.” The idea here is that [no-thought practice] is absolutely indistinguishable from the fundamental single-practice samādhi; naturally, hundreds and thousands of samādhis will be gradually attained and one will ferry across all the various classes of sentient beings.

For the preceding reasons, we know that although the terms “sudden awakening” and “gradual cultivation” may be the same, the interpretations of sudden and gradual offered by these two masters are quite different. [750b] From the standpoint of intrinsic inclusiveness [*sōnggu mun/xingju men* 性具門, the absolute], at the time of the initial awakening, one thought-moment contains the ten pāramitās and manifold supplementary practices, and the liberation of all beings is fully accomplished. But from the standpoint of manifest action [*hyōnhaeng mun/xianxing men* 現行門, *samudācāra*, the

relative],¹³¹ how would [these practices] not need to mature? This is what is meant by “Everywhere, it says, ‘Their merit does not yet equal that of all the saints.’”¹³²

Furthermore, in the *Zhenyuan Commentary* there also appears an explication of sudden awakening and sudden cultivation. There, what is referred to as sudden cultivation [subitist schema 2.1] is “neither to examine nor to purify, ... but to unite oneself fully with the path is called cultivation.”¹³³ Consequently, among the two aspects of initial [sudden] awakening and subsequent [gradual] cultivation as proposed by Guifeng, this corresponds to the fundamental cultivation of no-thought. In my opinion, the third of the three aspects of suddenness explained previously [*Zhenyuan Commentary*, schema 2.3, viz., simultaneous cultivation and awakening]—“when no-mind is shining in equanimity and we effortlessly remain quiescently aware”¹³⁴—involves both aspects of cultivation: the cultivation of no-thought and fully engaged cultivation. But it conceals without demonstrating the sudden cultivation that is fully engaged.

The [*Zhenyuan*] *Commentary* also states [subitist schema 2.4],

Furthermore, it is also said that the fact that we are originally endowed with all the qualities of buddhahood is called awakening; the fact that one thought-moment fully contains the ten pāramitās and the manifold supplementary practices is

called cultivation. Hence ..., this also encompasses both the understanding and realization awakenings.

The fully engaged cultivation elucidated in this passage has two aspects. From the standpoint of the understanding-awakening, it refers to the approach of intrinsic inclusiveness; it does not mean that meritorious practices are suddenly brought to completion. From the standpoint of the realization-awakening, it is the sudden cultivation that is fully engaged from the standpoint of manifest action. Guifeng thus not only elucidates the gradual cultivation that follows awakening, he also explains the approach of sudden awakening and sudden cultivation in which all tasks are suddenly completed. (Note: Sudden awakening/sudden cultivation will receive further explication later.) Nevertheless, his assessment was that “this [is suddenness] that has appeared now ... through gradual permeation over many lifetimes.”¹³⁵ From the standpoint of the Buddhist scriptural teachings, this is Hwaŏm’s suddenness in the style of instruction for bodhisattvas whose capacity for spiritual development has already matured; ¹³⁶ it is not what should be esteemed now. The approach of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation, which should be so esteemed, is, from the standpoint of Kyo, the suddenness that responds to [superior spiritual] capacity—the practice intended for the ordinary

person of superior faculties and discerning intellect.¹³⁷

Next, I will briefly quote some corroborating evidence that should enable neophytes to understand the essentials [of this issue] and, generating right faith, quickly realize bodhi. [750c]

Zongmi's Preface: Sudden and Gradual in the Scriptural Teachings

[Zongmi's *Preface to the* *Fount of Chan Collection* states,

It is only because there were variations in the World-Honored One's style of expounding the doctrine that there are sudden expositions that accord with the principle and gradual expositions that are adapted to the spiritual capacities [of the listeners]. This is why these are called the sudden teaching and the gradual teachings.

The gradual [teachings] are intended for those of average to inferior spiritual capacities. They include the [teaching vehicles] of humans and divinities (*inch'ōn/rentian* 人天) and the lesser-vehicle (sūtras like the *Āgamas* and śāstras like the *Abhidharma vibhāṣās*); dharma-characteristics ([viz., Yogācāra] sūtras like the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* and śāstras like the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* and the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*); and the eradication of characteristics (all the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras and śāstras like the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Śataśāstra*, and *Dvādaśanikāyaśāstra*). [These were explained while the Buddha] waited for [his listeners'] capacities to mature so that he could then instruct them in the definitive [teaching] (*yoŭi/liaoyi* 了義, *nītārtha*)—that is, sūtras like the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* and the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*.

The sudden teaching, furthermore, has two [subclassifications]: one, the suddenness that responds to [superior spiritual] capacity; two, the suddenness in the style of instruction.

[First,] the suddenness that responds to [superior spiritual] capacity: When [the Buddha] encounters an ordinary person of superior faculties and discerning intellect, he directly reveals for him the authentic dharma. Hearing it, that person has a sudden awakening and realizes exactly the same fruition as that of all the buddhas. Examples of this occur in the *Avataṃsakasūtra* where, at the moment of the initial generation of the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*), *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* [complete, perfect enlightenment] is achieved,^{[138](#)} and in the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra* where the [three] contemplations and the [twenty-five] practices are in fact equivalent to the achievement of the path to buddhahood.^{[139](#)}

After that, as in the practice approaches of the gradual teachings above, [the ordinary person of superior faculties] gradually removes the ordinary proclivities of habit and gradually manifests the qualities of sanctity. It is just as when the wind blows over the ocean, the water cannot reflect any images.^{[140](#)}

“After that, as in ... the gradual teachings”: in this consummate and sudden teaching there is also preliminary cultivation and gradual practice until one redirects the mind toward a sudden awakening.^{[141](#)} If we summarize this passage, the sudden awakening that results after having gradually removed [the proclivities of the ordinary person] and gradually made manifest [the qualities of sanctity] is obviously identical to the realization-awakening that results once the efficacy of practice has matured, as

explained in the gradual teachings. So how can this be said to be the [consummate and sudden] approach of initial [sudden] awakening and subsequent [gradual] cultivation that is intended for the ordinary person of superior faculties, as mentioned in the *Avataṃsakasūtra* and the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*? We should know that the spiritual capacity referred to in the [consummate and sudden] teachings is not the average and inferior [capacities] that were mentioned before [in reference to the gradual teachings]. It is also not [the spiritual capacity] of the bodhisattvas whose faculties have already fully matured, as will be discussed later [in reference to the sudden style of instruction].¹⁴²

But if the wind suddenly stops, the waves will gradually subside and reflections will reappear. This is the approach that appears in one section of the *Avataṃsakasūtra* (the *Avataṃsaka* subsumes two different kinds of suddenness and accordingly involves two different types of faculties),¹⁴³ as well as in the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*, the *Heroic March Sūtra* (**Śūraṃgamasūtra*), [751a] the *Dense Array Sūtra* (*Ghanavyūhasūtra*), and the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*. [There, too, the teachings are] explained in accordance with capacity and are not restricted to the beginning and the end [of his teaching career.]

Second, suddenness in the style of instruction: when the Buddha first completed the path, for the sake of those of superior faculties whose karmic affinities had already matured during previous lifetimes, in one moment [following his enlightenment] he explained all at once nature and characteristics, phenomena and principle, sentient beings'

myriads of delusions and bodhisattvas' myriads of practices, the different stages and levels of worthiness and sanctity, and the myriads of qualities of all the buddhas. Since cause suffuses the fruition that is as vast as the sea, the initial thought [of the aspiration for enlightenment] produces the attainment of bodhi. But since this fruition permeates the causal source, [such enlightened beings] will still be called bodhisattvas even after they have fulfilled all stages [of the path].¹⁴⁴ This [suddenness in the style of instruction] is what is termed the sudden teaching only in the *Avataṃsakasūtra* and the *Exposition of the Ten Bhūmis Sūtra* (*Daśabhūmividyākhyāna*); it is not found in any other [scripture]. The explanation here of “all dharmas” means that “all dharmas are entirely this one mind”; “one mind” means that the “one mind is entirely all dharmas.” Nature and characteristics are perfectly interfused and the one and the many interact freely. Hence, all buddhas and sentient beings are utterly interrelated, and the pure land [of the buddhas] and the soiled land [of this world] are seamlessly amalgamated; every dharma contains every other dharma, and every dust mote completely subsumes the *dharmadhātu*. They are mutually pervasive and mutually identical, unimpeded and interfused. All are endowed with the ten mysterious gates in endless superimposition. This is called the unobstructed *dharmadhātu*.¹⁴⁵

When people today hear of their own minds or their own natures, they assume these are something superficial and close at hand. When they hear of the “unobstructed *dharmadhātu*,” they assume it is something profound and far away. They are not aware that their own minds are the capital of the *dharmadhātu* and the source of both buddhas and sentient beings. If they would only look back on the radiance [of their own minds] until their sensory

suppositions (*chǒngnyang/qingliang* 情量) are exhausted, the *dharmadhātu* will then appear in all its glory. My only fear is that they will not make the best use of their minds and will end up languishing in the serenity of quiescence.

In the *Embroidered Cap of the Avataṃsaka* (*Huayan jin'guan*)¹⁴⁶ it is said,

In the explanation of mind-contemplation, it is related that if the meaning of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka nāma mahāvaipulyasūtra* (*Taebanggwang pul hwaōm kyōng* 大方廣佛華嚴嚴) is explicated according to the teachings, there will be many ways [of explaining it]; but if [these explanations] are not deployed so as to help us return to the one mind, what good will they do us?

Now then, “great” (*tae* 大, *mahā*) refers to the essence of mind: since the essence of the mind is boundless, it is called great. “Area” [*pang/-bang* 方, the first character in the Sinographic compound that translates *vaipulya*] means the characteristics of the mind, for the mind is fully endowed with a whole panoply of meritorious qualities. “Expansive” [*kwang/-gwang* 廣, the second character in the translation of *vaipulya*] corresponds to [751b] the function of the mind, for the mind possesses a function that accords with the essence. “Buddha” [*pul* 佛] means the fruition of the mind, for when the mind is liberated, one is called a buddha. “Flower” [*hwa* 華, the first character in the Sinographic translation of *avataṃsaka*] refers to the mind as cause: since the mind initiates all actions, it is compared to a flower [that initiates—i.e., produces—the seed]. “Adornment” [*ōm* 嚴, the second character in the translation of *avataṃsaka*] is the efficacy of the mind: since the mind can adorn everything through skillful techniques, it is called an adornment. “Sūtra” (*kyōng* 經) is the teaching of the mind: since the mind generates names and words to illustrate these principles, it is called a sūtra. Nevertheless, even though the

one word “mind” may not be everything, it can become everything.

As for contemplation, there are four *dharmadhātus* encompassed within the three greatneses, and four contemplations have been developed concerning these four *dharmadhātus*. Since the dharma is originally thus, one contemplates while depending on the dharma. If awakening and understanding result from these [contemplations], then thought-moment after thought-moment is precisely the Avataṃsaka-*dharmadhātu* and the Vairocana-*dharmadhātu*.¹⁴⁷

This explanation is quite detailed. Although the attributes and functions of the mind are explained via these four *dharmadhātus*, in reality there is just one authentic *dharmadhātu*. Hence, if we force the mind to perform these four contemplations, we will never be united [with that one authentic *dharmadhātu*].¹⁴⁸ Does it not say the following in Qingliang’s *Epistles on the Essentials of the Mind (Xinyao jian)*? “If we will only forget our passions, remain empty and bright, and be fully absorbed in all worldly affairs,¹⁴⁹ we will be like the moon reflecting on water: chimeric, yet visible. When we mirror phenomena with no-mind, we will be radiant yet constantly empty.”¹⁵⁰ It also says in Tiantai’s [Zhiyi’s] “Three Gates to Contemplation,” “[As for the mind], we have three designations for it; but when we look back on its radiance, we should not understand it to be either three or one. If, thought after thought, we see only the nature of our own minds, then, effortlessly, it is neither three nor one.”¹⁵¹ Gullible people do not

distinguish between verbal descriptions and actual contemplative practice. They pursue intellectual interpretations of the words found in the teachings, producing endless theories, and presume that this is what is meant by contemplating the mind. What delusion!

Zongmi's Schemata of Moderate Subitism and Gradualism in Sŏn

[Zongmi's *Preface to the Fount of Chan Collection* continues:]

The preceding discussion about sudden and gradual was given from the standpoint of the Teachings [Kyo]—that is, in relation to the Buddha. But if they are explained from the standpoint of awakening and cultivation [in the Sŏn schools]—that is, in relation to the spiritual capacities [of ordinary sentient beings]—the meanings [of sudden and gradual] will not be the same.

[First.] “Initially, by building up the efficacy of gradual cultivation, one has an expansive sudden awakening”: [751c] It is like chopping down a tree: chip by chip, the trunk is gradually chipped away until, in a single instant, the tree suddenly falls.

[Second.] “Based on sudden cultivation, gradual awakening occurs”: Like people who are training in archery, sudden [cultivation] means that, arrow after arrow, they pay attention only to the bull's-eye; gradual [awakening] means that they will hit it only after long training. This approach involves the sudden cultivation of mental application; it does not imply that efficacious practices are suddenly completed.^{[152](#)}

In the [*Zhenyuan*] *Commentary* this schema is missing. Although it refers to sudden cultivation, it is obvious that it is not referring to the suddenness that responds to [superior spiritual] capacity.

[Third.] “Gradual cultivation and gradual awakening, and so forth”: (Similes are as explained in the [*Zhenyuan*] *Commentary*.) These all refer to the realization-awakening.

[Fourth.] “There must be an initial sudden awakening before gradual cultivation is possible”: This [description is given] from the standpoint of the understanding[-awakening]. From the standpoint of the expedient techniques that eradicate obstructions, it is like the sun that rises suddenly and gradually evaporates the morning frost and dew. From the standpoint of perfecting meritorious qualities, it is like an infant who is born in an instant but whose stamina develops only gradually. Consequently, the *Avataṃsakasūtra* explains that after the right enlightenment achieved at the time of the production of one’s initial aspiration (*bodhicittotpāda*), one must then cultivate and gain realization at all levels of the three stages of worthiness¹⁵³ and the ten stages of sanctity.¹⁵⁴ If one cultivates without having had an awakening, it is not authentic cultivation.¹⁵⁵

At What Point along the Path Does Awakening Occur?

Nowadays there are some who say, “According to the consummate teachings, the ten levels of faith must be cultivated for ten thousand kalpas before one accesses the abiding stage of the production of the aspiration [for enlightenment, *bodhicittotpāda*].”

However, consider carefully the explanation of [Li Tongxuan's] *Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra*: “In the three-vehicle [teachings], one must cultivate the ten stages of faith over a period of ten thousand kalpas; but in this [consummate and sudden teaching] the buddha-*dharmadhātu* of fundamental wisdom is considered to be the essence of the teachings.¹⁵⁶ If one is merely capable of seeing reality, there is no need to discuss how many kalpas will be necessary.”¹⁵⁷ Students of Kyo nowadays have not read this *Exposition*; consequently, if they hear that ordinary people of superior capacity awaken and gain access to [the bodhisattva path] at the initial abiding stage of the production of the *bodhicitta*, they clap their hands and have a good laugh.

Moreover, this *Record* states that, after having awakened, one accesses the first level of the ten stages of faith.¹⁵⁸ However, the quotation from this [*Preface to the Fount of Chan*] *Collection* [752a] begins with the production of the *bodhicitta* at the initial abiding stage, so there seems to be a contradiction here. Nevertheless, because understanding refers to both understanding derived from the sensory consciousnesses (*sikhae/shijie* 識解, **vijānaka*) and understanding derived from knowledge (*chihae/zhijie* 智解) [perhaps “understanding derived from reflection,”

cintāmayīprajñā?], there can be differences in its relative shallowness and profundity and its development or lack thereof; they are therefore not contradictory. Furthermore, according to the explanation of the *Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra*, the three types of enlightenment¹⁵⁹ revealed at the initial stage of faith constitute the understanding-awakening; the access to the stages [of the bodhisattva path] at the initial abiding stage is the realization-awakening. The explanations of the access to the stages [of the path] offered in this *Fount of Chan Collection* and the *Exposition* both refer to the initial abiding stage. So how is it that there is a difference in whether the awakening involved is that of understanding or realization? However, given the explanation offered previously—that the Hwaŏm doctrine includes the two types of suddenness [responding to superior capacity and style of instruction] as correlated with the two types of capacity [superior and average to inferior]—awakening encompasses both understanding and realization and cultivation encompasses both sudden and gradual. Therefore, although from the standpoint of spiritual capacity these two explanations might differ, it is the same abiding stage in both cases.¹⁶⁰

The statements I have made here are from the standpoint of the faith and understanding of the consummate and sudden teachings [of the Kyo

school of Hwaŏm]. The [Sŏn school's] separate transmission outside the teachings is not subject to this same limitation.¹⁶¹

Zongmi's Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn

[Zongmi's *Preface to the Fount of Chan Collection* continues:]

[Fifth.] Sudden awakening and sudden cultivation: This describes those who have superlative wisdom. Since their faculties and intentions are both superior, from hearing [the dharma] once they have a thousand awakenings and attain great mnemonic prowess (dhāraṇī). (Because their faculties are superior, they awaken; because their intentions are superior, they cultivate.) Since not even a single thought arises, the limits of past and future are eradicated. The threefold karma [of body, speech, and mind] of such persons can be comprehended clearly only by themselves; for others it is impossible. When they cut through obstacles, it is like hacking through a whole spool of thread: all its strands are sliced instantly. Their cultivation of meritorious qualities is like dyeing a whole spool of thread: all its strands are dyed instantly. Heze said, "If just one thought comes into correspondence with the original nature, the practice of all eighty[-four] thousand pāramitās will simultaneously be put into operation."¹⁶² If we were to try to describe this approach by drawing on an instance from ordinary life, the example of Great Master Niutou [Fa]rong could be given.¹⁶³

Since it was said that this person's threefold karma cannot be known by others, how could his superiority

or inferiority be measured by ordinary human sentiment?¹⁶⁴

This approach [of radical subitism] has two varieties. If cultivation is based on awakening, it involves the understanding-awakening [viz., sudden awakening/sudden cultivation]. If awakening is based on cultivation, it involves the realization-awakening [viz., sudden cultivation/sudden awakening]. However, this preceding explanation is offered from the perspective of this present life. [752b] If we extend our investigation back into past lives, there is only gradualness and no suddenness. Any suddenness seen now appears through gradual permeation [of one's mind by practice] over many lifetimes.¹⁶⁵

Chinul's Critique of Radical Subitism

The preceding elucidation of sudden awakening and sudden cultivation from the *Fount of Chan Collection* has both a similarity and a difference with the premises of the [Zhenyuan] *Commentary* as quoted previously.

Their difference is that the *Collection* considers [sudden cultivation to be] the hundreds and thousands of samādhis that are fully attained when the phenomenal wisdom (*saji/shizhi* 事智) [viz., wisdom associated with the phenomenal realm] is made manifest. [Chengguan's *Zhenyuan* *Commentary* considers [sudden cultivation to be] the single-practice samādhi that is attained when the

ideal wisdom (*iji/lizhi* 理智) [i.e., the wisdom associated with principle] is made manifest.

Their similarity is that the [*Zhenyuan*] *Commentary* also states that “one thought-moment fully contains the ten pāramitās and the manifold supplementary practices”—an extension of the three schemata of suddenness [viz., *Zhenyuan Commentary*, subitist schema 2.4]. Nevertheless, the fact that “one thought-moment fully contains [the ten pāramitās ...]” is [an explanation given from the standpoint of] intrinsic inclusiveness (*sōnggu mun*). Thus, while one may be practicing [on the basis of] an authentic understanding-awakening, efficacious practices have still not been fully perfected. As [the *Awakening of Faith*] says, “Because [bodhisattvas who have produced the thought of enlightenment] know that the dharma-nature holds nothing back, by remaining in conformity with it, they devote themselves to the practice of *dānapāramitā* [the perfection of giving], and so forth.”¹⁶⁶ Heze’s statement that “[the practice of all the eighty-(four) thousand pāramitās is] simultaneously put into operation” is an explanation given from the standpoint of manifest action (*hyōnhaeng mun*). Since it was said that “his cultivation of meritorious qualities is like dyeing a whole spool of thread,” how could one’s efficacious practices not yet be finished? Consequently, the two masters’ explanations of sudden cultivation are

substantially the same in that they both involve fully engaged (*p'ansa*) [cultivation] and differ just slightly.¹⁶⁷

Although Guifeng also elucidated the simultaneity of cultivation and awakening for those whose faculties have matured, beginning with the section “this approach [of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation] has two aspects” [*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn”], he nevertheless explains that this approach of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation also involves the two varieties of the sudden cultivation that follows the understanding-awakening and the realization-awakening that follows sudden cultivation. We cannot help but try to explain this sense of sequence. If sequence is explained by assuming that sudden cultivation means “neither to examine nor to purify ...” [*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chengguan’s Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual,” schema 2.1] and to be free from taints, then this description applies to the three schemata [of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation] proposed by Qingliang [in his *Zhenyuan Commentary*]. This is also [the attitude common among] Sŏn meditators who rely on the approach involving the original purity [of the self-nature; *ponjŏng mun/benjing men* 本淨門] as the essential factor in permeating the sequence of their awakening and cultivation. For this reason, there are many in

monasteries today who advocate a maintaining [practice] (*poim/baoren* 保任), in which the afflictions are presumed to be originally nonexistent.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, Guifeng regarded the untainted cultivation of no-thought to be the fount of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation;¹⁶⁹ he proposed that sudden cultivation meant the simultaneous perfection of both the cultivation of no-thought and the fully engaged cultivation. [752c] If we follow this exegesis, then although [the awakening that occurs at] the first *bhūmi* of the provisional teachings (*neyārtha*) is said to be the realization-awakening, the operation of the discriminative wisdom that is able to refine practice throughout the future is even then still beset with difficulties. How much more so would this be the case with the understanding-awakening? Since the obstruction of understanding¹⁷⁰ has still not been overcome, how can it be said that the phenomenal wisdom has been suddenly mastered? Furthermore, in the gradual approach described previously [viz., sudden cultivation/gradual awakening], the term “sudden cultivation” was also used in reference to the application of mind; but since [this type of sudden cultivation cannot occur until] there has already been an understanding-awakening, how could it possibly avoid this same implication? Finally, we have to conclude that this [type of suddenness] in fact means nothing more than what was discussed previously:

the gradual cultivation following [sudden] awakening that has been perfected in the ordinary person of superior faculties.^{[171](#)}

As to the sudden cultivation followed by [gradual] realization-awakening: a fully engaged sudden cultivation is difficult to achieve even after awakening, let alone before; how could that ever happen? Even so, [Zongmi tried to] propose that sudden cultivation here meant suddenness regarding the application of mind. In this instance, we have to conclude that [sudden cultivation] means the suddenness involved in the gradual permeation that occurs prior to awakening, which is perfected by those whose faculties have already matured, as was mentioned previously.

Nevertheless, if the issue of sequence in the approach of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation is considered from the standpoint of the untainted cultivation [of no-thought] as proposed by Qingliang, the explanation is consistent. But if it is considered in relation to the fully engaged cultivation as proposed by Guifeng, considerable difficulties are involved. If we try to discover Zongmi's intention, it was probably to counter the students' wrong views of annihilationism (*ucchedadr̥ṣṭi*) and permanency (*śāśvatadr̥ṣṭi*) in regard to this sequence.^{[172](#)} Consequently, Sŏn Master [Yongming Yan] Shou also cites the schema in making his own assessment

[*Excerpts*, chap. 3 “Yanshou’s Assessment of Sudden and Gradual”]:¹⁷³ sudden awakening/sudden cultivation is the practice engaged in by those whose faculties are fully matured; it does not apply to the vast majority of ordinary people. Consequently, it is not as widely applicable as the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, which has been posited specifically for ordinary people of great aspiration. Gradual cultivation/sudden awakening, sudden cultivation/gradual awakening, gradual cultivation/gradual awakening, and so forth, all are practices directed at those whose faculties can only bear a gradual approach; they are not worth promoting now.¹⁷⁴

Issues in Zongmi’s Statements about Subitism and Past Lives

I am not free of doubts concerning the explanation given in Zongmi’s concluding assessment, which said that “if we extend our investigation back into past lives, there is only gradualness and no suddenness” [*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn”]. How could this be? If we try to follow the account given in that passage, it implies that throughout the past there existed only the gradual permeation [of the mind by practice] as described in the gradual teachings.

[753a] Therefore, those who gain sudden access [to the path] in this present lifetime are, in every case, individuals whose spiritual capacities had matured and who redirected their minds via gradual cultivation in accordance with the provisional teachings; throughout all eternity, no one has ever had the spiritual capacity to make direct progress [to buddhahood] from the bound stage¹⁷⁵ of the ordinary person. In like manner, in the explanation given in the provisional teachings about buddhahood being attained after cultivating consecutively on all levels of the three stages of worthiness and the ten bhūmis, the spiritual capacities [of sentient beings] and the teachings [of the Buddha] are in mutual correspondence. In this instance, therefore, gradual cultivation [leading to] sudden awakening is valid [as a soteriological alternative]. However, the *Avataṃsakasūtra*'s explanation—that “at the moment of the initial production of the aspiration for enlightenment, right enlightenment is achieved”¹⁷⁶ and subsequently one must cultivate the consecutive stages of the bodhisattva path—would have to involve the [provisional] teaching but would be lacking [the response to superior] spiritual capacity. To the contrary, then, sudden awakening/gradual cultivation would have to be spurious. Why is this? Did not Guifeng himself say that “if we know the two approaches of sudden awakening and gradual

cultivation, we will be able to see the tracks of all the sages and saints”?^{[177](#)}

This is not the only such example. Dharma master Eminence Hyo [Wŏnhyo] in his “Amitābha Realizes the Nature Gāthā”^{[178](#)} also gave a profound explanation, which is still popular today, of the approach of initial awakening and subsequent cultivation that was followed by all the buddhas of antiquity. As it says,

In the far distant past,
There was a great man named Dharmākara.^{[179](#)}
When he first generated the supreme bodhi-mind,
He left behind the mundane world, accessed the path, and
annihilated all signs,
Although he knew that the one mind is devoid of any sign of
duality,
Out of pity for all the sentient beings drowning in the sea of
suffering,
He made forty-eight superlative vows,^{[180](#)}
Fully cultivated all the pure karmic actions, and abandoned all
taints.

Furthermore, in the *Diamond Prajñā Sūtra*, it is said, “Long ago when King Kālīṅga was dismembering my body, I retained at that time no conception of a self, no conception of a person, no conception of a living being, no conception of a soul. Why is this? Long ago, at the time I was being torn limb from limb, if I had retained any conception of a self, a person, a living being, or a soul, I would have felt anger and animosity.”^{[181](#)} If we carefully scrutinize this passage

in the sūtra, it is clear that if a person does not first awaken to the mind-nature, does not attain the [ideal] wisdom [that understands] the voidness of dharmas, and does not leave behind all conceptions of self and person, then how would one be able, in this wise, on this sea of immeasurable, incalculable kalpas, to practice what is difficult to practice and to endure what is difficult to endure? Deluded and ignorant people today are not [753b] aware of this implication and from the beginning are depressed that they have to face the difficulties of [mastering] all the manifold supplementary practices of the bodhisattva; [such people] cower as if they were on the brink of a sheer precipice (*hyōnae/xuanya* 懸崖). Unable to look back on the radiance of their own minds, where the nature of the afflictions is void, they neither abandon all signs nor practice the bodhisattva path. For this reason, they hold fast to their cleverness and ingenuity and end up succumbing to interpretations based only on passages from texts; until the end of their days they are merely counting the treasures of others.¹⁸² Although they belong to a virtuous spiritual lineage, they are extremely far from the path. Consequently, we know that initial [sudden] awakening and subsequent [gradual] cultivation is not merely the approach through which to gain access to the path during this lifetime; it is also the beginning and end of the practice performed by all

sages and saints, in both the past and present. It applies throughout all three time periods.^{[183](#)}

Radical Subitism Is Valid Only from the Standpoint of the Present Lifetime

Given that [sudden awakening/gradual cultivation] is also Guifeng's foundational premise in this *Record*, why would he say in the *Fount of Chan Collection* that "there is only gradualness and no suddenness"? [*Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Zongmi's Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn."] Ordinarily, when gradual and sudden are discussed, they must be considered from two perspectives—one is the approach of faith and understanding [of the consummate and sudden teaching, e.g., Hwaŏm], the other is the approach of efficacious practices [of the provisional teachings of the scriptures]—and the explanation depends on the standpoint one takes. From the standpoint of faith and understanding, there may be a difference in how suddenly or gradually present-day adepts in the nature and appearance schools permeate [their awakening and cultivation], but [these adepts] are all still assured of their future attainment of the fruition [of buddhahood]. Since this is a fact even during their past permeation [of practice], how would there be only gradualness and no suddenness? From the standpoint of efficacious practices, the acuity or

dullness of the faculties and capacities [of various individuals] differs, their enthusiasm or negligence in applying themselves in practice is unequal, and the tardiness or celerity at which their awakenings occur varies. Consequently, the designations sudden and gradual apply here.

Moreover, were we to explain this from the standpoint of those of dull faculties in the sudden approach, then, although in the past they may have heard of the sudden dharma and practiced it with faith and understanding, since their obstacles were formidable and their proclivities strong, their contemplation weak and their minds adrift, they could consequently not [bring their practice to] a quick conclusion. Wandering on [in saṃsāra], they eventually arrived at the present life where they heard [one word of dharma] and immediately awakened. Consequently, it was said that “any suddenness that has appeared now is produced through gradual permeation over many lifetimes.”¹⁸⁴

This is not to say that there is no permeation through faith in and understanding of the sudden dharma, but rather that there has been a gradual maturation [of cultivation] through the permeation of efficacious practices. The statement that “any suddenness that appears now [appears through gradual permeation over many lifetimes]” refers to people like Niutou [Fa]rong, the attendant Huitong, and others whose

religious practice (*brahmacarya*) was impeccable from the moment of their birth.¹⁸⁵ We can ascertain that only gradualness and no suddenness applies just to these sorts of persons [whose conduct was impeccable from their youth]; it does not apply to those who engage in wicked behavior after they are born or to [753c] regular people who have a sudden awakening after encountering the right conditions. Examine this carefully; do not manufacture controversies based on this law of karmic cause and conditions.¹⁸⁶ What we are discussing here is the initial [sudden] awakening and subsequent [gradual] cultivation that occurs at the bound stage. This applies to people like the *upādhyāya* Shigong 石翬和尚 [Huizang] and Deng Yinfeng 鄧隱峰 (both these masters had been hunters), who committed wickedness their entire lives,¹⁸⁷ and to students today: occasionally such people do encounter the right conditions, which produce an opening into awakening. After the *upādhyāya* Shigong met Mazu and had an awakening, the practice of herding the ox that he then undertook was his gradual cultivation that follows awakening.

There are some people who, attempting to validate this assumption that there is only gradualness and no suddenness, say, “People like Shigong have also accumulated pure karma over a long period of time; they committed wickedness only

as an expedient.” But such an assessment is only supposition and cannot be trusted.

Moreover, permeation throughout the past has two aspects.¹⁸⁸ One is that, thanks to hearing the dharma, one generates the thought [of enlightenment], begins to practice, and continues on with that cultivation. The other is that, through making offerings to the three jewels [*ratnatraya*, viz., Buddha, dharma, and saṃgha] and planting the roots of all kinds of meritorious qualities, one may rise or sink [in the sea of suffering] according to one’s own actions.¹⁸⁹ We can prove [the reality of suddenness] through these two aspects. The fact that some people are, from birth, exceptional in their practice of the *brahmacarya* happens because, in a previous lifetime, they had already heard the dharma, generated the *bodhicitta*, begun to practice, and gradually developed the power of their cultivation. The fact that those who have committed only evil for their whole lives may have an awakening when they encounter the proper conditions does not occur because they have accumulated pure karma for a long time, but neither does it happen without reason; [it occurs] because they had planted the roots of merit (*kuśalamūla*) in a past life. “Planting the roots of merit” is still karma that is subject to the contaminants (*āsrava*); it is not the same as practice that cultivates truth and, consequently, it cannot

protect a person from rising and sinking [in saṃsāra] in accordance with one's karma. But even though one may so rise and sink, due to those roots of merit, when one hears the great dharma now, one's karma will not obstruct one's awakening. But although awakening occurs, it does not result from the efficacy of cultivating counteragents (*pratipakṣa*) over a long period of time. And since [awakening] does not result from such long-term cultivation, how could the power of ignorance not but be strong, rendering one subject to the same proclivities as ordinary people? But because there has been an awakening, how could one's power of prajñā not but be great, bestowing on one the same meritorious qualities as the buddhas? Due to the presence of these [754a] two countervailing forces, one must hone one's cultivation thought-moment after thought-moment until one naturally achieves effortless effort and the gradual progression that is free from any hint of gradualness.¹⁹⁰ Consequently, it was said that initial awakening/subsequent cultivation is not the same as the gradual teachings' cultivation of counteragents.

An example of what I referred to as “throughout the past ... [planting] the roots of all kinds of meritorious qualities” appears in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*:

Furthermore, O sons of good family, in Śrāvastī there was a Brahmin woman named Vaśitā. She had but one child, whom

she loved dearly. It happened that the child was struck down by illness and died. At that time the poison of grief entered her heart; she went mad and, losing her senses, went shamelessly around naked. She roamed the four corners of the city wailing and weeping until she lost her voice. She moaned, “My child, my child, where have you gone?” and tirelessly wandered around the city. But this woman had already planted the roots of merit at the time of a previous buddha.

O sons of good family! I took pity on that woman. At the very moment that woman came into my presence and thought of her child, I redirected her toward her original mind. She then came before me, embraced me, and smothered me with kisses. At the time I told my attendant Ānanda, “Arrange some clothes to give to this woman.” After they were given to her, I explained to her all the essentials of the dharma from a variety of perspectives. On hearing the dharma, that woman jumped up with joy and generated *anuttara[samyak]sambodhi*.^{[191](#)}

Furthermore, in the kingdom of Kośāla, there was a gang of five hundred brigands. Because they had planted the roots of meritorious qualities during the time of a previous buddha, when they met that buddha and heard the dharma, they produced the *bodhicitta*.^{[192](#)}

The circumstances surrounding both of these cases show that, although these people may have planted the roots of merit at the time of a previous buddha, they could still suffer the retribution of being either a woman who went mad and lost her senses or members of a gang of brigands who were obsessed with hurting others. Even though they may have received such demeritorious retribution, however, because they were still endowed with the

roots of merit, once they met the buddha and heard the dharma, they could generate the mind of enlightenment. They are not the same as common folk who lack such a cause. For this reason, we know that Shigong, Deng Yinfeng, and others can be said to have been endowed with the roots of merit; [their awakening] was not due to the accumulation of pure karma over a long period of time.

As far as this sudden capacity is concerned, [754b] the fact that a person has been endowed with the roots of merit in a past lifetime is said to demonstrate that there is only gradualness and no suddenness. But a person [with such an opinion] does not distinguish between mundane conditionality and the approaches of supramundane cultivation and realization: how can these be mentioned in the same breath? Furthermore, the law of causation operating throughout the three time periods is what prompts sentient beings, who remain always centered in the wisdom of nonproduction (*mujakchi/wuzuo zhi* 無作智, **akaraṇajñāna*), to be so self-deceptive that they would willingly undergo these chimeric transformations.¹⁹³ Such a proposition is not the buddhadharma.

I now think it essential to give this assessment of sudden and gradual because people who are cultivating their minds are simply not aware that their own minds are the buddha-mind and their own

natures are the dharma-nature; they gamely remain in an inferior state laboriously cultivating gradual practices, trying constantly to supplement those practices day after day, kalpa after kalpa. For this reason, my intention has been to illuminate the sudden school's directive to "see the nature and achieve buddhahood," so that those who are stuck inside the great dream of these three realms of existence, undergoing the hardships produced by ignorance throughout this long night of birth and death, will not become discouraged and backslide. I hope that they will not waste their efforts but will bravely work toward enlightenment and, extending the lifespan of the Buddha, reap benefits for an eternity of kalpas. What need is there to discuss the mundane law of conditionality that operates throughout the three time periods? For these reasons, we know that Guifeng's statement that there is only gradualness and no suddenness was made solely in reference to those extraordinary people who were able to cultivate the *brahmacarya* from birth; this has been verified. He was not referring to those who performed unsalutary acts or to regular folk. If even those who perform unsalutary actions can generate [the *bodhicitta*] when they encounter the appropriate conditions, then how much more possible is it for ordinary people who are cultivating wholesome actions and whose roots of merit from

past lives are difficult to fathom! How can they end up backsliding by demeaning themselves?

Furthermore, if we were to explain sudden and gradual merely from the standpoint of the relative maturity or immaturity of the spiritual capacity developed in past lifetimes, how could we ascertain this numinous efficacy of the buddhadharma? Hence, it is clear that people who are cultivating their minds should ascertain the reality that their own minds are originally buddhas by making use of these sincere and earnest instructions of the buddhas and patriarchs. After [experiencing] the purity of the self-nature and the liberation of the self-nature, they should forsake the myriads of worldly conditions and maintain this exclusive focus [on enlightenment]. They then will naturally achieve immaculate purity and the liberation that is free from all obstacles.¹⁹⁴

*Yanshou's Assessment of Sudden and Gradual in
the*

Common End of Myriad Good Deeds

Moreover, in the *Common End of Myriad Good Deeds Collection (Wanshan tonggui ji)*,¹⁹⁵ [Yongming Yanshou] quotes Guifeng's perspectives on cultivation and realization and sudden and gradual in his own elucidation [of these issues], so that people who are cultivating their minds would recognize

[754c] the strong and weak points of their own mind's knowledge and vision and clearly understand the relative rawness or ripeness of their own efficacious practice.¹⁹⁶ There are, however, slight differences in regard to whether they open it up [for analysis, as in Zongmi's schemata] or combine it together [into a synthesis, as with Yanshou].¹⁹⁷

Question: Must people of superlative faculties who have had a sudden awakening to their own minds still permeate their cultivation with the manifold supplementary practices that are aids to progress along the path [cf. *bodhipakṣikadharmā*]?

Answer: The Sōn Master Guifeng offered a fourfold taxonomy [of soteriological issues]: (1) gradual cultivation/sudden awakening, (2) sudden cultivation/gradual awakening, (3) gradual cultivation/gradual awakening, (4) sudden awakening/sudden cultivation. These preceding four alternatives all involve the realization/awakening. Only sudden awakening/gradual cultivation [a fifth alternative] involves the understanding-awakening: it is like the sun that appears suddenly and gradually evaporates the morning frost and dew. As the *Avatamsakasūtra* explains, at the time of the initial production of the *bodhicitta*, right enlightenment has already been achieved, but afterward one must still ascend the stages [of the bodhisattva path], sequentially developing cultivation and realization. [See "Issues in Zongmi's Statements about Subitism and Past Lives" *supra*.] If one cultivates without having had an awakening, it is not authentic cultivation. Only sudden awakening/gradual cultivation conforms to the buddha-vehicle and does not controvert the premise of the consummate [teachings].

Sudden awakening/sudden cultivation also implies gradual cultivation over many lifetimes until it suddenly

matures in this lifetime; it is personally experienced by those people in that moment. Since their words correspond to their actions and their actions to their words, their measure reaches to the boundaries of the *dharmadhātu* and their minds coalesce with the vastness of empty space. For them, the eight [worldly] winds¹⁹⁸ do not blow, the three types of sensations [*vedanā*: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral] are quiescent, the seeds [*bīja*: of future action lying dormant in the *ālayavijñāna*] and their manifest actions (*samudācāra*) are both destroyed, and the fundamental [afflictions, the six *mūlakteśa*] and derivative [afflictions, the twenty *upakteśa*] both vanish.¹⁹⁹ From the standpoint of benefiting oneself (*svārtha*), what need would they have to permeate their cultivation with the manifold supplementary practices? One who is not sick does not need to take medicine. But from the standpoint of benefiting others (*parārtha*), [these practices] cannot be dispensed with, for if they do not cultivate them themselves, how will they be able to encourage others to cultivate them? Consequently, the *Sūtra* [of *Bodhisattva Autonomous King*; *Zizaiwang pusa jing*] says, “If you are keeping the precepts yourself, you will be able to encourage others to keep the precepts.”²⁰⁰

If manifest actions are not yet eradicated and the afflictions and proclivities still persist, or whatever you see leads to passion and whatever you encounter produces impediments, then, even though you may have understood the implications of nonproduction, your strength is still insufficient. You should not grasp [at your understanding] and say, “I have already awakened to the fact that the nature of the afflictions is void,” for, if you produce the aspiration to cultivate, [your practice] will end up becoming corrupted [cf. *viparyāsa*]. Even though the nature of the afflictions may be void, they can cause you to receive the results of karma. Karmic fruition may have no nature, [755a] but it can still serve as the cause

of suffering. Although pain may be chimeric, how difficult it is to bear! Hence, you should know that inconsistencies between words and deeds are what enable you to verify the flaws in or soundness of your practice. Just measure the strength of your faculties; you cannot afford to deceive yourself. Examine your thoughts and guard against error; you must be absolutely vigilant in this!

The preceding passage, which is Sŏn Master [Yan]Shou's elucidation of the implications of sudden and gradual, takes the standpoint of the realization-awakening to offer a fourfold taxonomy; he draws on the perspective of the understanding-awakening to proposed a separate alternative that he especially commended [viz., sudden awakening/gradual cultivation]. Although there are differences in their specific import and in their correlation from what is presented in the *Fount of Chan Collection*, the idea of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation as it appears in this [*Dharma Collection and Special Practice*] *Record* was made to shine ever more brilliantly here. Why is this? In this *Record*, it is said that "if we succeed at sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, we will see the tracks of all the sages and saints."²⁰¹ But Sŏn Master [Yan]Shou also said, "Only sudden awakening/gradual cultivation conforms to the buddha-vehicle and does not controvert the premise of the consummate [teachings]." Hence, in both primary and subsidiary aspects, [the buddha-vehicle and the description of sudden

awakening/gradual cultivation in the *Record*] tally with one another; from a distance and from up close, they illuminate one another.²⁰² Since even sudden awakening/sudden cultivation is really gradual cultivation over many lifetimes that has suddenly matured in this life, how much more so is this the case with the other three alternatives; how would these not involve gaining access to the path through a gradual stimulus?

THE IMPORTANCE OF GRADUAL CULTIVATION FOLLOWING SUDDEN AWAKENING

The notion that there must initially be a sudden awakening on the bound stage, as we have been discussing here, is superior [to other soteriological approaches in regard to] both dharma and spiritual capacity. Being superior in regard to dharma does not mean that dharmas are originally either superior or inferior; [this statement] is merely intended to help students break through the spurious and reach the authentic so that their discernment of dharmas will be sublime and recondite. Consequently, although it has already been explained in this *Record*, I will give a few additional brief elaborations. For instance, it said,

Although there are hundreds and thousands of different shades that the jewel may reflect, let us consider the color black, which is diametrically opposed to the innate brilliance of the lustrous jewel. This will serve to illustrate the fact that, although the numinous and bright knowledge and vision is the

exact opposite of the darkness of ignorance, they are nevertheless of the same single essence. [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Relationship between Immutability and Adaptability: The Simile of the Jewel”]

For this reason, it was said,

When you are greedy or angry, you are aware; when you are loving and altruistic, you are also aware. [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “An Analogy for Gradual Cultivation”]

Even so, this awareness is not greed or anger, not loving-kindness or altruism, and so forth. Since nature and characteristics, essence and function, and adaptability and immutability inherently occur simultaneously, they are all unimpeded in being either present or absent.

Superiority of spiritual capacity refers to students who might hear the sublime dharma and have an abrupt awakening to the fact that the nature of the mind [755b] is originally pure and the afflictions are originally void. On the other hand, although they might not have an immediate awakening, they can still recognize the dharma’s sublimity and reconditeness. Therefore, whether they are speaking or keeping silent, acting or being still, they remain exclusively devoted to their investigations and, as the days lengthen and the months deepen, they will abruptly open into understanding. When we speak of suddenness here, although the relative rapidity or slowness of their access to awakening is not the

same, this is not a method of training that eradicates the spurious or holds onto the authentic. Hence, it merely discerns that the wholesome and unwholesome functions of their own minds originate from the true nature in accordance with conditions—and their origination is in fact their non-origination.²⁰³ Since, from the very beginning, [this approach involves] neither stages nor sequence, it is called sudden.

The provisional teachings of the three vehicles [of Kyo] and the Northern school of Sōn both advocate,

All sentient beings are inherently endowed with the nature of enlightenment in the same way that a mirror has the nature of reflectivity, but just like a mirror obscured by dust, the afflictions cover [that nature] so that it does not appear. [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Northern School’s Basic Premise”]

You must cultivate it and polish it so that [that nature and reflectivity] will appear.

Guifeng’s critique [of this position] said,

This [school] is simply characterized by its view that maculated and pure states are produced by conditions; its approach is to go against the current [of saṃsāra] and resist the proclivities of habit. But it does not recognize that deluded thoughts are originally nonexistent and the nature of the mind is originally pure. Since its awakening still lacks acumen, how can its cultivation be considered authentic? [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Northern School’s Basic Premise”]

For this reason, in sudden and gradual approaches, the characteristics of the practices involving

awakening, cultivation, and gaining access [to the path] are quite different. Although inferior sentient beings with little merit and many obstructions might come in contact with the sublime import [of the sudden approach] and chat about it all day long, this will just lead to contentious debates over [which soteriological approach] is superior and which inferior; it adds to their arrogance (*ahaṃkāra*) and does not help them generate right faith. And if they do not even have faith, what are the chances that they will diligently cultivate without indolence, not even sparing their own lives?

Although there may be others who have faith in the premise that the nature of the mind is originally pure, when their manifest actions are examined, they seem unable to control their deluded thoughts and proclivities. While wandering aimlessly in the four directions, they waste the offerings of the faithful. At present, such types are as numerous as grains of hemp or millet. This is what Sōn Master [Yan]Shou meant by his statement just above: “Inconsistencies between words and deeds are what enable you to verify the flaws in or soundness of your practice.” Engrave this on your minds right now and disseminate this approach of gradual cultivation following awakening.

This approach of [gradual] cultivation following awakening is not only designed to keep the student

untainted; it also involves permeating cultivation with manifold supplementary practices and offering of aid to both oneself and others. Nowadays, Sōn adepts often say, [755c] “We just need to vividly see the buddha-nature; afterward, the practices and vow to benefit others (*parārtha*) will be automatically consummated.” I, Moguja, do not agree with this. If we vividly see the buddha-nature, this only means that sentient beings and buddhas are equivalent and oneself and others are indistinguishable. If we do not then make the compassionate vow [to save all beings from suffering], I fear that we will languish in a state of quiescent tranquillity. This is as explained in the *Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra*: “The nature of wisdom is quiescent and tranquil; but we guard that wisdom with the vow.”²⁰⁴ Consequently, we know that, although one might have made a determined vow while still at the deluded stage that precedes awakening, the vow was not truly established because one’s mental powers were weak. But after [achieving] the understanding gained through awakening, one should use one’s discriminative wisdom to contemplate the sufferings of sentient beings and make that vow of compassion. If one practices the bodhisattva path according to one’s strength and abilities, the practice of enlightenment will gradually be consummated. Would this not be a felicitous delight?

The function of transformation that is brought into play after awakening has these two aspects of equivalence and differentiation. The transformation that involves equivalence manifests itself suddenly, but the transformation that involves differentiation is consummated only gradually; this is simple enough to understand.

Nowadays, those who read the biographies of [eminent monastics] who have transmitted the traces [of the tradition] see the remarkable events surrounding their achievement of the dharma and assume that, simultaneous with seeing the nature, the [six] superpowers (*abhijñā*) and the [four] unimpeded analytical knowledges (*pratisaṃvid*) are acquired automatically. Consequently, when they see [masters presumed to be awakened] who do not possess the sublime functions of the analytical knowledges or [super]powers, they presume they are charlatans and have no faith in them.²⁰⁵ Such people have obviously never encountered wise spiritual advisors and have not reflected well [on this issue]. They are not aware that, after awakening, the wisdom that scrutinizes delusions and the manifold supplementary practices of the bodhisattva must both be brought gradually to perfection. As the *Fount of Chan Collection* says,

It is like a person (the dharmakāya in bondage) who is endowed with all the sensory faculties and who is strong and

multi-skilled (the sublime functions that are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges). Unexpectedly, he contracts an illness (beginningless ignorance) that becomes steadily worse (the two types of grasping, at self and dharmas) until his energy has been completely sapped (performing actions and receiving retribution), and just his heart remains warm (the seed of uncontaminated wisdom within the ālayavijñāna). Unexpectedly, he may encounter a superb physician (a great spiritual mentor) who recognizes that his life-force is still present (he perceives that the mind of an ordinary person is the same as the mind of the buddhas) and who makes him ingest some miraculous medicine (even though people who hear [the dharma] for the first time might not believe it, they persist in expounding it to them and never give up). Abruptly, the patient is revived (awakening and understanding) and things he was unable to express initially (when people who are newly awakened expound the dharma, their responses to the objections others raise are not quite to the point), [756a] eventually he gradually learns to explain (he understands how to speak about the dharma). Step by step, he continues along the way (the ten bhūmis and the ten pāramitās) until his health is fully restored (he achieves buddhahood). There then are none of the skills he learned previously that he cannot perform (the superpowers, emission of light, and omniscient wisdom).

If each of these comparisons is examined in accordance with the dharma, how could you not overcome any of your remaining doubts? Hence, it is clear that the only reason why sentient beings are unable to make use of the superpowers is that they are afflicted by the ailment of delusion, which is generated by the karma-activating consciousness (*ōpsik/yeshi* 業識): it is not because their own *dharmakāya* is not endowed with all the sublime meritorious qualities.

Nowadays stupid people raise the objection, “Since you’ve had a sudden awakening, you’re a buddha: so why can’t you emit light?” But how is this any different from trying to order that sick person who has not yet recovered from his illness to resume his original occupation? [206](#)

The dharma simile recorded above is quite clear. Reflect on each of its points, resolve your doubts, and give rise to faith. As your faith becomes more intense, you will naturally open to understanding. To open to understanding does not refer only to intellectual understanding. Once you recognize that the mind is Buddha, you must take up this sublime adage and scrutinize it constantly; unexpectedly, you will progress one more level to the intimate stage of self-confidence and self-direction, and then and there you will gain right understanding. But if you do not develop the discernment that comes from skillful expedients, it will be extremely difficult to reach the ultimate stage.

Furthermore, some have noticed that those who are expounding the dharma may appear to be awakened when they are speaking; but when they are engaged in contemplative practice they just become absorbed in silent illumination,^{[207](#)} a practice that clings to quietude. Such types have not yet learned for themselves to establish their will or to regulate their practice. They fall into an expedient form of gradualness, constantly alternating between activity and quietude and governed by [wrong notions of what is] authentic and spurious. They will never be able to access the approach of the supreme vehicle where mind is Buddha. You must be aware of this!

If their faith and understanding are authentic and upright, their activity and quietude complementary, and they have arcane unity with their natures that are as vast as the sea, people will naturally gain the ability to engage in peaceful meditation and quietude of thought. Although some who have been subject to serious obstructions and delusions may have gained a modicum of perspicacity, they still should employ in their practice sensory restraint and other types of training so that they will never backslide.

The Process of Gradual Cultivation

Once someone asked Sŏn Master Guifeng:[208](#)

[Question:] Once we have awakened to the mind, how should we cultivate it? Must we still rely on [the directive to practice] sitting meditation as described in the teaching involving characteristics? [756b]

Answer: There are two implications here. On the one hand, either dullness predominates so that it is difficult to incite yourself to action, or else agitation and restlessness are especially bothersome so that it is impossible to control them. If greed and hatred blaze forth and make it difficult to control yourself when you encounter sense-objects, you should make use of the many expedients explained in the preceding types of teachings[209](#) and apply an antidote appropriate to the ailment. On the other hand, if the afflictions are relatively weak or if your wisdom and understanding are clear and discerning, you should rely on the single-practice samādhi of the fundamental school [“the direct revelation of the mind-nature

school”] and the fundamental teaching [“the revelation that the true mind is the nature teaching”].²¹⁰

Nowadays there are some who are unaware of these implications and, not measuring the true strength of their faculties, say, “I have already awakened to the fact that the nature of the afflictions is void.”²¹¹ Then, abandoning their practice, they fall into the malady of insouciance.²¹² Even when they happen to perform karma-producing actions, they feel no shame and dread. This is all due to the fact that the maculation (*mala*) of conceit (*ahaṃkāra*) is overwhelming and the hindrance (*nīvaraṇa*) of indolence [*kausīdya*; cf. *styānamiddha*] is severe, while vigor and willpower are entirely lacking. A gāthā by Sōn master Longmen Foyan says,²¹³

The mind’s effulgence is empty and brilliant,
Its essence transcends all sense of partiality or
comprehensiveness.

Like golden waves forming, one after another,
Motion and quiescence are always Sōn.

Whether thoughts arise or thoughts cease,
There is no need to stop them.
In this effortless flow,
How can any production or cessation remain?

If production and cessation are quiescent,
Mahākāśyapa will appear.
Whether sitting, reclining, or walking,
Sōn is never interrupted.

How can Sōn not be sitting?

How can sitting not be Sŏn?
If one can understand in this wise,
Only then is it called "sitting meditation."

Who is it that is sitting?
Sŏn is what sort of thing?
If there remains a desire to sit [in Sŏn],
It is like sending the Buddha out to find the Buddha.
The Buddha does not need to be sought,
If you look for him he will instead be lost.
Sitting is not contemplating the self,
Sŏn is not an external technique.

The mind of the neophyte is distracted and distraught,
It cannot avoid wandering on and exchanging [bodies].
Consequently, through many methods,
You are taught quiet contemplation.
When you sit straight and gather your spirits,
There will initially be disturbances of mind.
After a long time, as the mind becomes dispassionate,
The six sensory gateways will become composed.

As the six senses are tranquilized,
Discrimination may persist within.
Even though discrimination is generated,
And it seems as if this creates production and cessation,
The changes of production and cessation,
Are all made manifest by your own mind.

If again you use your own mind,
To look back once more,
In this one moment of looking back that is without a second,
An all-encompassing effulgence will be emitted from the crown
of your head.

In this numinous brightness of dazzling brilliance,
All states of mind are unimpeded.

Spatially, it contains [all places]; temporally, it accesses [all times].²¹⁴

Birth and death are ended for all eternity. [756c]

One drop of refined cinnabar,
Dipped into gold, becomes the elixir [of immortality].
The adventitious afflictions (*āgantukakleśa*) of body and mind,
Have no gateway through which to leak in or out.

Though you may still speak of delusion and awakening,
Cease all discussion of favorable and unfavorable.

When you closely consider the events of the past,
Sitting coolly, intent on the quest,
Although [your practice before awakening] is no different [from
your practice after awakening],
What great confusion it is [to think they are the same]!

A *kṣaṇa* (instant) [combines] ordinary people and saints,
But no one can believe it....²¹⁵

Even so, there is nothing more important than this
ability to believe!

RECAPITULATION OF THE GIST OF THE SPECIAL PRACTICE RECORD

I, Moguja, have examined carefully the premise of the dharma posited in the *Record* and have found that it divides the one authentic *dharmadhātu* into two aspects: dharma and person. The first, dharma, is further subdivided into the two categories of adaptability and immutability. The second, person, comprises the two aspects of sudden awakening and

gradual cultivation. If we list these categories and treat them one by one, [the meaning of this *Record*] will be clearly evident. We bhikṣus in this degenerate age of the dharma must have had affinities from past kalpas that have enabled us to come into contact with this sublime approach. If, with faith and understanding, we receive and keep it, in our own minds we will not be deluded about the road that enables us to cultivate truth; how could this not be to our great good fortune?

Now, there are neophytes resident here who receive and keep this *Record* and who exclusively dedicate themselves to contemplative practice, but who are still dark to their own minds and do not distinguish between what is authentic and what is spurious. Many of them have ended up backsliding. For this reason, I will briefly assess these [main tenets of this *Record*] to help disseminate its sublime import: like falling dew that adds to the streams or fine dust that supplements the marchmounts, [this discussion might aid students in developing their practice].

Now, as was discussed, the mind-nature of all sentient beings, “the foolish and the wise, the wholesome and the unwholesome, even that of the birds and beasts, would, in all these cases, be naturally clear and constantly aware, and accordingly different from [the insentience of] trees and stones”

[*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “How Hongzhou and Heze Differ”]. But [this mind-nature] is neither the discriminative consciousness that arises in relation to conditioned objects nor the wisdom produced by the realization-awakening. It is exactly the self-nature of suchness; it is not the same as insentient vacuity. This nature itself is constantly aware. The “[Ten] Dedications Chapter” ([*Shī*] *Huixiang pin* [十] 回向品) of the *Avataṃsakasūtra* says, “Suchness has radiance as its essence.”²¹⁶ The *Awakening of Faith* says, “The essence and characteristics of suchness are genuine consciousness and awareness.”²¹⁷ Kanakamuni Buddha’s transmission gāthā says,

The buddhas do not display a body—
Awareness is Buddha.
If awareness is really present,
There can be no buddha separate from it.²¹⁸

This is the idea here. [757a]

RESOLVING MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PRACTICE

Ordinary Beings Cannot Realize Buddhahood

Question: It was just established that the mind of numinous awareness “is exactly the self-nature of suchness.... It is neither the discriminative consciousness that arises in relation to conditioned

objects nor the wisdom produced by the realization-awakening.” We are now seeking the knowledge and vision of buddhahood while abiding in discriminations produced by the deluded consciousness. But this is like trying to transmute a black soapberry into a *maṇi*-jewel: it is only a waste of effort [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Hongzhou School’s View”]. When will we ever come into conformity [with that knowledge and vision]?

Answer: Although authentic awareness is quiescent, it constantly exists amid the myriads of conditions. Although deluded thoughts may be chimeric, they are always covertly united with the singular nature. How can you ignore this fundamental principle and create difficulties for yourself?²¹⁹ The dharma-similes brought up in this *Record* are analyzed clearly and without the slightest hint of concealment. My only fear is that people who are cultivating the mind will have such doubts, causing the power of their investigation to ebb.

If you say that the discriminations of the mind and the consciousnesses that appear right now in reality have an essential nature, you are like an ignorant child who sees the blackness reflected by the lustrous jewel but does not know that that reflection is completely void and straightaway says, “That is a black jewel.” Even though you hear people say that

“this is a lustrous jewel,” because your eyes see that blackness, you presume the jewel is cloaked in that enveloping blackness and by polishing it you will be able to remove that black occlusion and see the lustrous jewel. If you obstinately cling to this sort of understanding and do not abandon it, this is of course the same as the views of those students “who cling to characteristics in the dharma-characteristics [schools, viz., Yogācāra and Abhidharma] of the Greater and Lesser [Vehicles] and in the teaching of humans and divinities” [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Relationship between Immutability and Adaptability: The Simile of the Jewel”]. How can it be said that you are deeply intent on the mind-school [of Sōn],²²⁰ that you revel in listening to its profound implications, or that you are wholeheartedly pursuing samādhi and prajñā?

Although we have just explained that the void and quiescent numinous awareness is neither the discriminative consciousnesses nor the wisdom generated by the realization-awakening, it can nevertheless also give rise to that consciousnesses and that wisdom and can perform wholesome and unwholesome actions as either an ordinary person or a saint. Its salutary and unsalutary functions can change their appearance in a variety of ways. This is possible because its essence is aware: when it is in contact with any conditioned object, it can

discriminate whether it is skillful or unskillful, meritorious or demeritorious, and so forth. Although liking and disliking, anger and joy, seem to arise and cease when it is in contact with conditioned objects, [757b] the mind that is capable of awareness is never interrupted but remains tranquil and ever quiescent. When this awareness is under the sway of delusion, it is said that the mind moves. But once it has awakened, we know that the mind is free from any arising. As the text [of the *Record*] says,

Even when deluded, the mind is still aware, for awareness is inherently undeluded. Even when thoughts arise, it is still aware, for awareness is inherently free of thoughts. For that matter, whether the mind is sad or happy, joyful or angry, loving or hateful, in each of these cases it is always aware. Awareness is inherently void and quiescent. To be aware while remaining void and quiescent is the point at which one is clear and unconfused about the mind-nature. [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The View of the Heze School”]

For this reason, Master Zongmi always said to his students,

That which is clear and capable of awareness right now is your buddha-mind. But those who are ungifted cannot accept this in faith. They are unwilling even to consider the prospect but simply say, “I, so-and-so, am ungifted and really cannot comprehend this.” [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Relationship between Immutability and Adaptability,” with minor differences]

From this [passage] we know that Master Mi’s own lineage also included students who lost their heads

and ran around wildly; this does not only happen today. The *Śūraṃgamasūtra* says,

In that city, how was there any reason for Yajñadatta to be frightened that he had lost his head? If he were suddenly relieved of his madness, he would know that his head was not to be found anywhere else; but even if he had not yet calmed down, how could he ever really have lost it? If the madness of Yajñadatta that is within your own mind calms down on its own, that calming is bodhi. The effulgent mind of superlative purity originally pervades the *dharmadhātu*; it is not to be obtained from someone else. [221](#)

In this wise, his head was originally right where it was supposed to be; it was not a case of now it's there and then it isn't. But Yajñadatta suddenly went mad and convinced himself that he had his head but then had lost it—no one else did this to him. How could a wise person who knows he has made himself mad not try to correct himself?

Consequently, we know that views of authentic and spurious, gain and loss, are nothing more than your own deluded thoughts. It is not the fault of the mind-nature that [these views] increase and decrease. Even so, the arising of these deluded thoughts is like running around as if mad; they have no specific cause for their arising. Since they are designated as deluded, what cause could they have; for if there were a cause, they would not be called deluded. You should know that they are deluded and henceforth counteract the deluded with the authentic.

But if you probe the nature of that delusion, it is originally nonexistent; so how could the authentic possibly succeed [in counteracting it]? [757c] If you know that the authentic and deluded are both unascertainable, then the one who knows that they are unascertainable is also unascertainable. In such a state, one is like a snowflake on a red-hot stove.²²² Likewise, your previous vexations of validating names and grasping at appearances, which were like obstructions in your chest, immediately dissolve like melting ice. As there is nothing left to grasp, the bosom feels relieved and nothing remains that can bind you. Then, at your ease, you serenely redirect yourself back to contemplation and guard it carefully, without resting for even a split second. When all obscuration has vanished from the nine empyrea,²²³ what need is there to bore through it?

This one ray of numinous brightness has never been dimmed. Do not let it make a nest or come into port anywhere; leave behind past, present, and future. Its natural condition (*dharmatā*) is impeccable; it is not produced from causes and it is originally pristine. Whether seeing, hearing, speaking, or keeping silent, [numinous awareness] functions in all situations, clearly knowing and never dark. It has no deficiencies, so what could you propose to add to it? Once your faith in this is sufficient, you must settle it firmly. If you wield the phantom-like compassion and

wisdom and ferry across phantom-like sentient beings, the effortless practice of enlightenment will be accomplished without even trying. Then, how would your entire life not but be a felicitous delight?

Practice Is Impossible in This Degenerate Age of the Dharma

Nowadays, some people are not well informed. In their confusion regarding their own minds, they obstinately grasp at the sacred teachings' taxonomy of five fixed temporal divisions [in the history of the Buddhist dispensation] and say, "Nowadays, people who try to train in dhyāna or liberation during the current dissension period of the final five hundred years [of the dharma] do not realize that such attempts are inappropriate to the present time and so they engage in many sham practices." People who indulge in this sort of suspicious slander end up vilifying the three jewels because of their own ignorance, their modest backgrounds, and their lack of sense.^{[224](#)} Does it not say [the following] in the *Diamond Sūtra*? "If, in a future age, during the final five hundred years [of the Buddhist dispensation], there are sentient beings who happen to hear this sūtra and whose faith is pristine, they then will generate a conception of what is real (*silsang/shixiang* 實相, *bhūtasamjñā*). You should

know that such persons have accomplished the rarest of merit.”²²⁵ During this current degenerate age [of the dharma] (*malse/moshi* 末世, *saddharmavipralopa*), [758a] if there was in fact no one who had any faith and understanding or prajñā or had generated a conception of what is real, and yet the Buddha had made such a statement, then all the buddhas of the three time-periods would be liars who were just trying to deceive sentient beings. However, all the buddhas are saints “who are speakers of truth, speakers of what is real, and speakers of things as they are”;²²⁶ they do not deceive and they do not lie. Therefore, I earnestly pray that those suspicious slanderers who grasp at these time periods will rectify their minds, remove their doubts, abandon their confusion, and forever cease the serious offense of slandering the Buddha, dharma, and saṃgha. This would indeed be what is appropriate here!

Nowadays there are also students of prajñā, who are intelligent and with discerning faculties and who have gained a degree of faith and understanding without expending a lot of effort. They consequently become complacent and are then lax in their cultivation. Falling under the sway of their intellectual prowess and cleverness, they become great scholars of Confucianism and Buddhism. Their views are extensive but the strength of their meditative

absorption is minimal. Due to this disparity, they get carried away by salutary and unsalutary sensory objects. Liking and disliking, anger and joy, appear and disappear like a raging fire. Their inclination is perpetually to judge others' good and bad conduct—and they show no contrition [about doing so]. Since they are uncontrite, who knows if there is any way to reform or discipline them? In this wise, as the days lengthen and the months deepen, they do not turn away from their delusion. Since their power of the path is unable to conquer the power of their karma, they inevitably fall into Māra's clutches. In the final *kṣaṇa* [instant] as they are facing their deaths, the six rebirth destinies and the five aggregates of being (*skandha*) will appear before them; but fearful and apprehensive, there will be nothing on which they can rely. Without the wisdom to save themselves, they will drift along as before on the waves [of *saṃsāra*]. This is no minor matter. If even those of discerning faculties engage in this sort of unsalutary reflection, how much more possible is it for people whose faculties are dull? How could they dare to relax in their efforts to accomplish the great task [of enlightenment]?

For this reason, you must be filled with ardency and, unconcerned about your body or your life, stay wholeheartedly devoted to this task of yours. At all times, keep raised before you this principle of faith in,

and understanding of, the mind-nature and always keep your attention on it. Polishing the dharma-eye so that not even one dust mote can settle there is the foundation [of practice]. Take care not to neglect the manifold supplementary practices, such as worshipping the Buddha and reciting sūtras, [758b] [the pāramitās of] giving (*dāna*), morality (*śīla*), and forbearance (*kṣānti*), or any other practices that are aids to progress along the path [cf. *bodhipakṣikadharmā*]. An ancient [Guishan Lingyu] said, “In the ideal land, at the point of peak experience (*silche/shiji* 實際, *bhūtakoti*), not even a single dust mote settles. Among all the tasks of the Buddha, do not neglect even a single dharma.”²²⁷ This is what I mean here.

Observing Morality Is Unnecessary

Nowadays I often see immoral people who have regressed from the *bodhicitta* and pay no attention whatsoever to the Buddhist precepts. They do not watch over their threefold karma [via body, speech, and mind]; they are heedless (*pramāda*) and indolent (*kausīdya*). Their raison d'être is slighting others and passing judgment on the correctness and impropriety of others' conduct. They do nothing but create obstacles and difficulties. For this reason, we know that the afflictions may be incalculable, but hatred

(*dveṣa*) and pride (*māna*) are the worst of them; and although the approaches to cultivation may be incalculable, loving-kindness (*maitrī*) and forbearance (*kṣānti*) are their source. His Eminence Hyo [Wōnhyo] said, “To endure what is difficult to endure is the practice of the bodhisattva. To be silent about what can be spoken of is the mind of the great person.”²²⁸ The sūtras say, “To meditate in the mountains is not difficult. Not to be affected when in contact with sensory objects—that is difficult.”²²⁹ A śāstra [Li Tongxuan’s *Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra*] says, “If forbearance is not practiced, the manifold supplementary practices will not be completed.”²³⁰ The patriarch of Caoxi Mountain [Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch] said,

If they are authentic cultivators of the path, they do not notice the faults of the world; they always examine their own faults and thereby come into conformity with the path. If they notice the faults of others, their own faults will instead be augmented.... If they are persons of true virtue, in their hearts, they will not belittle others but will practice universal respect for all. Virtueless persons consider themselves to be great and, in their hearts, constantly belittle everyone else.... If they are truly unmoving, they never notice the faults of those they see or any of others’ salutary or unsalutary actions or the propriety or impropriety of their conduct. This is exactly the motionlessness of the nature. Although the bodies of deluded people may be unmoving [in meditation], as soon as they open their mouths they talk about everyone’s good and bad points and become estranged thereby from the path. Hence, the motionlessness created by examining the mind and examining purity [during

sitting meditation] will instead generate causes and conditions that obstruct the path.^{[231](#)}

The dharma discourses I have just cited are sincere words spoken straight from the heart by the Buddha and bodhisattvas out of their loving-kindness, compassion, and sympathy for those exceptional people who are cultivating the mind; they point out the essential factors in the process of cultivation. I, Chinul, feel deeply gratified to have encountered this dharma and will specially receive and keep these instructions for the rest of my life. [758c] I also encourage my fellow students to cultivate in accord with their injunctions. If persons of faith happen to encounter this sublime approach and have deep faith in and understanding of it, and if they constantly reflect on their own faults, censure their own laziness, and reform and train themselves, then they can guard well their words and check their thoughts. Whenever they encounter people, they guard well their mouths and focus their minds so that they do not see others' faults. They do not discuss the propriety of others' actions. Whether observing themselves or others, they covertly conform to the voidness of the nature. Practicing this path anew every day, they gain the power of the unproduced (*anutpāda*, *anutpattika*) loving-kindness and forbearance. They can be called truly remarkable heroes who have appeared in the world.

Although there are, in this wise, various expedients that are aids in cultivating the path, such as giving, morality, forbearance, and so forth, as well as the implementation of the manifold supplementary practices, these persons have previously awakened to the fact that the nature of the afflictions is void. Thus even though there may be proclivities generated that should be controlled, these proclivities are actually unproduced. Practices leading to enlightenment, which perform this controlling, are performed without performing anything. When both subject and object are left far behind and one adapts to external conditions without creating anything, that will then be authentic cultivation. Thus, how can it be said that after we have experienced the original purity there is absolutely nothing left to cultivate or to counteract?

Definitive and Conventional Practices Need Not Be Balanced

There was once a person who asked Sŏn Master [Cheng]Gu:[232](#)

“There are some people who have understood that the myriads of sensory objects are only mind. So why is it that, when by chance they come in contact with salutary or unsalutary sensory objects, they still experience craving or aversion, anger or joy?”

The master answered, “This occurs solely because these people’s power of the path is insufficient and their proclivities have not yet dissipated. Nevertheless, even though such thoughts may arise, they never perform any unwholesome actions. How is this possible? It is because whenever thoughts arise, they extinguish them completely right then and there. Consequently, [Yongming Yanshou] said, ‘Do not fear the arising of thoughts; only be afraid lest your awareness of them be tardy.’²³³ [Yanshou] also said, ‘The momentary uprising of thoughts is the malady; not to allow them to continue is the remedy. From then on they naturally will weaken.’²³⁴ Even though people who have awakened to the path may still have all the adventitious taints and afflictions, from another standpoint they have all achieved the knowledge and vision of the tathāgatas. For this reason, [Baozhi] said, ‘Afflictions are bodhi.’”²³⁵

That person asked again, “There are some people who have not yet understood that the myriads of sensory objects are only mind. So why is it that when they come into contact with unsalutary or salutary objects, they still do not experience craving or aversion, anger or joy?” [759a]

The master answered, “This is suppression—like a stone pressing down grass.²³⁶ Therefore, it is said that ‘although you might gain a bit of comfort and serenity by subduing the proclivities signs of discomfort will constantly appear.’²³⁷ [The *Zhao lun*] also says that ‘one may have succeeded in developing serenity of mind but has failed to realize the vacuity of external things.’”²³⁸

For this reason, people who are cultivating authenticity should not allow their thoughts to dwell on external signs like motion and stillness or salutary and unsalutary; rather, it is urgent that they refine themselves through the wisdom that derives from enlightenment and bring their work to completion.

I have also noticed that some people cultivating the mind pretend to have already awakened to the mind, but the state they have accessed is not very profound. Although they spend their whole day in inner contemplation, they are constantly ensnared by purity. Although they may perceive the vacuity of external things, they are perpetually constrained by those sense-spheres. The malady of these people is that they recognize only that their seeing, hearing, sensing, and knowing are the void and quiescent awareness. They sit at the gate of brilliant luster and do not care about anything else.²³⁹ On the other hand, neophytes nowadays, by disregarding the seeing, hearing, sensing, and knowing they use everyday, are never able to set out on the road of practical training. Furthermore, as they are not profoundly aware that this mind-essence is ineffable, they are never able to avoid being sent astray by their seeing, hearing, sensing, and knowing.²⁴⁰ How can they talk about the technique of extinguishing [dualistic thoughts] precisely at the point where they arise? You must consider this deeply and carefully; do not hoodwink yourself.

RADICAL REJECTION AND RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

This mind-essence, which is the ineffable object of awakening, is the nature of all dharmas; it subsumes

all wonders and transcends words and speech. Since it transcends words and speech, it incorporates the approach of sudden realization in which the mind is forgotten. Since it subsumes all wonders, it includes the aspect that supports the flourishing of attribute and function.

Therefore, this mind-nature operates in two different modes: radical rejection (*chŏn'gan/quanjian* 全揀) and radical acceptance (*chŏnsu/quanshou* 全收). Those of you who are cultivating the mind should consider [these two modes] carefully. [In his *Chan Preface*,] Sŏn Master Mi said,

The nature of the one true mind, with regard to all tainted and pure dharmas, treats them with radical rejection and radical acceptance.

“Radical rejection” means just to expose the essence by directly pointing out that the numinous awareness is in fact the nature of the mind and that everything else is spurious. Consequently, [the *Avataṃsakasūtra*] says, “[The profound realm of the tathāgatas] is not something that can be apprehended by consciousness, / It is also not a mental object,”²⁴¹ and so forth; it also is neither nature nor characteristics, [759b] neither buddha nor sentient being. It leaves far behind the tetralemma [*catuṣkoṭi*; viz., is, is not, both is and is not, neither is nor is not] and is free from the hundred negations (*paekpi/baifei* 百非).

“Radical acceptance” means that are none of the tainted and pure dharmas that are not the mind. Because the mind has become deluded, it spuriously gives rise to deluded actions, which ultimately lead to the four modes of birth [*yoni*, viz., oviparous, viviparous, moisture-born, and metamorphic] within the six rebirth destinies in this worldly realm with all its

different types of filth. Because the mind awakens, functioning is generated from its essence and there are none of [those functions, from] the four boundless states (*apramāṇa*), the six perfections (*pāramitā*), up to the four analytical knowledges (*pratisaṃvid*), the ten powers (*bala*), the sublime body, and the pure [buddha-]realm that are not made manifest.

Since it is this mind that manifests all dharmas, each and every one of those dharmas is in fact the true mind. This is like the events appearing in a previous night's dream—each and every one of those events are that person's; or like utensils made of gold—each and every one of those utensils is solid gold; or like the images reflected in a mirror—each and every one of those images is the mirror itself. (Dreams are a simile for deluded thoughts and karmic retribution; utensils are a simile for practice; images are a simile for responsive transformations). Therefore, the *Avataṃsakasūtra* says, “You should know that all dharmas are the own-nature of the mind; the perfection of the wisdom-body does not come from any other awakening.”²⁴² The *Awakening of Faith* says, “The three realms of existence are chimeric and counterfeit; they are just a construct of the mind. Apart from the mind there are no six sense-spheres. For this reason, all dharmas are like the images in a mirror.”²⁴³ The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* says, “Quiescent-extinction [nirvāṇa] is called the one mind; one mind is called the tathāgatagarbha. [This one mind] has the potentiality to create all the rebirth destinies, to perform wholesome and unwholesome actions, and to receive suffering and joy, because it is the cause of everything.”²⁴⁴ Therefore, we know there is nothing that is not mind....²⁴⁵

By directly exposing the essence of the true mind, one then and there can reject everything and accept everything. Since [the mind] is free to operate in either acceptance or rejection modes, and since both its nature and its characteristics are unimpeded, it

then will never again abide in any dharma. This alone is called the definitive teaching (*nītārtha*).

Sudden Awakening Balances These Two Modes

It should now be clear that, if you do not have a sudden awakening to the nature of the one true mind and in [that benighted state] you just reject everything, then you will succumb to an understanding derived from ineffability. But if you just accept everything, then you will succumb to an understanding derived from consummate interfusion (*wōnyung/yuanrong* 圓融). In both cases, you will fall into intellectual understanding, which will make it difficult to reach the access to awakening. If you want acceptance and rejection to function freely [759c] and nature and characteristics to be unimpeded, you must have a sudden awakening to the one mind. If you want a sudden awakening, it is absolutely imperative not to succumb to intellectual understanding.

For this reason, if you end up succumbing [to intellectual understanding], then even though both your acceptance and rejection may be imperfect, at the very moment that you reach the gateway to awakening and bring an end to all expedient stratagems, you will be extremely close to radical rejection alone. Exposing the essence by pointing

directly to the numinous awareness is the role of radical rejection. Consequently, we should know that the disciplined approach to awakening of the eminent masters of our school also considers the abandonment of numinous awareness to be the greatest of wonders.^{[246](#)}

If we can free ourselves from intellectual understanding and thereby awaken suddenly to the one mind, we then will know that the mind contains all wonders and transcends all words and speech, and our application of radical acceptance and radical rejection will be free and unimpeded. Therefore, we know that the mind of numinous awareness, which is the object of awakening, is the unadulterated and authentic nature that is as vast as the sea. Although it cannot be spoken of, it can adapt itself to conditions and manifest the four modes of birth, the six rebirth destinies, a sublime body, a pure [buddha] land, and all other kinds of tainted and pure dharmas; this is therefore called conditioned origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). But since this origination is actually unoriginated, it is called the inconceivable origination. Hence, [just above, Zongmi] says that “each and every one of those dharmas is in fact the true mind.... Each and every one of those images is the mirror itself.” In this wise, then, after awakening to the mind, we establish [the salutary] and clear

away [the unsalutary]; so, what obstruction can there be?

Their Relation to Conditioned Origination and Nature Origination

Dharma Master Ŭisang's 義湘 / 相 (625–702) *Gāthā* [*Chart of the One-Vehicle Dharmadhātu of Hwaŏm (Hwaŏm ilsŭng pŏpkye to)*] says,

The dharma-nature is perfectly interfused and free from any sign of duality.

All dharmas are unmoving and originally quiescent.

Nameless, signless, it eradicates everything;

It is what the realization-wisdom knows, nothing else.

The true nature is extremely deep and exceedingly sublime.

By not guarding any nature of its own, it can freely adapt according to conditions.

In one is everything, in many is one.

One is precisely everything, many are precisely one....[247](#)

This [*Gāthā*] explains, first, that the true nature is distinct from names and free of signs and, next, that the conditioned origination of the true nature is unimpeded. Therefore, [these two propositions] correspond respectively to the denotations of radical rejection and radical acceptance as found in the consummate teachings. On the other hand, when we speak just of conditioned origination, it does not involve radical acceptance; but since conditioned origination [here] actually means nature origination

(*sōnggi/xingqi* 性起), it is then referred to as [760a] radical acceptance. This principle may be quite obvious, but it is difficult to fully comprehend. Therefore, you should know that the ultimate principle of radical acceptance also involves knowledge derived from the realization-wisdom. Nevertheless, we generally say that mind-only (*cittamātra*) or consciousness-only (*vijñaptimātra*) belongs to the mode of radical acceptance.^{[248](#)}

Sōn Master [Yan]Shou said,

The doctrine of conditioned origination is not covered in the sudden teaching. Since conditioned origination deals with the characteristics of mundane phenomena, it does not enable the manifestation of principles involving the absolute. This is because the extinction of characteristics is what reveals the nature of reality. If [the sudden teaching] were to refer to conditioned origination, it would be like diseased eyes that see flowers in the sky.^{[249](#)} The [conditioned] origination of the *dharmadhātu* in the consummate teachings perforce involves the mutual interpenetration between the one and the many, for then the power of existence and the power of nonexistence will both be operative. When one and many are unimpeded and their mutual interpenetration is simultaneous, this is then called accessing great conditioned origination.^{[250](#)}

Sōn Is Not the Sudden Teaching of Kyo

According to this explanation, the sudden teaching does not discuss conditioned origination and so is deficient in regard to radical acceptance. And since it is lacking in radical acceptance, it cannot perfect

radical rejection. Why is this? Since the sudden teaching eradicates signs and extinguishes mental states, it perforce clings to the true nature. Consequently, how can it perfect radical rejection? The faculty of radical rejection as it is interpreted in the Sŏn school merely exposes the essence and points directly to the mind-nature that is originally ever quiescent and free from all relativity. If there is no clinging or rejection, this is then a radical rejection that remains centered in radical acceptance. This is not the same as the sudden teaching, which is utterly lacking in radical acceptance. Although the sudden teaching may therefore seem to employ radical rejection, its radical rejection remains forever imperfect. Those who do not understand this idea provoke needless contention between Sŏn and Kyo and between themselves and others. But there is nothing strange about this, for we are living in a contentious age.^{[251](#)}

Sŏn Is Not the Consummate Teachings

Sŏn Master Mi said, “The teachings of the Buddha serve as a support for tens of thousands of generations; hence, its principles must be laid out in great detail. The admonitions of the patriarchs involve an immediate crossing-over to liberation; their intent is to produce recondite discernment.”^{[252](#)}

Consequently, we know that the formulations and principles of Sŏn and Kyo are different in their own ways. How so? What the Buddhist teachings lay out in great detail is the unimpeded interfusion of all phenomena in the doctrine of the conditioned origination [of the *dharmadhātu*]. Since it involves a whole range of ingenious positions, it is close to radical acceptance but far from radical rejection. The recondite discernment produced by the patriarch's admonitions refers to instructions given in accordance with [a student's] capacity, the words of which eradicate all meaning, the meaning of which eradicates all words. When meaning and words are both sent running, students will no longer get stuck in their traces; [760b] hence, these instructions are close to radical rejection but far from radical acceptance. To be close to radical rejection involves an immediate crossing-over to liberation. To be close to the faculty of radical acceptance implies serving as the support for tens of thousands of generations.^{[253](#)}

Vindicating the Sŏn Approach

Although both schools [Sŏn and Kyo] employ these two modes, they each have their own emphases, so neither can be criticized. [The instructions of the Sŏn patriarchs] involve an immediate crossing-over to liberation; they are a concise approach. Therefore,

although [Sŏn] cites the teachings, it does so to shed light on the source; it is not pure doctrine. Those who do not understand the implications of this try to use the profound and superficial tenets of Kyo to evaluate the basic premise of Sŏn and end up indulging in baseless slander. Great is their mistake! If weighty people will lay down the tenets of Kyo, simply take up “the one-thought present right now” in their own minds,^{[254](#)} and in this wise probe carefully the basic premise of Sŏn, then they will have some attainment. A person of faith should consider these words closely.

THE INSTANTANEOUS ATTAINMENT OF BUDDHAHOOD

The One Thought That Transcends All Dualities

Nowadays, some people are unable to discern that all causes and effects, whether mundane or supramundane, wholesome or unwholesome, originate from this one thought. In their daily life they exercise only light supervision over their minds and do not understand the role of careful investigation. For this reason, although there are times when they may unexpectedly get the meaning while reading sūtras or Sŏn gāthās, it is but momentary good fortune. Later they will lay this understanding aside lightly and fail to develop their discernment.

Moreover, they will not appreciate that this dharma is something that is difficult to meet even in ten thousand kalpas. As they keep chasing after defiled conditions, thought after thought will flow on continuously. What hope is there that they will ever have an opportunity to complete their work?

Sŏn Master Mi issued a crucial caution when he said, “People who are training on the path treat cause lightly and effect importantly. I hope that those of you on the path will have deep faith in your own minds.”²⁵⁵ If we scrutinize these words, how can we not but feel despondent? Let me elaborate on this point.

The discriminative thought processes of ordinary people nowadays derive from the conditioned origination of the true nature. Since that nature is originally pristine, if we empty ourselves of passion and simply trace back the effulgence [of the mind], then in only a single thought [we can return to that original state of purity] without wasting a lot of effort. Even though the power of prajñā might then be strong, the power of ignorance still remains so great that it is inconceivable. Consequently, [760c] afterward it is difficult to nurture [our achievement] constantly and not forget to maintain it. Later, when our practice of looking back on the radiance [of the mind] is progressing satisfactorily and our faculty of faith is firm, if we then persist ardently over a long

period of time, how could we not succeed in our practice? But if we disregard the importance of this one thought and seek elsewhere for the superpowers and the power of the path that both derive from seeing the nature, then how will we ever gain repose?

Denotation of the “One Thought That Is Present Right Now”

This “one thought that is present right now” in all people is in fact the one dharma; consequently, [the *Awakening of Faith*] says that “The word ‘dharma’ means the mind of the sentient being.”^{[256](#)} This mind is the source of its two aspects of true suchness and production and cessation and of the three greatneses [of essence, characteristics, and function].^{[257](#)} For this reason, the essential nature of the mind plunges to the depths and embraces the vastness. While utterly subsuming the myriads of living things, it is both unmoving and adaptive. Hence it is essence and function, person and dharma, spurious and authentic, phenomenon and principle. Its aspects manifest in a myriad of different ways, but it remains always placid and ever quiescent, for it eradicates all plurality. For this reason, it is neither nature nor characteristic, neither principle nor phenomenon, neither buddha nor sentient being, and

so forth. The autonomy and unimpededness of radical acceptance and radical rejection, as mentioned before, is what is meant here.

Since the mind is in this wise inconceivable, eminent masters pointed directly to “the one thought that is present right now” in all people and advocated “seeing the nature and achieving buddhahood.” When we speak of the “nature” in this context, it means the fundamental dharma-nature of the one mind, not nature in the binary of nature and characteristics. Consequently, the *Epistle on the Essentials of the Mind (Xinyao jian)* by the chief of the Hwaŏm commentators [Chengguan] says,

The great path originates in the mind,
The mind-dharma originates in nonabiding.
In the essence of the nonabiding mind,
Numinous awareness is never dark.
Nature and characteristics are quiescent,
And subsume all meritorious functions.^{[258](#)}

My hope is that those today who are suspicious of the Sŏn dharma will examine this excellent testimony and, resolving their doubts, will cultivate their minds.

Furthermore, the Great Master Yongjia Zhenjue said, “‘One thought’ means the thought of the numinous awareness of right enlightenment.”^{[259](#)} A poem by the Eminence [Bao]Zhi *upadhyāya* says,

The great path clearly is right before your eyes,
But deluded dullards don’t recognize it.

The mind of one thought is it,
Why search for it elsewhere?²⁶⁰

“Just pointing to this one thought” [761a] is an abbreviation used in Sōn gāthās to indicate the immediate crossing-over to liberation. Hence we know that, although [this mind of one thought] was said to be the mind of sentient beings, it is obviously not limited to one attribute of the two aspects or the three greatneses [viz., the “production-and-cessation” aspect of the one mind and “characteristics” in the three greatneses]. Therefore, it is not the same as the principle in the inferior [Kyo version of the sudden] teaching that holds out the hope of achieving buddhahood in one thought. Deluded people see the similarity in these statements and multiply their discriminations needlessly; they are thus unable to gain any profound understanding regarding this sublime directive.²⁶¹

Sōn Master [Yan]Shou, quoting the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, said, “The three realms of existence contain no discrete dharmas; they are just a construct of the one mind.”²⁶² Now, this means that they are only a construct of one thought that is ignorant and that clings to characteristics. This is the etiology of the three realms of existence’s ailment of birth and death. If we acknowledge our ignorance, do not give rise to [craving, *tṛṣṇā*], clinging (*upādāna*),

and becoming (*bhava*), and finish with our old [karma] and make none anew, this will be the remedy for curing that ailment.²⁶³ For this reason, we should know that the mind of one thought, the etiology of the ailment, is also the fount of the path.

The Instantaneous Achievement of Buddhahood

Grasping at reality is a mistake; understanding voidness is faultless. Awakening takes place in a *kṣaṇa*; past and future then vanish. For this reason we should know that when our discernment becomes subtle and sublime, the ultimate principle will be exceedingly close. Although we might be sentient beings of the degenerate age, if the measure of our mind is wide and spacious, we will be able to empty our hearts of passion, look into ourselves, and have faith that not even one thought of conditioned origination is produced. Even if we do not yet have personal realization, [that state of mind] will serve as the foundation for accessing the path. The *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra* says, “If, during the degenerate age, sentient beings’ minds do not give rise to anything unreal, the buddhas would say that such persons are bodhisattvas who have appeared in the world.”²⁶⁴ In this degenerate age, if there were no way to access [the path] through faith and yet the Buddha made such a statement, he

would be lying. But the buddhas “are speakers of truth, speakers of what is real”;²⁶⁵ thus how can we allow ourselves to backslide and not investigate? As it says in [Yanshou’s] *Mirror of the Source Record*,²⁶⁶

Question: The seeds and the manifest actions of sentient beings’ actions and fruitions have been permeating [their minds] over a number of kalpas; they are like glue or lacquer. How is it, then, that if we only comprehend the one mind, they will suddenly be eradicated and buddhahood achieved?

Answer: If you grasp at mind and objects as being real and at person and dharmas as being nonvoid, you will practice in vain for a myriad of kalpas without ever realizing path-fruition (*mārgaphala*). [761b] But if you suddenly recognize that there is no self (*anātman*) and penetrate deeply to the vacuity of material things, subject and object will both vanish. What then will remain to be realized? It is as if a particle of dust were thrown into a howling wind or a dinghy were to be swept along by a swift current. My only fear is that you will not believe in the one mind and will just create difficulties for yourselves. If you access the mirror of the source (the one mind is the source that reflects all dharmas like a mirror), where can you go where this [realization] would not follow? It is like the bodhisattva Pradhānaśūra, who transgressed the precept on sexual misconduct (*kāmamithyācāra*) but still awakened to nonproduction (*anutpāda*), or Xing bhikṣuṇī, who cultivated no-mind and also realized path-fruition. If even they could achieve enlightenment, how much more possible is full realization for those who have faith and understanding in the dharma of the one [buddha-]vehicle and who clearly comprehend their own minds?²⁶⁷

Someone with a doubt asked, “Why is there no need to eradicate the afflictions?”

In explanation, I responded, “You only need to observe carefully that killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying all

originate from the one mind. If they are quieted just as they arise, then what further eradication is necessary? Therefore, if you just comprehend the one mind, then naturally the myriads of sense-objects will become like a conjurer's trick. Why is this? All dharmas are conjured up by the mind; but, since the mind is formless, what characteristics could those dharmas have?"

According to the implications of the [*Mirror of the Source*] *Record's* explanation of eradicating delusion [cf. *kleśaprahāṇa*]*—an explanation given from the dual standpoints of both nature and characteristics—this is the authentic eradication that is free from eradication, which eradicates while eradicating nothing.*²⁶⁸

Nowadays Sōn adepts just say that originally there are no afflictions and that inherently [those afflictions] are bodhi; but if they do not yet have the clarity that is produced by sudden awakening, [this principle] will still be difficult to comprehend when they are faced with killing, theft, sexual misconduct, or lying. The *Strategy of the Avataṃsakasūtra* [*Da huayan jing luece*] says,

Perturbations fundamentally have no source; they arise abruptly because of delusion about the truth. If one is deluded but does not turn away from it, confusion will be boundless. It is like wisps of clouds covering the sky: though they have come from nowhere, they fill the sky in an instant and the six directions²⁶⁹ are darkened. But should a strong wind all of a sudden start to blow, the clouds scatter all at once. Then not a trace of them remains for thousands of leagues and the myriads of images all stand out clearly. In the same manner,

when the wind of expedients starts to blow and exposes the fact that the perturbations are without foundation, then the voidness of the nature appears and all meritorious qualities are originally complete. The eighty[-four] thousand defilements are all pāramitās; the delusory obstacles as numerous as the sands of the Ganges are all entirely suchness.[270](#)

By basing ourselves on this explanation, we will be able to perceive clearly. Now, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying [761c] may all arise from delusion, but if through expedient wisdom one “exposes the fact that the perturbations are without foundation [and] the voidness of the nature appears,” then, as was said, from where would killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and so forth arise? But rather than just saying that one “exposes the fact that the perturbations are without foundation,” it is better to say “you merely must observe carefully that killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying all originate from the one mind. You should only observe that killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying all arise from the one mind.... They are quieted just as they arise.” This is a joint elucidation of nature and characteristics. One who does not direct one’s mind toward the wisdom that derives from contemplation will not understand this principle.

Buddhahood Has Already Been Achieved

The concluding stanza of [Ŭisang's] *Chart of the [Avataṃsaka's] One-Vehicle Dharmadhātu* ([Hwaŏm] *ilsŭng pŏpkye to*) says,

Sitting upright on the seat of the middle way, at the point of peak
experience (*bhūtakṛti*),
Unmoving since of old, he is called “buddha.” ...

Question: Bound sentient beings have yet to eradicate the afflictions or to accomplish both merit and wisdom. What is the rationale for calling this a buddhahood that has been achieved since of old?

Answer: If the afflictions are not yet eradicated, it cannot be referred to as achieving buddhahood; but once the afflictions are eradicated and merit and wisdom are brought to perfection, from that point on it is called the buddhahood that has been achieved since of old.

Question: What is meant by eradicating the perturbations?

Answer: As the *Exposition [of the Ten Bhūmis Sūtra]* (*Daśabhūmividyākhyāna*) explains, “They do not exist in past, present, or future but are operative in past, present, and future.”²⁷¹

Question: How do you eradicate them?

Answer: Like space: that is how you should eradicate them. As long as you have not yet eradicated anything, it is not called eradication. But once this eradication is completed, it is called the eradication that has been finished since of old. It is like awakening from a dream: sleeping and waking are then not the same. Hence, although we make reference to achievement and nonachievement, eradication and noneradication, the fact is that the real mark (*silsang/shixiang* 實相, *tattvasya*

lakṣaṇam) of all dharmas is neither augmented nor diminished and is originally unmoving.²⁷²

Where this master says, “the afflictions are eradicated and vanish, and merit and wisdom are brought to perfection,” he is referring to the fact that the activation of the *bodhicitta* at the first level of the ten abidings is what is meant by the achievement of buddhahood from the standpoint of the consummate interfusion that subsumes the five stages [of the bodhisattva path in the initial aspiration for enlightenment]. This is possible because if one affliction is eradicated, all are eradicated; and if a portion of merit and wisdom is achieved, all are achieved. “From that point on” [762a] means that in an approach involving a progressive [soteriological] process (*haengp’o mun/xingbu men* 行布門),²⁷³ one can look forward to the ultimate fruition [of buddhahood]. Nevertheless, the consummate teachings explain that, since nature and characteristics are unimpeded, consummate interfusion does not impede soteriological development and soteriological development does not impede consummate interfusion; one does not draw on the perceptions of the affective consciousnesses to construct an understanding of differences in the time factor.²⁷⁴ “They do not exist in past, present, or future” means that the object—the perturbations that are illuminated—is originally void,

and the subject—the wisdom that illuminates—is also quiescent. When one abandons the nature of being a subject or an object, nothing is ascertainable because all signs of the three time periods are eliminated. Hence, one must initially have faith and understanding that accords with the nature, for then and only then can one practice.

“But [they] are operative in past, present, and future” means that if one makes use of expedients that are ultimately unascertainable and investigates accordingly, this wisdom operates throughout past, present, and future. Nevertheless, because this expedient wisdom is completely and utterly unascertainable, while active it is inactive, and while inactive it is active. Hence, [Ŭisang] said, “Like space: that is how you should eradicate them.” Note the *Mirror of the Source*’s statement: “You merely must observe carefully that killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying all originate from the one mind. If they are quieted just as they arise, then what further eradication is necessary?” [*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Instantaneous Achievement of Buddhahood.”] This is exactly what is meant here.

Authentic Cultivation Achieves Nothing Yet Achieves Everything

Ordinary students are not aware that authentic cultivation and authentic eradication as understood in the school of the nature are like space: both are unascertainable. Due to their own affective perceptions, they mistakenly assume that there really is an agent and object of eradication, in the same way that light and darkness are in contradistinction to one another. They argue in vain and do not look back on their minds. Hence, when will they ever be able to practice correctly the authentic eradication in which the afflictions are [perceived to be] originally void? If you understand the implication of this, you should be able to comprehend the meaning of Dharma Master [Ūi]Sang's notions that buddhahood has been achieved since of old and eradication has been accomplished since of old. At that point, you also will be able to harmonize readily with the real mark of all dharmas without falling into the wrong view that dharmas can either be augmented or diminished.

The *Doctrinal Essentials of Huayan* (*Huayan zongyao*) says, "Concerning this tenet of accessing the *dharmadhātu*, because there is nothing accessed, there is nothing that is not accessed. As for cultivating the boundless qualities gained through practice, because there is nothing gained, there is nothing that is not gained."²⁷⁵ This is what is meant.

The Eminence Zhi[Gong] *upadhyāya's Gāthā in Praise of the Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng zan*) says,

Śrāvakas eradicate perturbations thought after thought,
But the thought that performs this eradication is a brigand.
If brigand after brigand is trying to chase the other away, [762b]
When will they comprehend that originally speech is silence?
Not understanding the all-inclusiveness of the buddhadharma,
They waste their efforts in following lines of text and counting
drops of ink....

The dharma-nature is originally ever quiescent,
It is untrammelled (*tangdang/dangdang* 蕩蕩) and without
borders.
But if you settle the mind in the interstice between grasping or
rejecting,
You will constantly be alternating between the two.

If you sit in meditation wearing a serious expression, trying to
access dhyāna,
You absorb sensory objects and settle the mind's thoughts and
imagination,
But this is the cultivation of a marionette, [276](#)
When will you ever arrive at the other shore [of nirvāṇa]?

All dharmas are originally void and free from attachment.
Ultimately they are like floating clouds that billow and disperse.
If you suddenly awaken to the original nature's inherent
voidness,
It will be as if you had sweated out a fever.

Do not speak of this in front of dullards,
Or else I will beat you until your body is scattered like stars. [277](#)

The Afflictions Are Bodhi

State Preceptor [Nanyang Hui]Zhong said, “The
eradication of afflictions is emblematic of the two

vehicles [of disciples (śrāvaka) and solitary buddhas (pratyekabuddha)]; the nonproduction of afflictions is emblematic of great nirvāṇa.”²⁷⁸ The implication of this passage is not that bodhi is gained by eradicating the afflictions; it more correctly means that one comes to the realization that the afflictions are bodhi. This in fact is what we mean by authentic cultivation and authentic eradication. As a previous venerable [*sic*; the *Humane Kings Sūtra* (*Renwang jing*)] said, “When bodhisattvas are deluded, they consider bodhi to be the afflictions. When bodhisattvas are awakened, they consider the afflictions to be bodhi.”²⁷⁹ This is exactly what is meant here. It is like the person who asked the ancient venerable [Zhiwei], “‘The teachings speak of conditioned origination from the true nature. What is this principle?’ [The master was silent. The master’s attendant stood up and] answered, ‘Oh Great Venerable! At the very moment you thought to ask this question, that was conditioned origination from the true nature.’ Hearing these words, the monk opened into a great awakening.”²⁸⁰ Consequently, we know that if those who are cultivating the mind nowadays do not contemplate deeply the fact that the conditioned origination that occurs in one thought-moment is unproduced, they then will never be able to avoid suspicious arguments regarding the eradication of the perturbations and also will not be

aware of the notion that true eradication eradicates nothing. When confronted by this type of person, it is best just to remain silent.

Now, when we say “one comes to realize that the afflictions are bodhi,” we mean that the nature of the afflictions is originally void. As it says in [Zongmi’s] *Commentary to the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*, “As for the passage [in the scripture] ‘whether salutary thoughts or unsalutary thoughts, there are none that are not liberation’: since those thoughts are originally void themselves and inherently ineffable, the confused wonder: since the afflictions are originally nonexistent, the attainment of what thing would be bodhi?”²⁸¹ [762c] This is referring to a person who embraces the verbal expression but neglects their import.

Furthermore, a previous saint said, “As they observe sentient beings, bodhisattvas give rise to three kinds of thoughts as to why they deserve compassion. First, the spurious suffering [of saṃsāra] is originally nonexistent, but [those beings] just accept it without any awareness; second, the authentic joy [of nirvāṇa] is originally existent, but they forgo it without caring; third, they alternate back and forth between these two attitudes.”²⁸² Consequently, we know that if the spurious suffering of sentient beings really existed but authentic joy really did not, then whosoever would access the path

perforce must subdue this and eradicate that. But they would be just like well diggers who dig deep into the ground but ultimately find nothing. How then could it be that, in the biographies of past and present [masters], there were incalculable numbers of people who in one thought had a consummate and sudden awakening and understanding? Hence, we know that it is simply because people are narrow-minded and their characters inferior that they mistakenly try to remove and eradicate still more and more [of the afflictions] and do not turn their thoughts back to the mind—the place where that potentiality to eradicate [the afflictions] originates.^{[283](#)}

Sōn Is a Consummate and Sudden Approach

The Great Master Yongjia Zhenjue's *Song of Enlightenment (Chengdao ge)* says,^{[284](#)}

Though the lion's roar (*simḥanāda*) is the speech of
fearlessness (*abhaya*),
We should sigh deeply for the stupid and obstinate [who refuse
to listen].
They can only comprehend that transgression of the major
precepts is an obstacle to bodhi,
And cannot see that the Tathāgata is constantly disclosing
esoteric acroamata.

There were two bhikṣus: one broke the precept on celibacy; the
other, the precept against killing.
Bu Upāli's firefly [wisdom] only tightened the knot of
wrongdoing.

The *mahāsattva* Vimalakīrti instantly removed their doubts,
Like the hot sun that melts both frost and snow....

Due to their [inferior] spiritual lineage (*gotra*) and their misguided
knowledge and understanding,
They could not fathom the Tathāgata's consummate and sudden
system.

The two-vehicle adherents are zealous but neglect the mind of
the path;

The non-Buddhists are clever but lack wisdom. [285](#)

From this passage it is clear that this approach of awakening and understanding in one moment of thought is not a gradual method that rejects the unreal and clings to the authentic. For this reason, it is called “the Tathāgata's esoteric acroamata” and “the Tathāgata's consummate and sudden system.” How then can the Hwaōm school alone be invested with the qualities of the consummate and sudden approach? From the standpoint of the principles that it describes (*abhidheya*), [Hwaōm doctrine] is not deficient in any respect concerning its consummateness. But from the standpoint of actually accessing the path, the approach of the Sōn school involves a consummate awakening to the nature and characteristics and essence and function of one's own mind.

The basic premise of consummate and sudden awakening and understanding is that there are no special expedients; [763a] all that is required is a single thought-moment of personal faith. Those

whose faith is insufficient may employ the power of various types of skillful means, but they will still end up creating difficulties for themselves. A gāthā of Sōn Master Longmen Foyan says,

Delusion means to be deluded about awakening,
Awakening means to awaken from delusion,
Delusion and awakening are the same identical essence,
Once you awaken you will know this.

In your delusion, you confuse south for north,
And presume this observation to be real,
Originally, north is south,
Awaken and you will no longer drift into deviations [viz.,
skeptical doubt].

If you delve into the conditions that create delusion,
You will never find the place whence they arise,
Suddenly awaken to the right direction,
And where will delusion go?

Delusion is just delusion,
It is you yourself who wrongly assign it value.
Through your mistaken attention to saṃsāra,
To no avail, you accept the sticky snare. [286](#)

If you penetrate through delusion and the unreal disappears,
Your joy will be immeasurable.
The slaying of the brigand ignorance,
Happens in an instant.
Within that instant,
You covertly pervade the chilicasm.

In that immediate moment of cognition,
The three time periods become a vacuous mystery.
Everything since time immemorial,
Comes down to today.

For the rest of time,
You need search no further.

The present thought is free of thoughts,
The numinous light is brilliant.
As that numinous brilliance shines ever brightly, ...
The mind's awareness is difficult to obstruct.

The numinous fount reaches clear into the deep blue sky,
Reaching all phenomena in creation (*samna/senluo* 森羅).
When the ocean-seal (*haein/hai'in* 海印) [samādhi, viz.
 sāgaramudrāsamādhi] clearly appears, [287](#)
You will pay no attention to activity or rest. [288](#)

I ask all eminent persons who are cultivating their
minds to reflect deeply on [this gāthā] and consider it
carefully.

The Role of Numinous Awareness in Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation

I will now make a humble attempt to review the
implications of the process [lit., “roots and branches”]
of initial awakening followed by subsequent
cultivation. My purpose here is principally to ensure
that neophytes will be neither self-denigrating nor
haughty and, perceiving these principles clearly for
themselves, will never again be confounded. [289](#)

The text [of this *Record*] says,

Now, the sudden awakening to the constant awareness of the
original mind is like cognizing the immutable wetness of water.
Since the mind is then no longer deluded, there is no

ignorance: it is as if the wind had suddenly stopped. After awakening, mental disturbances naturally come to a gradual halt, like waves that gradually subside. By suffusing both body and mind with *śīla*, *śamādhi*, and *prajñā*, you gradually become self-reliant until you are unhindered even in displaying magic and miracles and can universally benefit all sentient beings. This is called buddhahood. [*Excerpts*, chap. 2, “An Analogy for Gradual Cultivation”]

If one contemplates the efficacy and benefit of this method [of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation], it is vast and brilliant, readily understandable, sensible, and permitting of easy comprehension. It is the best mirror on the mind for people today who, by relying on these verbal instructions, will have the capacity to access the path through faith. [763b]

Question: Nowadays people cultivating the mind presume that the void and quiescent numinous awareness to which they have awakened is the mind that has been transmitted successively from the Buddha down through the patriarchs. But those who are not gifted cannot help but be skeptical and bewildered. If you have evidence that would corroborate this, please give us some examples so that we may examine them and resolve our remaining doubts.

Answer: Although there is much corroborating evidence, there are special cases where it is clear in every detail and where you can see it distinctly. Now,

as it is said in the *Preface to Comprehensive Expressions of the Fount of Chan Collection*,

It is only because [people in] this region [China] were deluded about the mind and clung to the words of the texts, presuming that those terms were the essence [of the buddhadharma], that Bodhidharma used skillful stratagems that rejected the written word in favor of transmitting the mind. He disclosed its name (mind is its name) but silently pointed to its essence (awareness is its essence). Through the metaphor of “wall contemplation” (*pyōkkwan/piguan* 壁觀), he prompted [his student Huike] to eliminate all remaining conditioning. Once [Huike] had brought all conditioning to an end, [Bodhidharma] asked him, “Have you completely eradicated it yet, or not?”

[Huike] answered, “Although I have brought all conditioning to an end, nothing was eradicated, either.”

“How will you prove your statement that nothing was eradicated?”

“I myself am clearly aware of it for myself, but words cannot express it.”

The master then certified this and said, “This alone is the pristine mind of the self-nature. Harbor no further doubts about it.”

If [Huike’s] answer had not tallied [with truth], Bodhidharma would have pointed out his mistake to him and had him investigate further. Finally, he did not mention the word “awareness” to Huike initially, but simply waited for him to awaken to it for himself so that he would be able to verify the truth through his own personal realization of that essence. Subsequently, [Bodhidharma] certified it and resolved all of his remaining doubts. This is what is called “the silent transmission of the mind-seal.” “Silent” just means to keep silent about the word “awareness”; it does not mean that he did not speak at all. Each of the successive transmissions through the six generations [of Chinese Sōn patriarchs] was of this type.

By Heze’s time, the other schools [of Sōn] were each contending with the other, so that even if one wished to seek

that esoteric conformity [with the silent transmission], the opportunity never presented itself. Furthermore, he considered [Bodhi]Dharma's "hanging thread" (*hyōnsa/xuansi* 懸絲) prediction: Dharma said, "After the sixth generation, the fate of my dharma will be like a hanging thread." Fearing that the core directive of the [Sōn] school might be utterly lost, [Heze] accordingly said, "This one word 'awareness' is the gateway to all wonders," [763c] confident that his students would awaken to this either profoundly or superficially; he thus made every effort to ensure that the school's teachings would not be eradicated. The fate of the great dharma of this kingdom had also reached the point where there was a certain type of religious and laity who had heard a lot about [this silent transmission], so [Heze] had to respond in this manner.

Because other people did not yet know about the silent transmission, [Heze] used the *kāṣāya* [dyed] robe to help them have faith. This visible [symbol of] transmission was readily recognizable to the students; he only used words and explanations to resolve their doubts. [290](#)

Here, Master Mi indicates that the one word "awareness" is the fount of both the exoteric and the esoteric [transmissions] from generation to generation of the buddhas and patriarchs. He was confident that those who were cultivating the mind, in accordance with their own capacity and the profundity or superficiality of their awakening with regard to this one word "awareness," would work to ensure that the teachings of the school would not be eradicated but would continue to shine like a gleaming mirror. How can one entertain any doubts about this?

Question: According to the implication of this passage, during the orthodox transmission between all the generations of patriarchs and teachers, no one explained the word "awareness" to others initially. Instead, they waited for them to awaken to it for

themselves so that they would be able to verify its truth through their own realization of the essence; afterward, they certified it. Today, we see that people who are cultivating the mind initially employ this term “numinous awareness” to develop an understanding of distinctions and to contemplate their own mind. This is just the approach of the exoteric transmission that uses words and speech to resolve doubts; it does not entail a personal realization of the essence. How can we say that such people have awakened to the mind?

Answer: Didn't I answer this previously? Recall this: “Those who make no serious effort to trace back the mind's radiance but simply nod their heads and say, ‘That which right now is clear and capable of awareness is your buddha-mind’—such people have certainly not grasped the idea.”^{[291](#)} How can you assume that the reflections you see right before your eyes are the void and quiescent numinous awareness? Can someone who is unable to distinguish between the authentic and the spurious be a person who has awakened to the mind? You should know that my reference to “a person who has awakened to the mind,” is not just intended to resolve doubts using words and speech. Rather, it is a statement that will directly encourage students to develop the efficacy of tracing back the radiance [of

the mind] by drawing on the description of the void and quiescent numinous awareness; [764a] and due to the efficacy of looking back on that radiance, they will gain the ineffable essence of mind.

THE SHORTCUT APPROACH OF *KANHWA* INVESTIGATION

The approach to dharma I have discussed so far has been designed for students who can generate the access to the understanding-awakening while relying on words;^{[292](#)} it has offered a detailed assessment of the two aspects of dharma—adaptability and immutability—and the two approaches concerning person—sudden awakening and gradual cultivation. Through these two aspects [of dharma], they will be able to understand that the most crucial points of all the sūtras and śāstras in the entire canon are the nature and characteristics of one's own mind. Through these two approaches [concerning person], they will see that the tracks followed by all the sages and saints are the beginning and end of their own practice. This sort of detailed assessment of the fundamental and ancillary aspects [of the process of practice] will obviously help people free themselves from delusion, transition from the provisional toward the real, and realize bodhi quickly.

However, if students develop understanding based solely on words and are unaware of the road

they should follow, then, even though they may investigate the whole day long, they will only end up being bound by intellectual understanding and will never have a moment to stop and rest (*hyuhö̃l/xiuxie* 休歇). Consequently, for the sake of those patch-robed monks in the Sŏn lineage today who might be able to access [the path] by leaving words behind and might suddenly be able to bring an end to their intellectual understanding of these matters, I will briefly quote some of the words of the patriarchs and spiritual mentors, even though these were not esteemed by Master Mi. Through these shortcut expedients (*kyŏngjŏl pangpy'ŏn/jingjie fangbian* 徑截方便), which they use to inspire progress in their students, they prompt accomplished meditators who are at the pinnacle of their practice (*ch'amsŏn chunnyu/canchan junliu* 參禪峻流) to know the one living road that leads to salvation.

The Dead Word of Numinous Awareness vs. the Live Word of the Hwadu

Sŏn Master Dahui said,

Guifeng called it “numinous awareness.” Heze said in regard to it, “The one word ‘awareness’ is the gateway to all wonders.” Huanglong Sixin Sou said that “the one word ‘awareness’ is the gateway to all calamities.” It is easy to get what Guifeng and Heze meant, but hard to get Sixin’s intent. Right here, you must be endowed with eyes that transcend this world. You

cannot explain it to anyone; you cannot transmit it to anyone. For this reason, Yunmen said, “The great majority of statements are like brandishing a sword before a doorway. But beneath that one word [the live word of the *hwadu*] there will certainly be a road that leads to salvation. If this were not the case, you would die beneath that word.”²⁹³

Understanding Derived from the Dead Word [764b]

The Sixth Patriarch addressed the congregation:

“There is one thing that supports the heavens above and the earth below. It exists during all activities, but can’t be grasped during those activities. All of you! What do you call it?”

Shenhui came forward from the congregation and said, “It is the original fount of all the buddhas. It is Shenhui’s buddha-nature.”

The patriarch said, “Even when I call it ‘one thing,’ that still isn’t correct. How dare you call it ‘original fount’ or ‘buddha-nature’? From here on, even though you cover your head with thatch, you’ll only be a lackey of intellectual understanding.”²⁹⁴

Awakening through the Live Word

In the *Records of Master Fazhen Shouyi*, it says,

When Master Huairang came to consult the Sixth Patriarch, the patriarch asked, “Where have you come from?”

Huairang answered, “I came from State Preceptor Songshan An’s place.”

The patriarch asked, “What is this thing and in what manner did it come?”

Huairang was at a loss. Only after acting as the patriarch’s attendant for eight years did he understand [the patriarch’s]

previous statement. He then told the patriarch, “I have finally gotten what you meant when I first came here and the *upadhyāya* received me with, ‘What is this thing and in what manner did it come?’”

The patriarch inquired, “What have you understood?”

“If you allude to it as ‘one thing’ you miss the mark.”

“Have you been able to cultivate and realize it, or not?”

“Though cultivation and realization are not absent, they can never be sullied.”

“What can never be sullied is exactly the thought safeguarded by all the buddhas. I am like this and so are you.”²⁹⁵

Pointing Directly to the Human Mind

Sōn Master Dahui said,

When Master Yueshan first consulted Shitou, he made this request: “I’ve done some study of the three vehicles (*triyāna*) and the twelve divisions of the scriptural teachings (*dvādaśāṅgapravacana*), but I’ve heard that in the South they point directly to the human mind in order to see the nature and achieve buddhahood. Since I still haven’t understood what this means, I beg the master to instruct me.”

Shitou said, “You can’t get it this way, but you can’t get it that way, either. Whether this way or that, you’ll never be able to get it.” Yueshan didn’t understand what he meant, so Shitou said, “Go to Jiangxi and ask [764c] Great Master Mazu.”

Yueshan took his advice and went to Mazu’s place, where he asked the same question. Mazu said, “Sometimes I teach to raise the eyebrows or blink the eyes and sometimes I don’t teach to raise eyebrows or blink eyes. Sometimes it’s okay to raise the eyebrows or blink the eyes, and sometimes it’s not okay to raise the eyebrows or blink the eyes.”

As he heard these words, [Yueshan had] a great awakening; but, since he didn’t have any way of showing his

gratitude, he just lowered his head and bowed.

Mazu asked, “What principle have you perceived that makes you bow?”

Yueshan said, “When I was at Shitou’s place, I was like a mosquito alighting on an iron ox (*munjasang ch’ōru/wenzishang tieniu* 蚊子上鐵牛).”

Mazu accepted it. [296](#)

See the Moon, Not the Finger Pointing at It

Sŏn Master Dahui said,

At first, the Second Patriarch [Huikē] did not understand the skillful means used by Bodhidharma when [Bodhidharma] said, “Externally, bring all conditioning to rest; internally, keep the mind free from panting.” [297](#) In this manner, [Bodhidharma] tried to explain mind, nature, path, and principle. But [Huikē] quoted the words of texts and thereby sought the seal of approval (*in’ga/yinke* 印可). For this reason, Bodhidharma rejected each and every one [of Huikē’s statements]; finally, when there was no place left [for Huikē] to use his mind, he was able to take a step back [and see the mind directly. Thus,] words that made the logical mind like a wall were not Bodhidharma’s real dharma. Unexpectedly, in front of that wall, all conditioning was suddenly brought to rest; immediately Huikē saw the moon and forgot all about the finger pointing at it. He then said, “It is clear and constantly aware; words cannot describe it.” This statement was also just a temporary bit of information to show Bodhidharma that he had understood; it also was not the real dharma of the Second Patriarch. [298](#)

Generating the Sense of Doubt

Dahui said further,

When you are reading the teachings of the sūtras or the stories surrounding the access to the path of ancient venerables and you do not understand them clearly, your mind will become puzzled, frustrated, and insipid (*molchami/moziwei* 沒滋味), just as if you were gnawing on an iron rod. When this occurs you should put forth all your energy. [765a] First, don't let it go, for that is where the intellect cannot operate and thought cannot reach; it is the road through which discrimination is eradicated and theorizing ended. It's commonplace that we can speak about principles or distinguish points in practice, but these are all ancillary aspects of the affective consciousnesses. You have constantly been mistaking a thief for your own son.²⁹⁹ You can't be unaware of this!³⁰⁰

Flawed Approaches to Sōn Practice

Dahui continued,

Nowadays there is a certain type of shaven-pate heretic whose own eyes are dull. They just teach people to stop and rest like a hedgehog playing dead.³⁰¹ But even if you were stopping and resting in this manner until a thousand buddhas appeared in the world, you still wouldn't be able to stop and rest and you would just end up stupefying your minds as well.

They also teach people just to give their full attention to forgetting passion and maintaining silent illumination. Illuminating here, illuminating there, maintaining here, maintaining there, they end up adding to their stupidity, with no end in sight. They sabotage the expedients of the patriarchs and mislead others.

Moreover, they teach people not to pay any attention to what is going on around them and just keep on putting things to rest in this way—for once they've put everything to rest, passionate thoughts will not arise. At such a time, they won't be lost in dull nescience but will straightaway be alert and

clear. But this style blinds a person's eyes with poison. It's not a small matter.

Even for this old gaffer [Dahui], it's not that I never teach people to sit Sŏn and work away on their practice in a quiet place. But this is like giving medicine to suit a specific ailment; it's not really a proper way to instruct people. Haven't you seen this? Master Huangbo said, "Ever since this Sŏn school of ours began to be passed down, it has never taught people to seek knowledge or understanding. It just says 'study the path' (*hakto/xuedao* 學道)." ³⁰² But actually these words were just intended to offer some guidance. In fact, the path can't be studied; if you study the path while holding onto your passions, you will end up mastering the path to delusion. The path that is without direction or position is called the Mahāyāna mind. This mind does not exist inside, outside, or in between; in reality, it has no direction or position. First, don't generate any intellectual understanding. I want only to tell you that the point where thinking occurs right now is the path; and once thinking comes to an end, your mind will have no direction or position.

The path is impeccable. It is originally nameless. [765b] It is only because worldly persons do not recognize it and stupidly remain immersed in sensuality that all the buddhas appeared in the world to fully reveal this matter. Fearing that you wouldn't understand, they conventionally gave it the name "path." But it's a mistake to generate understanding while embracing that name.

What I said before about a blind person misguiding others is like mistaking a fish-eye for a lustrous jewel: it generates understanding while embracing names. To teach people to give this their full attention generates understanding while remaining attached to their cognition of the reflections that are right before their eyes. To teach people that they must be absolutely intent on stopping and resting generates understanding derived from embracing the void-quietude of indifference: it teaches people to continue to rest until they attain an insensibility and nescience that is like that of earth, wood, tile, or rocks. At such a time, to assume that this is not

dull nescience generates understanding that mistakenly endorses the words that were expedient accounts meant to free people from their bondage.

To teach people to be discerning in all circumstances, but without teaching them about the unwholesome cognitions that are appearing right in front of them—this also generates understanding that derives from endorsing the affective consciousnesses in their skulls.

To teach people just to let go completely and allow everything to take care of itself shows a lack of concern for the appearance of mental states and the process of thinking. The arising and vanishing of thoughts may originally be devoid of any real essence, but if you cling to [thoughts] as being real, the mind that is subject to production and cessation will arise. This also refers to a person who generates understanding while assuming that embracing the spontaneity of the essence is the ultimate dharma.

All these above maladies are not issues with students who are training on the path. They all result from the erroneous instructions of blind masters. [303](#)

Investigating the Mu Hwadu

Dahui also said,

If you want to understand the principle of the shortcut, you must take up this one thought [of the *hwadu*] and suddenly smash it to smithereens; then and only then will you comprehend birth and death. This is called the access to awakening. But you absolutely must not retain any thought that waits for that breakthrough to occur. If you do retain a thought that simply waits for a breakthrough, then you will never break through for an eternity of kalpas. You need only lay down, all at once, the mind full of deluded thoughts and corrupted views (*viparyāsa*), the mind of logical discrimination, the mind that loves life and hates death, the mind of knowledge and vision,

interpretation and comprehension, and the mind that rejoices in serenity and withdraws from disturbance. Only when you have laid down everything should you examine this *hwadu*: [765c]

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does a dog have the buddha-nature, or doesn’t it?”

Zhaozhou replied, “*Mu* 無” [lit., “doesn’t have it,” viz., “no”].

This one word is the weapon that smashes all types of wrong knowledge and wrong conceptualization. [1] Don’t understand it to mean “have” or “doesn’t have.” [2] Don’t try to understand it logically. [3] Don’t ponder over it with the mental faculty (*manendriya*). [4] Don’t get fixated [and presume you’re getting hints about the meaning of the *hwadu*] where one raises the eyebrows or blinks the eyes. [5] Don’t try to come up with a calculation [of what it means] along the road of language. [6] Don’t toss it into the carapace of unconcern. [7] Don’t try to verify it at the place where you raise the *hwadu* to your attention. [8] Don’t look for evidence in the wording. [304](#)

Throughout the twelve time periods and all four deportments [*īryāpatha*: walking, standing, sitting, lying down], try always to keep this question before you and centered in your attention: “Does a dog have the buddha-nature, or doesn’t it?” He answered, “Doesn’t have it (*mu*).” Without neglecting your daily activities, try to work at your practice in this manner. [305](#)

I, Moguja, would add: This dharma discourse only delineates eight maladies. If we examine the whole of its exposition from beginning to end, we must also add these two types: [9] taking it to be the *mu* of true nonexistence; and [10] grasping at a deluded state, simply waiting for awakening. Consequently, together they amount to ten maladies.

Dahui said further,

Zhaozhou's topic [*hwa/hua* 話, viz., the *hwadu*], "a dog doesn't have the buddha-nature," must be kept raised before you regardless of whether you are happy or mad, calm or disturbed. First, don't set your mind on expecting an awakening; if you do, you are saying to yourself, "I am now deluded." If you cling to your delusion and just wait for awakening to come, then even though you pass through kalpas as numerous as dust motes, you will never get it. When you raise the *hwadu*, you just have to rouse yourself and inquire, "What does this mean?"^{[306](#)}

CONCLUSION

Although the discussion up to this point has been given in accordance with people's faculties, its import lies beyond the ken of the logical operation of the mind and consciousnesses. It will enable people to remove the nails and pull out the pegs, and to escape from the cage and be released from the yoke.^{[307](#)} If you can attend carefully to your investigation, you will be able to cleanse away the preceding maladies of intellectual understanding concerning the buddhadharma. Then you will reach the ultimate stage of serenity and happiness. [766a]

You must know that people who are cultivating the path in this present degenerate age of the dharma should first, via intellectual understanding that accords with reality, discern clearly their own mind's authentic and deceptive aspects, its production and cessation, and its essential and secondary features.

Next, through a word that splits nails and cuts through iron,³⁰⁸ you should probe closely and carefully until a place appears where you can find salvation. Then, you will be able to say, “The four legs of a table are set firmly on the ground so they don’t wobble.”³⁰⁹ Whether emerging into birth or exiting into death, you will have complete autonomy.

Through such words and phrases that cut through iron, you may reach a stage where your only passion is to train in this method that sloughs off cleansing knowledge and vision; but if you have not yet gained an authentic awakening, your conduct and understanding will inevitably be imbalanced and you will still not be autonomous in the realm of birth and death. This is exactly what the ancient masters used to warn against. But if you are able just to awaken to the mystery in the word (*kujung hyŏn/juzhong xuan* 句中玄), your mind will be completely free of knowledge and vision concerning the buddhadharma; you will be a patch-robed monk (*napsŭng/naseng* 衲僧) who is utterly pristine.

Even though this may be the case, if you continue to be pressured by knowledge and vision, then your practice will still not be genuine. Furthermore, you may still be prone to thoughts of liking and disliking, anger and joy, self and others, and success and failure, for you have not yet awakened to the mystery in the essence (*ch’ejung hyŏn/tizhong xuan* 體中玄)

and [you therefore still assume that] the sense-spheres exist external to the mind. Hence, although you seem to be awakened when you speak, you are still deluded whenever you come into contact with the sense-spheres. For people in such a condition, it is better to rely on Master Mi's words and teachings, which accord with reality, and put all of your efforts into your investigation. This will enable you to subdue thoughts of liking and disliking, anger and joy, others and self, success and failure. Since it is only through such genuine knowledge and vision of the buddhadharma that you will locate the road leading to salvation, the mystery in the mystery (*hyŏnjung hyŏn* 玄中玄) and the additional proposition that was established separately will naturally come to exist therein. You must not employ the teaching on the three propositions (*samgu/sanju* 三句) and the three mysteries and bore into this (*ch'ŏnch'ak/chuanzuo* 穿鑿) haphazardly or foment controversial discussions.^{[310](#)}

If you truly are an exceptional person, you will not be pressured by words and speech or by intellectual understanding. Then, throughout the twelve time periods, whether you are in contact with the sense-spheres or involved with conditionality, you will neither disseminate mundane truths nor formulate theoretical exegeses concerning the buddhadharma. If you do find the one living road, you will naturally

see the mistakes of all the buddhas of the three time periods, the mistakes of the six generations of patriarchs, and the mistakes of all the spiritual mentors of this current generation.^{[311](#)} [766b] Afterward, if you will cart out the riches and treasures of your own home and offer them to everyone, the kindness of the sovereign and the kindness of the Buddha will simultaneously be completely requited.

Written on a certain month and day in the summer of cyclical year kisa [1209], the prime year of the [Jin Dynasty's] Da'an 大安 Reign Period.

Personal notes by Chinul, Moguja [the Oxherder], from Chogy Mountain in Haedong.^{[312](#)}

Appendix: Complete Table of Contents of Chinul's Excerpts

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Abbreviations

Full citations of the sources listed below may be found in the bibliography.

CDL	<i>Jingde chuandeng lu</i>
CXT	<i>Zhonghua chuanxindi Chanmen shizi chengxi tu</i>
CYH	<i>Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo sagi hae</i>
CYKM	<i>Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo kwamok pyŏngip sagi</i>
DHYL	<i>Dahui [Pujue chanshi] yulu</i>
DSQXL	<i>Dasheng qixin lun</i>
DX	<i>Chanyuan zhujuan ji duxu</i>
Excerpts	Present English translation of Chinul's <i>Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo pyŏngip sagi</i> . Citations to <i>Excerpts</i> are by chapter and section headings in the translation (for a listing of these sections, see the appendix, "Complete Table of Contents of Chinul's <i>Excerpts</i> ").
HPC	<i>Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ</i>
HYJ	<i>Dafangguang fo huayan jing</i> (Śikṣānanda trans.)
HYJb	<i>Dafangguang fo huayan jing</i> (Buddhabhadra trans.)
IBK	<i>Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū</i>
JIABS	<i>Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies</i>
KRS	<i>Koryŏ sa</i>
LJL	<i>Linji lu</i>
LZTJ	<i>Liuzu dashi fabao tan jing</i>
PCPHN	<i>Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok</i> , by Zongmi
Preface	<i>Chanyuan zhujuan ji duxu</i>
PGHP	<i>Pulgyo hakpo</i>

<i>PKC</i>	<i>Sungsan Pak Kil-chin paksa hwagap kinyŏm: Han'guk Pulgyo sasang sa</i>
<i>Record</i>	<i>Present English translation of Zongmi's Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record</i>
<i>T</i>	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i>
<i>XHYJL</i>	<i>Xin Huayan jing lun</i>
<i>XZJ</i>	<i>Xuzangjing</i>
<i>YJJDSC</i>	<i>Yuanjue jing da shu chao</i>
<i>ZZ</i>	<i>Dainihon zokuzōkyō</i>

Notes

Notes

1. The last generation has seen the burgeoning of a secondary literature on Zongmi. The most comprehensive discussion of his thought is found in Kamata Shigeo, *Shūmitsu kyōgaku*; Zongmi's important role in the development of Korean and Japanese Buddhism has been covered in Kamata's "Chōsen oyobi Nihon Bukkyō ni oyoboshita Shūmitsu no eikyō." Yoshizu Yoshihide offers an insightful treatment of Zongmi in his reappraisal of the Huayan tradition in *Kegonzen no shisōshi teki kenkyū*. The definitive English study on Zongmi is found in Peter N. Gregory's monumental *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*. See also Gregory's *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity*. Zongmi's major writings on Chan have been translated by Jeffrey Lyle Broughton in *Zongmi on Chan*. Gregory has also published a series of valuable articles on aspects of Zongmi's thought; see the listings in the bibliographies of his above two books. Prior to Gregory and Broughton, Jan Yün-hua contributed a series of useful, if now somewhat dated, articles on various aspects of Zongmi's life and thought: "Tsung-mi: His Analysis of Chan Buddhism," "Conflict and Harmony in Chan and Buddhism," "*K'an-Hui* or the 'Comparative Investigation,'" "Tsung-mi's Questions Regarding the Confucian Absolute," "Two Problems Concerning Tsung-mi's Compilation of *Chantsang*," and "Tsung-mi chu *Tao-su ch'ou-ta wen-chi* te yen-chiu." Valuable

insights on Zongmi's ecumenical approach to Buddhism can also be found in Takamine Ryōshū, *Kegon to Zen to no tsūro*, pp. 22–35.

2. See the discussion in Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, p. 224ff., drawing on Yoshizu Yoshihide's argument in *Kegonzen no shisōshi teki kenkyū*, pp. 307–308.
3. DX 1–1, p. 400b11; see also Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, p. 226; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 109.
4. The successorship of the Sagulsan lineage is still a matter of scholarly debate. The only record concerning its transmission line appears in a postscript to a Taehŭngsa 大興寺 edition of the *Records of Dahui*, written sometime in the middle of the fourteenth century by Yi Saek 李穡 (1328–1396) and discussed by the modern Chinul specialist Yi Chong-ik. According to this postscript, in the *Sŏn'ga chongp'a to* 禪家宗派圖 (not extant), written by Yi Chang-yong 李藏用 (1201–1272), an important mid-Koryŏ classical scholar and literary figure, the Kulsansa 崛山寺 lineage was transmitted as follows: Pŏmil 梵日 (810–889), Pohyŏn Kaech'ŏng 普賢開清, Odae Sin'gyŏng 五臺神鏡, Taeŭn Tojang 大隱道藏, Saja Chihyu 獅子智休, Chŏnghak Tojam 青鶴道潛, Tut'a Ŭngjin 頭陀應眞, Tansok Chihyŏn 斷俗智玄, Changsu Tamjin 長壽曇眞, Ch'onch'uk Nŭngin 天竺能仁, Sin'gwang Chonghwi 神光宗暉, Pojo Chinul 普照知訥. See discussion in Yi Chong-ik, *Taehan Pulgyo Chogyŏ chong chunghŭng non*, pp. 93–94. Yi Chigwan (*Han'guk Pulgyo soŭi kyŏngjŏn yŏn'gu*, p. 29) identifies Chonghwi as an eighth-generation successor of Pŏmil but does not provide a source for his information. Most of these figures are little known. Kulsansa was located in the present-day Kangnŭng District 江陵郡 of Kangwŏn Province; only the foundations of the monastery remain.
5. The Koryŏ civil examination system began in 958, the ninth year of Kwangjong's 光宗 reign (KRS 2.27b). It is uncertain when the saṃgha examinations began, but most scholars believe they probably began simultaneous with, or immediately following, the institution of the bureaucratic

examinations; Yi Chaech'ang, "Koryŏ Pulgyo ūi sŭngkwa sŭngnoksa chedo," p. 434; Yi Chae-ch'ang and Kim Yŏng-t'ae, *Pulgyo munhwa sa*, pp. 112–113; Nukariya Kaiten, *Chōsen Zenkyōshi*, pp. 206–207. The examinations were held once every three years, usually at the two chief monasteries of the Sŏn and Kyo schools in the Koryŏ capital of Kaesŏng: Kwangmyŏngsa 廣明寺 for Sŏn and Wangnyunsa 王輪寺 for Kyo (Yi Chae-ch'ang, "Koryŏ ūi sŭngkwa sŭngnoksa chedo," p. 436). The Sŏn exams covered material in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, and later, Chinul's disciple Chin'gak Hyesim's *Sŏnmun yŏmsong chip*; the Kyo examinations covered the *Avataṃsakasūtra* and in some cases the *Daśabhūmivyākyaṇa*. The ranking system for the two major schools was as follows: Sŏn schools—Taedŏk 大德, Taesa 大師, Chung taesa 重大師, Samjung taesa 三重大師, Sŏnsa 禪師, Taesŏnsa 大禪師; Kyo schools—Taedŏk, Taesa, Chung taesa, Samjung taesa, Sujwa 首座, Sŭngt'ong. See Yi Chae-ch'ang, "Koryŏ sŭngkwa," pp. 436–437 (Yi Chae-ch'ang and Kim Yŏng-t'ae, *Pulgyo munhwa sa*, p. 113). Monks at the two highest ranks of either Sŏn or Kyo could be appointed by royal proclamation to the position of royal preceptor (*wangsa* 王師) or state preceptor (*kuksa* 國師), which were as much government posts as religious ranks; see Lee, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*, p. 28n.78, and Yi Chae-ch'ang, "Koryŏ sŭngkwa," p. 437n.32. For the Saṃgha administration, see Yi Chae-ch'ang, "Koryŏ sŭngkwa," p. 441. The strictness of this system somewhat abated later. Any of the ranks conferred by examination could also be gained through royal appointment and were often conferred posthumously on especially distinguished monks. Chinul's successor Chin'gak Hyesim was apparently the first monk to receive the appellation Sŏnsa (Sŏn master) or Taesŏnsa (Great Sŏn master) without taking the examination; see *Chin'gak kuksa pimyoŋg*, in Yi Nŭng-hwa, *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa* 3:354.1. For an extensive recent treatment of the monastic examination system and monastic offices during the

Koryŏ dynasty, see Vermeersch, *Power of the Buddhas*, pp. 183–268.

6. See the full account in Chinul's funerary stele, *Sŭngp'yŏng pu Chogyesan Susŏnsa Puril Pojo kuksa pimyŏng* (Sinographic text, with English translation, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 370).
7. See *ibid.* Chinul's lack of a legitimate transmission from a recognized master as well as the fact that he did not leave the customary enlightenment poem are mentioned by some present-day Sŏn masters, such as T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl, who raise doubts about the validity of Chinul's outline of Sŏn practice, a critique I will discuss in detail later. In Chinul's defense, however, such a poem might well have been included in his *Pŏbŏ ka song* 法語歌頌 (Dharma discourses, songs, and verses), which is mentioned in his funerary inscription (Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 381), but is no longer extant. For this reason some Koreans consider T'aego Pou, whose Imje/Linji credentials are impeccable, to be the ancestor of the Korean Sŏn lineage. One of the points I make in this introduction is that Korean Sŏn thought—in particular, the sudden awakening/gradual cultivation soteriological schema and *kanhwa* Sŏn meditation—finds its source in Chinul and especially his *Excerpts*. For a discussion of the problems involved in ascertaining the lineage of the Korean Chogyŏ school, see the study by Sŏk Sŏngch'ŏl, *Han'guk pulgyo ŭi pŏmmaek*, which displays the author's wide knowledge of scriptural and epigraphical materials; see also Chang Wŏn-gyu, "Chogyŏ chong ŭi sŏngnip kwa palchŏn e taehan koch'al," pp. 311–351; Yi Chong-ik, *Chogyŏ chonghak kaeron*; Yi Chi-gwan, *Chogyŏ chong sa*; Ko Hyŏng-gon, *Haedong Chogyŏ chong ŭi yŏnwŏn mit kŭ choryu*, pp. 6–11; and other references in Yi Kibaek, *Han'guksa sillon*, pp. 179–180.
8. For the official account of Chinul's three enlightenment experiences, which I will discuss briefly below, see his funerary stele *Pojo pimyŏng*, pp. 377–378 (Sinographic text

and English translation in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 370–374).

9. This is the last line of a stanza summing up Chan practice that is traditionally attributed to Bodhidharma; the passage has been traced to *Da banniepan jing jijie* (A collection of commentaries to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*), *T* 1763:37.490c26. See discussion in Miura and Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, pp. 228–230.
10. This phrase “Mind is Buddha” (*chŭksim chŭkpul* 卽心卽佛) is traditionally attributed to Mazu Daoyi, but in the conversation from which this phrase is excerpted it actually appears as “this mind is precisely the Buddha-mind” (*ch’asim chŭksi pulsim* 此心卽是佛心) (see *CDL* 6, p. 246b5). In later Chan texts, however, the remark is always cited as “mind is Buddha” (see *Wumen guan*, case 30, *T* 2005:48.296c27; *Rentian yanmu* 2, *T* 2006:48.307c8–9). Some of the early references I have been able to find for *chŭksim chŭkpul* include Baozhi’s 寶志 (418–514) *Dasheng zan*, *CDL* 29, p. 449b29, and the biography of Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790) found in *CDL* 14, p. 309b14. See also the extensive discussion of the phrase in Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, pp. 168–182.
11. *Hwaŏm non chŏryo*, *HPC* 4.767c; see also, Kim Chi-gyŏn, *Hwaŏm non chŏryo*, pp. 1–3; I include the Sinographic passage and an English translation in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 356.
12. And specifically in the “Rulai chuxian pin” 如來出現品 (Appearance of the tathāgatas) chapter of the *Avataṃsakasūtra*; *HYJ* fasc. 51, pp. 272c23–25 and 272c7–17. This passage is the focus of three alternative explanations of how buddhahood exists in ordinary sentient beings; these alternatives are discussed extensively in Chinul’s *Treatise on the Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood* (*Wŏndon sŏngbullon*), translated in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 248ff. The “Rulai chuxian pin” in Śikṣānanda’s translation of the *Avataṃsakasūtra* is equivalent to the “Rulai xingqi pin” 如來性起品, the thirty-second chapter of

Buddhabhadra's earlier sixty-roll translation of the scripture, which is itself an abbreviation for "Baowang rulai xingqi pin" 寶王如來性起品. The "Xingqi pin" circulated independently before being incorporated into the *Avataṃsaka* compilation and was known as the *Tathāgatotpattisaṃbhavanirdeśa*; it was translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 292 as the *Rulai xingxian jing* (T 291). For a discussion of the text and its important implications for the development of tathāgatagarbha theory, see Takasaki Jikidō, *Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga*, p. 35ff., and Takasaki Jikidō, "Kegon kyōgaku to nyoraizō shishō"; see also the discussion in Kim Ingsok, *Hwaōmhak kaeron*, pp. 214–215, where he demonstrates that Fazang also knew that this chapter was originally an independent sūtra. For this important chapter in the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, see Cheng Chien, *Manifestation of the Tathāgata*.

13. XHYJL 15, pp. 815a3–8, 819a29–b2; XYHJL 21, pp. 862a7–8. Chinul himself cites all these passages and outlines their impact on him in the preface to his *Condensation of the Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra* (*Hwaōm non chōryo*), in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 356–358.
14. See the preface to the *Condensation of the Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 358.
15. See Pak Chong-hong, *Han'guk sasang sa*, p. 193; Yi Chong-ik, *Taehan Pulgyo Chogyae chong chunghŭng non*.
16. For this passage from Zongmi's *Record* that is quoted in Chinul's *Encouragement to Practice*, see my translations (along with the original Sinographic text) in *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 154–155, and *Korean Approach to Zen*, pp. 111. Chinul also refers to this passage in his *Excerpts*, chap. 2, "The Relevance of Numinous Awareness"; I include the full translation in the annotation to the translation there (*Excerpts*, n. 63).
17. These other works of Zongmi include his *Rites for the Cultivation and Realization of the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra Bodhimaṇḍa* (*Yuanjue jing daochang xiuzheng yi*), an eighteen-roll work on Buddhist ritual

activities, and an exchange involving Zongmi that appears in the *Jingde-Era Transmission of the Lamplight Record* (*Jingde chuandeng lu*). See the references in my translation of *Encouragement to Practice: The Compact of the Samādhi and Prajñā Society*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 115–194.

18. See the full account in Chinul's funerary stele, *Sŏngp'yŏng pu Chogyesan Susŏnsa Puril Pojo kuksa pimyŏng* (Sinographic text, with English translation, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 373–374). The passage from Dahui's *Records* appears at *DHYL* 19, pp. 893c28–894a2.
19. For a discussion of this problem concerning the title of this text, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "The Identity of the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*," *Korean Approach to Zen*, Appendix, pp. 375–384; Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, esp. pp. 318–319, and Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 12; for an extensive discussion of the different titles known in the literature, see Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 206–208n.25.
20. A suggestion made by the pioneering Chan scholar Ui Hakuju in his *Zensūshi kenkyū*, 3:48; noted in Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 12.
21. See the discussion in Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 318–319, and Jan, "Fa-chi and Chinul's Understanding of Tsung-mi."
22. For background on the works of these two commentators, Hoeam Chŏnghye 晦庵定慧 (1685–1741) and Yŏndam Yuil 蓮潭有一 (1720–1799), see Yi Chi-gwan, "Yŏndam mit Inak ūi sagi wa kŭ ūi kyohakkwan," pp. 1001–1009.
23. *CYH*, *HPC* 9.546a6–12.
24. *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.196a4–5.
25. Just so there is no doubt, Yuil states specifically that the *Chanyuan ji* was not extant in Korea; see his *Outline of the "Preface" with Inserted Personal Notes* (*Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*), *HPC* 10.180a2–3 (also in Kamata Shigeo, *Shūmitsu kyōgaku*, p. 270 l. 3).
26. *DX* 1–1, p. 399a16–18.

- [27.](#) For the possible structure of the *Chanyuan ji* and its possible absorption into Yanshou's *Zongjing lu*, see Jan, "Two Problems," p. 46; Buswell, *Korean Approach to Zen*, Appendix; Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 322–323; and Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 22–26. For an extensive study of the *Zongjing lu*, see Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan*.
- [28.](#) As examples of such schools covered in other extant works of Zongmi but omitted in the *PCPHN*, we can bring up, in the first case (the heterodoxy of their tenets), the school of Laomu An Heshang 老母安和尚 (the third house covered in *YJJDSC* 3b, p. 534a), and, in the latter (their relative lack of significance in the history of Chan), the second house Zhishen 智誡 and the sixth house of Nanshan Nianfo Men 南山念佛門 (*YJJDSC* 3b, pp. 533c, 534c–535a).
- [29.](#) See *Chuanxin fa yao*, *T* 2012A:48.382b5–9; *pyŏrhaeng* is used specifically at l. 9.
- [30.](#) Dahui's teacher, Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–1135), describes Chan as a "separate practice outside the Teachings that simply transmits the mind-seal" (教外別行單傳心印); see *Yuanwu Foguo chanshi yulu* 14, *T* 1997:47.777a7. The late-Koryŏ work *Yu-Sŏk chirŭiron* (*HPC* 7.264b2) says, "The Sŏn dharma is a separate practice that is outside the teachings"; it also says (*HPC* 7.253c8–10) that Sŏn's "treasury of the correct dharma eye, the sublime mind of nirvāṇa, which was entrusted to [the first Sŏn patriarch] Mahākāśyapa and transmitted successively down through the generations, is a special practice that is outside the teachings." This text is attributed to Hamhŏ Tŭkt'ong 涵虛得通, also known as Kihwa 己和 (1376–1398), but questions have been raised about the attribution; see Pulgyo Munhwa Yŏn'gu So, *Han'guk Pulgyo ch'ansul munhŏn ch'ongnok*, p. 168.
- [31.](#) Yi Chong-ik, "Kōrai Fushō kokushi no kenkyū," p. 79; noted in Pak Sangguk, "*Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok yŏn'gu*," p. 9.
- [32.](#) Pak Sang-guk, "*Pojo ŭi Sŏn sasang yŏn'gu*," pp. 9–10.
- [33.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 2, "The Relationship between Immutability and Adaptability: The Simile of the Jewel."

- [34.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Hongzhou School Only Infers the Reality of the Buddha-Nature.”
- [35.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “Sudden Awakening and Gradual Cultivation”; see also CXT, p. 875b.
- [36.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “Chinul’s Exegesis of the Four Schools.”
- [37.](#) CXT, p. 866a (XZJ 110:433c; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 267); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 70.
- [38.](#) CXT, pp. 866a–869b; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 70–73.
- [39.](#) The most current coverage of Zongmi’s analysis of the Chan schools of his time appears in Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, passim, and Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, esp. chap. 9. Zongmi’s discussions on contemporary Chan schools are also treated in a series of classic articles by Jan Yün-hua: “Tsongmi: His Analysis of Ch’an Buddhism,” “Conflict and Harmony in Ch’an and Buddhism,” “*K’an Hui* or the ‘Comparative Investigation,’” and “Tsong-mi’s Questions Regarding the Confucian Absolute.” In Japanese, Kamata Shigeo’s *Shūmitsu kyōgaku no shisō shi teki kenkyū* is in a class by itself; useful information on Zongmi’s synthetic attitudes can also be found in Takamine Ryōshū’s *Kegon to Zen to no tsūro*, pp. 22–35, and Yoshizu Yoshihide, *Kegonzen no shisōshi teki kenkyū*.
- [40.](#) YJJDSC 3b, pp. 532c–535b; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 180–188; see also the partial translation in Jan, “Tsong-mi,” pp. 41–50.
- [41.](#) Zongmi’s *Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu* (DX 1–1, p. 400b–c) states that the body of the book would cover one hundred masters divided into ten major schools; only Zongmi’s introductory preface to that collection survives (though there is an emerging scholarly consensus that large portions of the body of this collection were incorporated wholesale into Yanshou’s *Zongjing lu*; see this introduction, n. 27, for references). I agree with the conclusions reached by Jan Yün-hua, following the lead of Sekiguchi Shindai, which support traditional claims for the existence of the hundred-roll main body of this work. See Jan’s article, “Two Problems concerning Tsung-mi’s Compilation of *Ch’an-tsang*,” pp. 37–

47; see also the overviews in Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 322–323, and Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 22–26.

[42.](#) For schematic charts comparing the treatment of the schools in Zongmi's *CXT* and *PCPHN*, with the different classifications in Zongmi's *DX* and *YJJDSC*, see Kamata Shigeo, *Shūmitsu kyōgaku*, p. 296, and Kim Ing-sōk, "Puril Pojo kuksa," p. 32.

[43.](#) These two important categories are discussed at length in *Excerpts*, chap. 2, especially in the section "The Approaches of Dharma and Person" and, in chap. 3, the section on "Recapitulation of the Gist of the *Special Practice Record*"; see the annotation there for Yōndam Yuil's descriptions in *CYKM*. The terms ultimately derive from the *Zhao lun* (see translation in Liebenthal, *Chao Lun*, pp. 106–107) and thence from the Laozi (see discussion in Liebenthal, *Chao Lun*, pp. 17–18).

[44.](#) *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, edited by Prahlad Pradhan, p. 133.17.

[45.](#) See Takasaki, *Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga*, p. 182.

[46.](#) "One should take refuge in the dharma, not in the person [who teaches it]" (*dharmapratisāraṇena bhavitavyam na pudgalapratisāraṇena*): see *Weimojie soshuo jing* (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*), *T* 475:14.556c10, interpreted by Thurman (*Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, p. 99) as "relying on reality and not insisting on opinions derived from personal authorities." For other similar references to the distinction between dharma and person in the four reliances, see *Dazhidu lun*, *T* 1509:25.125a26–29, *Pusa shanjie jing*, *T* 1582:30.994b22, *Yijiao jing lun* ("Commentary to the *Bequeathed Teachings [of the Buddha] Scripture*"), *T* 1529:26.283b26–29.

[47.](#) From *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation" section.

[48.](#) Traditional views concerning the doctrines of the Northern school were dramatically altered by the discovery of some of its original documents in the Dunhuang caves. Scholarship in both Japan and the West on this school has burgeoned over

the last generation and filled in many details of the Northern school's perspectives on Chan practice. Unlike its traditional portrayal, the school's doctrines seem not to have been merely gradual and not confined solely to the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*. Rather, the Northern school apparently advocated a sophisticated approach to Buddhism involving both Huayan and Prajñāpāramitā teachings. There is evidence, too, that Shenxiu also used a sudden approach, reserving his gradual teachings for beginners. And the school was initially widely influential, even finding its way into Tibet. The definitive studies of the Northern school based on these Dunhuang documents are McRae, *Northern School and the Formation of Early Chan Buddhism*, and Faure, *Will to Orthodoxy*. For the Northern school's Huayan connections, see Takamine Ryōshū, *Kegon to Zen to no tsūro*, pp. 67–75; Robert Zeuschner's early dissertation, "Analysis of the Philosophical Criticisms of Northern Ch'an Buddhism," was groundbreaking for its time.

49. See *Excerpts*, chap. 2, "The Perspectives of the Four Chan/Sōn Schools"; and cf. Zongmi's *YJJDSC* 3b, p. 534c (partially quoted in Jan, "Tsong-mi," pp. 47–48).
50. Niutou Farong's 牛頭法融 biography appears in Chang, *Original Teachings*, pp. 17–26; for the development of the school see John McRae's article, "The Ox-head School of Ch'an Buddhism."
51. For Zongmi and Chinul's discussion of the Oxhead school, see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, "The Perspectives of the Four Chan/Sōn Schools."
52. Mario Poceski has called into question much of this traditional portrayal of the Hongzhou school in his provocative and convincing book *Ordinary Mind as the Way*.
53. Jinhua Jia tells the history of the Hongzhou lineage in her book *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth-through Tenth-Century China*. See also Ishikawa Rikizan's article "Baso kyōdan no tenkai to sono shijisha tachi" for an outline of the early historical development of the school. It is worth noting that the only other early Chan school to survive

the Tang—the lineage that traces itself from Qingyuan Xingsi—is of equally obscure origins. Its founder is virtually unknown, and whether such a monk even studied under Huineng cannot be verified. This school was based in Hunan, also deep in the countryside. Indeed, the early isolation of these two schools probably contributed much to their survival; see Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, p. 54.

[54.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Hongzhou School’s Basic Premise.”

[55.](#) CDL 6, p. 246a5.

[56.](#) See the discussion in *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “How Hongzhou and Heze Differ” and “The Hongzhou School Only Infers the Reality of the Buddha-Nature,” quoting the *PCPHN*.

[57.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Perspectives of the Four Chan/Sōn schools,” for the discussion; the *Preface* quotation relevant here appears in *DX* 1–2, pp. 402c–403a. See the extensive treatment of these three broad categories of Chan schools in Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, chapter 9; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 120–124.

[58.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Perspectives of the Four Chan/Sōn schools,” for the discussion; the *Preface* quotation relevant here appears in *DX* 1–2, pp. 402c–403a.

[59.](#) For an overview of Shenhui’s sudden teaching, see McRae, “Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment.”

[60.](#) For Shenhui’s anti-Northern school campaign, see McRae, *Northern School*, pp. 240–242; Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, pp. 23–38.

[61.](#) See Kamata Shigeo, “Chōsen oyobi Nihon Bukkyō ni oyoboshita Shūmitsu no eikyō,” for a discussion.

[62.](#) See the notice in Ūich’ōn’s *Kang Wōn’gak kyōng palsa* 講圓覺經發辭, *chei* 第二, in *Taegak kuksa munjip* 3, *HPC* 4:531c.

[63.](#) For the following discussion, see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Perspectives of the Four Chan/Sōn Schools.”

[64.](#) For example, at *Shenhui heshang yiji*, pp. 128–129, translated partially by Yampolsky in *Platform Sutra*, p. 33.

[65.](#) As I will discuss later in this introduction, Zongmi’s *Preface* is included in the *Sajip* 四集 collection, which traditionally

constituted the core Sōn curriculum of the Korean monastic educational system. Since Chinul's *Excerpts*, which is an exposition of Zongmi's *Record*, is included in the same collection, fully half the foundational texts of the Korean Buddhist monastic curriculum derive from Zongmi.

- [66.](#) *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, 1.10 (*pabhassaraṃ idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ*) (see Woodward, *Book of the Gradual Sayings*, 1:8); this passage is treated with his usual perspicacity by Ñāṇananda Bhikkhu in *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought* (p. 58); the implications for spiritual cultivation of the mind's inherent luminosity are brought out in a fascinating discussion by Ñāṇananda Bhikkhu in *Magic of the Mind* (p. 83ff.).
- [67.](#) This concept is treated in the apocryphal *Shoulengyan jing* (**Śūraṃgamsūtra*) 1 (945:19.107a29–107b1). The term is commonly used by both Zongmi and Chengguan (see the latter's *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu chao* 1, XZJ 200:7.801a16; and *Xinyao jian*, in CTL 30, p. 459b23–24) and appears in Chan/Sōn texts as well (e.g., *Biyan lu* 10, case 99, T 2003:48.222c24).
- [68.](#) *Linji lu*, T 1985:47.497c19; translated in Sasaki, Yoshitaka, and Fraser, *Recorded Sayings of Ch'an Master Lin-chi*, p. 26.
- [69.](#) Cf. Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality*, pp. 46–68, on the nonmanifesting consciousness (Pāli, *viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ*) of the enlightened person.
- [70.](#) For insightful comparative discussion, see *ibid.*, pp. 2–22, and Ñāṇananda, *Magic of the Mind*, pp. 57–67.
- [71.](#) From *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 223.
- [72.](#) From *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "The Role of Numinous Awareness in Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation."
- [73.](#) From *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 219.
- [74.](#) Hu Shih, ("Ch'an [Zen] Buddhism in China" p. 15) translated it as "knowledge"; D. T. Suzuki ("Zen: A Reply to Hu Shih," p. 31ff.) proposed the alternative "*prajñā*-intuition." Jan Yün-hua entered the debate on the side of Hu (see Jan's "Tsung-mi:

His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism," p. 40n.1). I believe both renderings miss the point and have adopted the translation "awareness" consistently throughout my translation of Chinul's texts. I was flattered that my friend and colleague Peter N. Gregory subsequently adopted my rendering of the term in his definitive 1985 study, "Tsong-mi and the Single Word 'Awareness'" (pp. 249–269).

- [75.](#) As *Excerpts* notes (chap. 3, "Ordinary Beings Cannot Realize Buddhahood"): The mind of numinous awareness "is exactly the self-nature of suchness.... It is neither the discriminative consciousness that arises in relation to conditioned objects nor the wisdom produced by the realization-awakening."
- [76.](#) For this famous line, "The one word 'awareness' is the source of [alt. gateway to] all wonders," see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, "The Heze School's Basic Premise." The passage derives from *Laozi* 1; see Chengguan's discussion in *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 1, *T* 1736:36.2b.
- [77.](#) For comparable uses of *panjo*, see Liebenthal, *Chan Lun*, p. 71 and n. 289; *LJL*, p. 497c19; Ruth Fuller Sasaki has translated it as "turning your own light inward upon yourselves" (Sasaki, Yoshitaka, and Fraser, *Recorded Sayings of Ch'an Master Lin-chi*, p. 10). See also *Xinxin ming*, *T*, p. 376c2; Baizhang Huaihai, in *Chodang chip*, Appendix, roll 14, p. 92b; *DX* 2–2, p. 411c5, 17; *DHYL* 26, p. 922c24. The term ultimately can be traced to religious Daoist origins; cf. the use of the term *pan'gwang/fan'guang* 返光, which Schipper (*L'Empereur Wou*, p. 48n.1) translates as "retourner la lumière (vers l'intérieur)." Schipper notes that "les yeux étant considérés comme des sources de lumière, des luminaires, qui éclairent le monde et nous permettent ainsi de voir." Cf. also the usage in Bhāvaviveka's *Karatalaratna* (Jewel in hand treatise); *Dasheng zhangzhen lun*, *T* 1578:30.277c20.
- [78.](#) For this quotation from Yuil, see *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.211c21–23 (lines 15–17 in electronic ed.).
- [79.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "The Shortcut Approach of Hwadu Investigation."

- [80.](#) *Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood (Wōndon sōngbullon)*, exchange no. 2, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 269.
- [81.](#) Ibid., exchange no. 4, p. 295.
- [82.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 216.
- [83.](#) Extensive coverage of this debate is found in the several articles collected in Gregory, *Sudden and Gradual*. See also Bernard Faure's always provocative treatment of the ramifications of this issue in his *Rhetoric of Immediacy*.
- [84.](#) For a general overview of Chinul's conception of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, see my article, "Chinul's Systematization of Chinese Meditative Techniques in Korean Sōn Buddhism," pp. 203–207. Relevant material on Chinul's soteriological views is also found in chap. 2 of Hee-Sung Keel's *Chinul: The Founder of the Korean Sōn Tradition*. Chinul's views on sudden awakening/gradual cultivation were of course inspired by Zongmi; for this preferred soteriology, see Gregory, "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation," and Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 192–196.
- [85.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Issues in Zongmi's Statements about Subitism and Past Lives."
- [86.](#) Chengguan's *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* (Commentary to the "Original Vows" chapter of the *Avatamsakasūtra*); in ten rolls; XZJ 227:5.48b–198a; the passage in question appears in roll 2, sec. 5, XZJ, p. 64b–64c, and is translated in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Chengguan's Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual." Chinul always refers to this text as the *Zhenyuan Commentary* (K. Chōngwŏn sŏ, C. *Zhenyuan shu*), after the Zhenyuan 貞元 reign period (785–804) of the Tang dynasty, when this last translation of the *Huayan jing* was made; see discussion on the reign period and title of the text in *Excerpts*, n. 91. For Chengguan's life and career, see Hamar, *A Religious Leader in the Tang*.
- [87.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "The Role of Numinous Awareness in Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation."

- [88.](#) XHYJL 32, p. 941c; quoted in Chinul's *Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 261–262.
- [89.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in *ibid.*, p. 224.
- [90.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Northern School’s Basic Premise” section et passim.
- [91.](#) Chinul's *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, exchange no. 7, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 225–227.
- [92.](#) Yuil, CYKM, HPC 10.200a14–15.
- [93.](#) See Chŏnghye's extensive discussion of the term *p'ansa su* in his CYH, HPC 9.551c–552b.
- [94.](#) In Chengguan's *Zhenyuan Commentary* (XZJ 227:5.64b); see discussion in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chengguan's Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual.”
- [95.](#) This discussion appears, for example, in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chinul's Critique of Radical Subitism.” An “ordinary person of great aspiration” (*taesim pŏmbu/daxin fanfu* 大心凡夫; alt. *taesim chungsaeng/daxin zhongsheng* 大心衆生) refers specifically to a person who has achieved the initial understanding-awakening and is engaged in the gradual cultivation that will eventually lead to the realization-awakening. Note also Chinul's comment (*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chinul's Critique of Radical Subitism”) that “the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation ... has been established specifically for ordinary people of great aspiration.” Such a person is defined by Li Tongxuan (XHYJL 6, p. 756c) as a person who “seeks only the inscrutable vehicle of the tathāgatas” and is unsatisfied with the provisional teachings of the three vehicles. See also discussion in *Excerpts*, n. 81.
- [96.](#) The preceding description paraphrases Chinul's *Encouragement to Practice*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 167–170.
- [97.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in *ibid.*, p. 217.
- [98.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, the sections on “Yanshou's Assessment of Sudden and Gradual in the *Common End of Myriad Goods and Deeds*,” “Zongmi's Schemata of Moderate

Subitism and Gradualism in Sŏn,” and “Sŏn Is a Consummate and Sudden Approach.”

- [99.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Issues in Zongmi’s Statements about Subitism and Past Lives.”
- [100.](#) See *LZTJ*, p. 353b4–5, for the relevant passage.
- [101.](#) Chinul discusses both types at length in his *Encouragement to Practice* and especially in his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (including a lengthy passage in sec. 9); see, e.g., Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 127–189, 233–240. For general discussion on this need to balance samādhi and prajñā, see also Bugault, *La notion de “Prajñā,”* pp. 89–93.
- [102.](#) For parallels in Pāli materials, see, e.g., the discussion on the use of *samatha* (quiescence) and *vipassanā* (insight) in *Atthasālinī*, i. 131: “And here they are given as forming a well-yoked pair (*yuganaddha*)” (translation from Pe Maung Tin, *The Expositor*, 1:173). For Yogācāra sources, see *Abhidharmasamuccaya of Asaṅga*, edited by Pralhad Pradhan, p. 75.
- [103.](#) See *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 252; cf. *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Correlating Chengguan’s Kyo Views with Sŏn.”
- [104.](#) See, for example, excerpts from *Shenhui heshang yiji*, pp. 128–129; partially translated in Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, p. 33.
- [105.](#) For the metaphor of prajñā as radiance, see Liebenthal, *Chao Lun*, pp. 64–80, 66n.259, 79n.333, 97n.455. Paul Demiéville, “The Mirror of the Mind,” in Gregory, *Sudden and Gradual* pp. 13–40 (Neal Donner’s translation of “Le miroir spirituel,” *Sinologica*, 7 [1927]). See also Wayman, “Mirror-like Knowledge in Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature,” pp. 353–363; Wayman, “Mirror as a Pan-Buddhist Metaphor-Simile,” 264–265.
- [106.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 238.
- [107.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in *ibid.* p. 233.
- [108.](#) *Encouragement to Practice*, in *ibid.*, pp. 154–155. Chinul quotes just the first two sentences in *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The

Relevance of Numinous Awareness.”

- [109.](#) Zongmi's *Yuanjue jing daochang xiuzheng yi* 3, XZJ 1449:128.747b11–12, as quoted in *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 225.
- [110.](#) See discussion in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “A Comparison of Chengguan and Zongmi.”
- [111.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 227, quoting DX 1–1, p. 403a; and see *Excerpts*, chap. 2 “The Heze School’s Basic Premise.” This phrase “no-thought is the origin of them all” is one of the hallmarks of the Heze school and appears in the Dunhuang edition of the LZTJ, p. 338c15–16, translated in Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, p. 137; see also Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, pp. 137–138n.69, for references to secondary studies on no-thought.
- [112.](#) *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 323–324; see also XHYJL 18, p. 834b22–23, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 324. For the distinct Indian background to the term, where no-thought (*acintya*; *acittaka*) can carry the negative connotation of “aphasia,” see Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 113–114. Virtually the only positive use of the term in Indian texts is when no-thought is taken to be an attribute of the attainment of the cessation of thought (*asaṃjñinirodhasamāpatti*); see *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, edited by P. Pradhan, p. 8; Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, xxiii. 18, translated in Ñāṇamoli, *Path of Purification*, p. 824.
- [113.](#) *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 246.
- [114.](#) *Zhenyuan Commentary, Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* 2, sec. 5, XZJ 227:5.64b–64c; translated in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chengguan’s Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual.” See also the discussion in Gregory, “Sudden Enlightenment,” pp. 309–311.
- [115.](#) *Wanshan tonggui ji* 3, T 2017:48.987b–c. For this passage, see *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Yanshou’s Assessment of Sudden and Gradual.”

- [116.](#) Chengguan's soteriological schemata are covered in his *Zhenyuan Commentary, Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* 2, sec. 5, XZJ 227:5.64b–64c; translated in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Chengguan's Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual."
- [117.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Yanshou's Assessment of Sudden and Gradual."
- [118.](#) For sudden cultivation/gradual awakening, see DX 2–1, p. 407c12–16, quoted in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Zongmi's Schemata of Moderate Subitism and Gradualism in Sōn." This same simile of the apprentice archer who only learns to hit the bull's-eye only after extended training is used to describe cultivation in an early text of Daoxin's, the *Rudao anxin yao fangbian famen* 入道安心要方便法門, translated in McRae, *Northern School*, p. 141. Perhaps the closest form of practice that one might associate with this soteriological schema is Dōgen Kigen's 道元希玄 (1200–1253) "just sitting" (J. *shikantaza* 祇 / 只管打坐), a frequent object of criticism by Linji/Rinzai adepts, which encourages the meditator to repeatedly engage in the simple act of sitting until enlightenment is made manifest.
- [119.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Zongmi's Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sōn."
- [120.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Chengguan's Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual."
- [121.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "A Comparison of Chengguan and Zongmi," for these two correlations.
- [122.](#) DX 2–1, pp. 407a23–408a2; quoted in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Zongmi's Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sōn."
- [123.](#) DX 2–1, p. 408a2–5; quoted and discussed in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Zongmi's Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sōn" and "Radical Subitism Is Valid Only from the Standpoint of the Present Lifetime."
- [124.](#) Summarizing *Wanshan tonggui ji* 3, T 2017:48.987b–c, quoted in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Yanshou's Assessment of Sudden and Gradual."
- [125.](#) Zongmi's YJJDSC 3b, p. 536a22. See the full quotation in *Excerpts*, n. 121.

- [126.](#) Zongmi's *YJJDSC* 3b, p. 536b6–8. See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chengguan’s Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual,” and n. 122.
- [127.](#) *DX* 2–1, p. 407c12–16, quoted in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Moderate Subitism and Gradualism in Sŏn.” I have discussed this metaphor in reference to *kanhwa/kanhua* practice in my article “The ‘Short-Cut’ Approach of *K’an-hua* Meditation” (p. 349).
- [128.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s *Preface to the Fount of Chan Collection*,” and chap. 3, “Chinul’s Critique of Radical Subitism.”
- [129.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “A Comparison of Chengguan and Zongmi.”
- [130.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 213.
- [131.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chinul’s Critique of Radical Subitism,” following Yanshou’s explanation.
- [132.](#) See summary at *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Issues in Zongmi’s Statements about Subitism and Past Lives.”
- [133.](#) For Aṅgulimālya’s story, see Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Aṅgulimāla.”
- [134.](#) For Kṣemā’s story, see *ibid.*, s.v. “Kṣemā.”
- [135.](#) *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 213.
- [136.](#) For the origins and evolution of the *hwadu* technique, see my article “The ‘Short-Cut’ Approach of *K’an-hua* Meditation” (pp. 321–377); I include there references to relevant work in Japanese and Western scholarship. See also my introduction, n. 140 *infra*. For *kanhwa* practice in Korea, see my article “Chinul’s Systematization of Chinese Meditative Techniques” (pp. 216–226); and for modern Korean *kanhwa* practice, see Buswell, *Zen Monastic Experience*, chap. 7. I have explored some of the issues regarding this critique of radical subitism in my article “Chinul’s Ambivalent Critique of Radical Subitism in Korean Sŏn Buddhism” (pp. 32–39).
- [137.](#) See *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 226, quoting *DHYL* 26, p. 920a7–11.

- [138.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation.”
- [139.](#) See, for example, *LJL*, p. 506b8; *Jingde chuandeng lu*, T 2076:51.358c14; *Biyan lu*, case 2, T 2003:48.141c6, case 49, p. 184c14, and case 60, p. 192b5.
- [140.](#) For still-useful historical background on the development of the *kongan/gong’an* in Chan Buddhism, see the classic study by Miura and Sasaki, *The Zen Koan* (pp. 3–16; reprinted in Miura and Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, pp. 3–16). For a more recent study of the development of the *gong’an* and the *kanhua* Chan technique, see Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*.
- [141.](#) From a widely cited definition of *gong’an* by Zhongfeng Mingben in his *Evening Talks in the Mountain Lodge* (*Shanfang yehua* 山房夜話), in *Tianmu Zhongfeng heshang guanglu* (The expanded records of Master Zhongfeng of Tianmu Mountain), Pinqie ed., (Shanghai, 1911; reprint ed., Korea [1977], fasc. 11a, fols. 54–55), also in *Nihon kōtei Daizōkyō* 298/299.32121c–32122a; see also a translation of the relevant passages and extensive discussion in Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, pp. 237–240, and Miura and Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, p. 6.
- [142.](#) *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 331, and *Excerpts*, chap. 1, “Chinul’s Preface.”
- [143.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation.”
- [144.](#) This famous *gong’an* opens the collection *Wumen guan* (T 2005:48.292c) and is the *gong’an/huatou* that Dahui most commonly taught.
- [145.](#) For a typically provocative and insightful examination of this famous *wu gong’an*, see Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*.”
- [146.](#) For background on the development of doubt into a positive soteriological force in the Chan/Sōn tradition, see my article “The Transformation of Doubt.” A useful overview of the place of language in *kanhua* Sōn appears in Park, “Zen Language in Our Time.”

- [147.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Flawed Approaches to Sŏn Practice,” quoting *DHYL* 19, p. 891a.
- [148.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Flawed Approaches to Sŏn Practice.”
- [149.](#) Chinul uses the term *p’a/po* 破 (lit., “disintegrates,” “smashes to smithereens,” “explodes”) in reference to the disintegration of the doubt regarding the *hwadu* (see *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 352).
- [150.](#) My terminology here is influenced by Nāṇananda’s fascinating discussion of nonconceptualization in *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*, but the account of *kanhwa* derives from the outlines of the process described in the Chan and Sŏn traditions.
- [151.](#) *Tianmu Zhongfeng heshang guanglu*, Pinjie ed., (Shanghai, 1911; reprint ed., Korea [1977]), fasc. 17, p. 96b.
- [152.](#) A suggestion made by Yi Chong’ik (*Taehan Pulgyo Chogyŏ chong chunghŭng non*, p. 83). Ch’ŏngwŏnŏsa was located near the seaport of Naju in the southwest of the Korean peninsula. For Koryŏ/Song sea routes, see Yi Pyŏng-do, *Han’guk sa*, 2:390. Establishing the location of Yesŏng kang 禮成江, probably the main Korean port for the overseas trade, has been problematic; the most plausible location seems to have been in Hwanghae Province near present-day Inch’ŏn 仁川 (see Yi Pyŏng-do, *Han’guk sa* 2:314–317). Important information on these sea routes can also be found in the *Gaoli tujing*, kwŏn 39, pp. 93–95, and the Koryŏ section of the *Song History* (*Songshi* 487.1–21, in *Bonaben ershisi shi*, 30:24734–24744).
- [153.](#) After his second awakening experience (prompted by his reading of Li Tongxuan’s *Exposition of the Avataṃsakasūtra*), which occurred sometime between 1185 and 1188 at Pomunsa 普門寺 on Haga Mountain 下柯山 in southeastern Korea, Chinul left in 1188 for Kŏjosa 居祖寺 on Mount Kong 公山 to create the Samādhi and Prajñā Society. In 1197, Chinul and his colleagues set out for Kilsangsa 吉祥寺 (the monastery that would become known as Songgwangsa 松廣寺) in the far southwestern corner of Korea to reestablish the

retreat society. En route, they stopped in central Korea and spent three years at Sangmujuam on Mount Chiri. It was during his time there that Chinul had his third and final awakening while reading *Dahui Records*. I discussed this event briefly earlier in this introduction, in the section “*Excerpts* as Chinul’s Religious Autobiography.” For an overview of these years in Chinul’s career, see Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 17–27; see also my full translation of Chinul’s funerary stele (*Chogyesan Susōnsa Puril Pojo kuksa pimyoŏng*), which gives all this information, in *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 372–374.

[154.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation”; and cf. chap. 1, “Chinul’s Preface.”

[155.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Conclusion.”

[156.](#) Ibid.

[157.](#) Ibid.

[158.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation.”

[159.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Conclusion.”

[160.](#) “Taking a leap off the hundred-foot pole” (百尺竿頭進步) is a wellknown line from the forty-sixth case of the Chinese *gong’an* collection *Gateless Checkpoint*. See *Wumen guan*, *T* 2005:48.298c11–14.

[161.](#) *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 345–346.

[162.](#) Ibid.

[163.](#) Ibid., p. 337 (emphasis mine).

[164.](#) Ibid., p. 346. There is only a single similar statement made anywhere in *Excerpts* (in chap. 3, at the end of his “At What Point along the Path Does Awakening Occur?” section), where Chinul says, “The [Sōn school’s] separate transmission outside the teachings is not subject to this same limitation [as the Hwaōm teachings of Kyo].”

[165.](#) *Chin’gak kuksa ōrok*, *HPC* 6.40a11–12; translated in Jorgensen, *Seon Dialogues*, pp. 173–174.

[166.](#) The *Sōnmun yōmsong chip* was an anthology of 1,125 *kongans*, with prose and verse commentary, in thirty rolls,

compiled by Hyesim in 1226; it is the first indigenous Korean *kongan* collection. Beginning with stories concerning Śākyamuni Buddha, the work includes sūtra extracts, cases involving the twenty-eight traditional Indian patriarchs and their six Chinese successors, and episodes from the lives of later Chan masters. To each case are appended interpretative verses by both Hyesim and other Chan and Sŏn teachers. The first edition of the text was burned by the Mongols, and the revised editions of 1244 and 1248 added 347 new cases, to make a total of 1,472 *kongans*. For a brief description of the work and its different editions, see Tongguk Taehakkyo Pulgyo Munhwa Yŏn'guso, *Han'guk Pulgyo Chansul munhŏn ch'ongnok*, pp. 123–124. Substantial portions of the collection have been translated into English by John Jorgensen and Juhn Y. Ahn, in *Gongan Collections I and II*. For a discussion of “prose commentaries” (lit., “raising old cases”; *yŏmgo/nian'gu* 拈古) and “panegyric verses” (*songgo/songgu* 頌古) and other verse-explanations of Sŏn *kongan*, see Iriya Yoshitaka, Kajitani Sōnin, and Yanagida Seizan, *Setchō jūko*, pp. 291–304, and Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, pp. 240–263.

For Hyesim and his important role in the popularization of the *kanhwa* technique in Koryŏ Buddhism, see Ko Hyŏng-gon, *Haedong Chogyŏ chong ŭi yŏnwŏn mit kŭ choryu*, pp. 60–84. For general studies of his life and thought, see Nukariya Kaiten, *Chosŏn Sŏn'gyosa*, pp. 292–305, and Han Ki-du, *Han'guk Pulgyo sasang*, pp. 217–242. For Hyesim's *Discourse Records*, see *Chin'gak kuksa ŏrok*, HPC 6.1a–49c, and Kim Talchin, *Chinul, Hyesim, Kakhun, Han'guk ŭi sasang taejŏnjip*, pp. 205–375. Hyesim's associations with Chinul are discussed, and some excerpts from his memorial stele translated, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 28–32.

[167.](#) See the entries on all of these figures in Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v.

[168.](#) *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 353.

[169.](#) For these two types of *hwadu* investigation, see my article “Chinul's Systematization of Chinese Meditative Techniques

in Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” pp. 220–223, and *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 80–84.

[170.](#) See my more extensive treatment of the three mysterious gates in my article “Chan Hermeneutics: A Korean View.” For background on this hermeneutical category in Chan and Sŏn, see Seong-Uk Kim, “The Zen Theory of Language.”

[171.](#) Chinul uses the term “terse” (*saengnyak/xinglüe* 省略) with reference to the *hwadu* in *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 350 et passim.

[172.](#) For the specific sequence of these three mysterious gates, see Chinul’s *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Conclusion”; *Treatise on the Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood* (*Wŏndon sŏngbullon*), in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 286–287; and *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 330–331.

[173.](#) T’oeong Sŏngch’ŏl, *Sŏnmun chŏngnok*, see esp. chaps. 13 and 18. A few hints of Sŏngch’ŏl’s attitudes toward Chinul appear in an English anthology of his dharma talks, *Echoes from Mt. Kaya*; see, e.g., p. 153. For an extended discussion of Sŏngch’ŏl’s advocacy of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation and his critique of Chinul, see also Mueller, “Sŏngch’ŏl’s Radical Subitism,” and Yun, “Zen Master T’oeong Sŏngch’ŏl’s Doctrine.”

[174.](#) T’oeong Sŏngch’ŏl, *Sŏnmun chŏngnok*, p. 175.

[175.](#) Ibid., pp. 170, 161.

[176.](#) See ibid., p. 164 et passim.

[177.](#) Ibid., p. 167.

[178.](#) For these three checkpoints (*samgwan/san’guan* 三關) see Sŏngch’ŏl, ibid., pp. 108–110; they are discussed in Yun, “Zen Master T’oeong Sŏngch’ŏl’s Doctrine,” pp. 207–209. For references to maintaining the *hwadu* during wakefulness and sleep (*omae iryŏ/wumei yiru* 寤寐一如) in the works of these four Linji/Imje masters, see Dahui Zonggao (*DHYL* 27, p. 925a9); Gaofeng Yuanmiao (*Chanyao*, XZJ 1401:70.707b1); Mengshan Deyi (as quoted in *Chan’guan cejin*, T 2024:48.1099c7ff.); T’aego Pou (*T’aego hwasang ōrok* 1,

- HPC 6.678b10, *kwŏn* 2, p. 696b4). See also the discussion in Jorgensen, *Seon Dialogues*, pp. 349–350 and nn. 22, 23, 24.
- [179.](#) T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl, *Sŏnmun chŏngnok*, p. 209.
- [180.](#) For the changes Sŏngch'ŏl made in the Haeinsa seminary curriculum, see the discussion in Shim, *Korean Buddhism*, p. 215; discussed also in Uri Kaplan, "Transforming Orthodoxies," p. 92. For a summary of the content and textual history of the *Dunwu rudao yaomen lun*, see Miura and Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, pp. 413–415. There is an outdated translation by Blofeld, *The Zen Teaching of Hui Hai on Sudden Illumination*.
- [181.](#) *Biyan lu* 1, T 2003:48.142b11–12. To be fair, however, Yuanwu often contradicts himself in analyzing this connection between the word and the meaning: elsewhere in his commentary, for example, he notes, "Hear clearly the word (*ju*) distinct from the voice; don't look for anything in the meaning (*yi*)" (*Biyan lu* 4, T 2003:48.175a25–26). For Yuanwu's contribution to the development of *kanhwa* Sŏn, see Hsieh, "Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in's Teaching." A few selections from Yuanwu's writings have appeared in Cleary and Cleary, *Zen Letters*.
- [182.](#) See Hyujŏng's discussion of these two forms of *hwadu* investigation in *Sŏn'ga kwigam*, sec. 21, in Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, p. 93, and HPC 7.619c, where they correspond to the "dead word" (*sagu/siju* 死句) and the "live word" (*hwalgu/huoju* 活句), respectively; see also *Sŏn'ga kwigam*, Pŏpchŏng ed. and trans, sec. 12, p. 41.
- [183.](#) *T'aego hwasang ŏrok* 1, HPC 6.678c9; Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 109 et passim. See also discussion in Buswell, "'Short-Cut' Approach of K'an-hua Meditation," p. 347. Representative selections from T'aego's discourse record are rendered by Jorgensen in his *Seon Dialogues*, pp. 301–393.
- [184.](#) *T'aego hwasang ŏrok* 1, HPC 6.679b21–24; Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 114. "The road to Shu will be difficult" (Ch'ok to *nan/Shu dao nan* 蜀道難) is the title of a famous poem by the Tang poet Li Bo 李白 (701–762). Shu refers to Sichuan Province, in the southwest of China, which was then the wild frontier region of the Chinese empire. This long and

difficult journey was more than seven hundred leagues long, thus making it a metaphor for any sort of difficult undertaking. See Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 114 n. 1.

- [185.](#) See the several references culled by the renowned Japanese Rinzai (C. Linji) master Kajitani Sōnin 梶谷宗忍 (1914–1995), the former abbot of Shōkokuji 相國寺 in Kyōto, in his article “Daie” (esp. p. 268ff.).
- [186.](#) Araki Kengo, *Daiesho*, p. 102; Christopher Cleary, *Swampland Flowers*, p. 55.
- [187.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn,” quoting Zongmi, *DX* 2–1, p. 407c12–16.
- [188.](#) Paraphrasing *T'aego hwasang ōrok* 2, *HPC* 6.696a; Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 266ff.; and Yi Nŭng-hwa, *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa*, 2: 195ff.
- [189.](#) *T'aego hwasang ōrok* 2, *HPC* 6.696a20–21; Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 267.
- [190.](#) *Yuanjue jing*, *T* 842:17.913c28, 914a14.
- [191.](#) *T'aego hwasang ōrok* 2, *HPC* 6.696a24; Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 268.
- [192.](#) See *Biyan lu* 4, case 100, *T* 2003:48.223b.
- [193.](#) *T'aego hwasang ōrok* 2, *HPC* 6.696b2–8; Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 269.
- [194.](#) *T'aego hwasang ōrok* 2, *HPC* 6.696b19; Yi Yŏngmu, *T'aego Pou chip*, p. 272.
- [195.](#) *DX* 2–1, p. 408a3–5, quoted by Chinul in his *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn.” For Chinul’s treatment of this issue, see his *Excerpts*, chap. 3, secs. “Chinul’s Critique of Radical Subitism” through “Issues in Zongmi’s Statements about Subitism and Past Lives.”
- [196.](#) For *T'aego Pou*, Naong Hye'gŭn, and the latter-Koryŏ Sŏn tradition, see Nukariya Kaiten, *Chosŏn Sŏn'gyosa*, pp. 350–357, 360–384 (Naong); Takahashi Tōru, *Richō bukkyō*, pp. 321–344; Han Ki-du, “Koryŏ hogi ūi Sŏn sasang,” pp. 598–613, 613–639; Han Ki-du, *Han'guk Pulgyo sasang*, pp. 243–272, 273–310; Yi Nŭnghwa, *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa*, 3:500–514.

- [197.](#) For an overview of late-Koryŏ Sŏn thought, see Kwŏn Ki-jong, “Koryŏ hugi ūi Sŏn sasang yŏn’gu,” esp. pp. 163–167; and Kwŏn Ki-jong, *Koryŏ sidae Sŏn sasang yŏn’gu*.
- [198.](#) See *DHYL* 16, p. 879b, which Chinul extracts in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Dead Word of Numinous Awareness vs. the Live Word of the *Hwadu*.”
- [199.](#) *T’aego hwasang ŏrok* 1, *HPC* 6.678a15–20; see also Jorgensen, *Seon Dialogues*, pp. 346–348.
- [200.](#) I have identified this shift as one of the important early stages in the development of a distinctively indigenous strand of Korean Buddhism; see Buswell, “Imagining ‘Korean Buddhism,’” pp. 85–87.
- [201.](#) For a translation of the major documents generated by this debate, see Charles Muller, *Korea’s Great Buddhist-Confucian Debate*.
- [202.](#) For a brief overview of Kihwa’s career, see Charles Muller, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, pp. 24–35.
- [203.](#) Koreans know Hyujŏng better by his toponym Sŏsan *taesa* 西山大師; they are also more familiar with his role as a leader of the Korean monk militias that fought during the Hideyoshi invasions than as a religious figure. For an overview of Hyujŏng’s life and thought, see my article “Buddhism under Confucian Domination,” and Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, pp. 7–30.
- [204.](#) For a helpful discussion of the various strands of influence in Hyujŏng’s *Sŏn’ga kwigam*, including that coming via Chinul, see Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, pp. 3–6, and Jongmyung Kim, “Hyujŏng’s *Sŏn’ga kwigam*.” For a different English version, see Jorgensen, *Hyujeong: Selected Works*.
- [205.](#) Where Dahui had described eight maladies, Hyujŏng refers to Chinul’s list of ten. See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Investigating the *Mu Hwadu*,” and Hyujŏng’s parallel treatment in his *Sŏn’ga kwigam*, *HPC* 7.837a8–14, *HPC* 7.620a11–17, in Jorgensen, *Hyujeong: Selected Works*, p. 80; and Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, pp. 96–97. Hyujŏng also quotes

many of the very same passages from Dahui's *Letters* that Chinul includes in *Excerpts*.

- [206.](#) Yi Chi-gwan *sŏnim*, the former head lecturer at the Haeinsa seminary and administrative head (*chongmu wŏnjang*) of the Chogyŏ order, documents the history of the xylographic editions of *Excerpts* in his *Han'guk Pulgyo soŭi kyŏngjŏn yŏn'gu*, pp. 133–135.
- [207.](#) See *Tosŏ Chŏryo punkwa ch'ongsŏ* 都序節要分科捻叙, *HPC* 8.405a4–405b. According to *Pulgyo Munhwa Yŏn'gu So*, (*Han'guk Pulgyo ch'ansul munhŏn ch'ongnok*, p. 189), the full text of the *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo kwamun* is extant in a xylographic edition dated 1701 from Pongamsa 鳳巖寺, but I have not been able to procure a copy of this edition.
- [208.](#) See Yuil's mention of this text in his *Preface to Essential Notes to Preface and Excerpts* (*Sŏ To yo ki sŏ* 序都要記叙), the general preface to his *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, *HPC* 10.178a; and see *Pulgyo Munhwa Yŏn'gu So*, *Han'guk Pulgyo ch'ansul munhŏn ch'ongnok*, p. 193.
- [209.](#) See *CYH*, by Hoeam Chŏnghye, *HPC* 9.546a–560b (this text is also known by the alternate title *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok sagi hwajok*); *CYKM*, by Yŏndam Yuil, *HPC* 10.196a–213b.
- [210.](#) For these different section outlines, see the discussion in Ch'oe Yŏnsik, "*Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok chŏryo pyŏngip sagi rŭl t'onghae pon Pojo sammun ŭi sŏnggyŏk*," esp. pp. 118–124. For these outlines as a type of hermeneutical superstructure, see my discussion in Buswell, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment*, pp. 36–38.
- [211.](#) My account of Paekp'a and Ch'oŭi has benefited greatly from the extensive research on these two figures in Seong-Uk Kim's superb UCLA dissertation, "Korean Sŏn Buddhism in the 19th Century." See also the entries on these two figures in Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v.v. "Ch'oŭi Ŭisun" and "Paekp'a Kŭngsŏn."
- [212.](#) Paekp'a and Ch'oŭi make virtually the same claim: see Paekp'a's *Hand Mirror on the Sŏn School* (*Sŏnmun sugyŏng* 禪文手鏡), *HPC* 10.519b2, (noted in Seong-Uk Kim, "Korean Sŏn Buddhism," p. 143); Ch'oŭi's *Desultory Words on the*

Four Distinctive Types in the Sŏn School (*Sŏnmun sabyŏn manŏ*), *HPC* 10.828a1 (noted in Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” p. 181).

[213.](#) These two important categories are discussed at length in *Excerpts*, especially in the following sections: chap. 2, “The Approaches of Dharma and Person,” chap. 3, “Recapitulation of the Gist of the *Special Practice Record*,” and chap. 3, “The Role of Numinous Awareness in Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation.”

[214.](#) *Sŏnmun sugyŏng*, *HPC* 10.519b2–4. See discussion in Seong-Uk Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” p. 143; see also *Sŏnmun sabyŏn manŏ*, *HPC* 10.827c22–828a1.

[215.](#) *Sŏnmun sugyŏng*, *HPC* 10.519b2–3; Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” p. 144.

[216.](#) *Sŏnmun sugyŏng*, *HPC* 10.519b6–7; Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” p. 145.

[217.](#) *Susŏn kyŏlsa mun*, *HPC* 10.534a3–9.

[218.](#) See Seong-Uk Kim, “Zen Theory of Language.”

[219.](#) See the translations in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 286–287 (*Wŏndon sŏngbullon*), pp. 330–331 (*Kanhua kyŏrŭiron*).

[220.](#) My former student Seong-Uk Kim has convinced me that my earlier rendering of this passage from *Kanhua kyŏrŭiron* is in error. (“The student becomes the master”!) Where I translate the phrase *ko sŏnsa/gu chansi* (古禪師) generically as “the Sŏn masters of old” (*Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 331), Dr. Kim (“Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” p. 114) suggests that this phrase actually refers to “the Sŏn master [Cheng]Gu,” following the custom of referring to Sŏn teachers by the last syllable of their dharma name. He is clearly right. Hence, my translation there should be revised as follows: “Nevertheless, setting up these three mysterious gates was the idea of Sŏn master [Cheng]Gu” (emphasis added). *Chinul* gives an extensive quotation from Jianfu Chenggu in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Definitive and Conventional Practices Need Not Be Balanced,” where he also calls him “Sŏn master Gu.”

- [221.](#) *Susŏn kyŏlsa mun*, HPC 10.534a2–9; Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” p. 157.
- [222.](#) See *Susŏn kyŏlsa mun*, HPC 10.536a7–9; this passage is translated and discussed in Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” 162.
- [223.](#) See *Sŏnmun sugyŏng*, HPC 10.536b8–11; Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” pp. 163.
- [224.](#) *Pulcho yogyŏng*. I have prepared a complete English-language translation of the *Pulcho yogyŏng* for publication by the Wŏn Buddhist order.
- [225.](#) *The Scripture of the Founding Master (Taejonggyŏng)*, chap. 6, “Doubts Clarified,” exchange no. 40, in *Scriptures of Won-Buddhism*, pp. 282–283; Chung, *Scriptures*, p. 265. One of UCLA’s PhD students, Frederick Ranallo-Higgins, has done extensive work on the soteriological underpinnings of the Wŏn Buddhist order and I have benefited from his insights on this topic.
- [226.](#) *The Scripture of the Founding Master (Taejonggyŏng)*, chap. 10, “Belief and Dedication,” exchange no. 2, in *Scriptures of Won-Buddhism*, pp. 344–345; Chung, *Scriptures*, pp. 294–295.
- [227.](#) *The Principal Book of Won-Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, chap. 1, “The Il-Won-Sang,” in *The Scriptures of Won-Buddhism*, pp. 4–7; Chung, *Scriptures*, p. 120–122.
- [228.](#) *The Scripture of the Founding Master (Taejonggyŏng)*, pt. 3, “Practice,” chap. 17, “Stages of Dharma Rank,” in *Scriptures of Won-Buddhism*, pp. 82–84; Chung, *Scriptures*, pp. 163–164.
- [229.](#) For a general overview of the Chosŏn-period seminary curriculum, including the *Sajip*, see the extensive coverage in Kim Yong-t’ae, *Chosŏn hugi Pulgyosa yŏn’gu*, pp. 223–231, 250–251. My coverage here of the historical development of the *Sajip* as a collection has benefited from the materials collected in Uri Kaplan’s dissertation on the contemporary Korean monastic curriculum, “Transforming Orthodoxies: Buddhist Curriculums and Educational Institutions in Contemporary South Korea.” I was privileged to have been

asked to serve as an external member of Dr. Kaplan's dissertation committee and I appreciated the opportunity to read and respond to his research.

[230.](#) Dahui's *Letters* are embedded as the last section of his larger *Discourse Records*, hence the occasional variation between *Letters* and *Records* in referring to this text in the literature. See Dahui [Pujue chanshi] shu, in Dahui [Pujue chanshi] yulu, T 1998A:47.916b8. There is a complete modern Japanese translation of the *Letters* by Araki Kengo, *Daiesho*. Among the several Korean translations published (often in connection with larger *Sajip* translation projects), perhaps the best and most heavily annotated is Chisang, *Sōjang*. A partial English translation has been made by Christopher Cleary, *Swampland Flowers*.

[231.](#) The *Essentials of Chan* (Sōnyo/Chanyao) was first printed in Korea in 1354; it was reprinted on the peninsula more frequently than any of the other three *Sajip* texts. See discussion and sources cited in Kaplan, "Transforming Orthodoxies," p. 33 and n. 62.

[232.](#) Gaofeng's *Essentials of Chan*; see Gaofeng Yuanmiao chanshi Chanyao, ZZ 2.27.4/XZJ 1401:70.702a–713a. There is an excellent Korean translation, with extensive annotation, by T'onggwang, *Kobong hwasang Sōnyo*, Ŏrok. I have discussed the text, and these three constituents of *kanhwa* practice (viz., great faith, great fervor, great doubt) in my article "The Transformation of Doubt." I am currently preparing a complete, annotated translation of Gaofeng's *Essentials of Chan*, one of several projects I am determined to finish in this lifetime.

[233.](#) 若導初學 則先以禪源集別行錄 立如實知見 次以禪要語錄 [alt. 書狀] 掃除知解之病 而指示活路也. This passage appears in Hyujōng's biography of Chiōm, *Record of the Practice of the Rustic Gaffer Pyōksong* (Pyōksongdang Yaro haengnok 碧松堂堃老行錄), which is included as the first section of the *Record of Pyōksong* (Pyōksong nok 碧松錄). The passage is cited in the annotation to an alternate edition of the same text with the title *Traces of the Practice of the Great Master*

Pyöksong (*Pyöksongdang taesa haengjök* 碧松堂行大師行蹟), which is included in his compilation *Samno haengjök* (Traces of the practice of the three masters); see *HPC* 7.753b2–4, and for the passage mentioning the *Sajip*, see *HPC* 7:753c n.9. This passage (taken from the text with the alternate title *Pyöksongdang taesa haengjök*) is also listed in a series of citations to the Chosŏn-dynasty monastic curriculum compiled by Nam To-yŏng, “*Han’guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ rŭl chungsimŭro pon Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyoyuk*,” and cited in Kaplan, “Transforming Orthodoxies,” p. 27n.41.

[234.](#) This Ansimsa printing includes all three of the *Sajip* texts (the only exception being Zongmi’s *Preface*). See Kaplan, “Transforming Orthodoxies,” p. 48 n. 105, citing an unpublished master’s thesis by Son Sŏng-p’il.

[235.](#) 先以都序節要 決釋佛法之知見 以固其基本 次禪要書狀 擊碎佛法知解之病. This passage appears in the *Chewŏltang taesa haengjök* 霽月大師堂集行蹟 (Traces of the practice of the great master Chewŏl), a religious biography of Kyŏnghŏn that is appended to the *Chewŏltang taesa chip* (Records of the great master Chewŏl), *HPC* 8.126c5–7. The passage is noted in Nam To-yŏng, “Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyoyuk,” and cited in Kaplan, “Transforming Orthodoxies,” p. 27n.41. See also the parallel discussion of Chewŏl Kyŏnghŏn in Seong-Uk Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” p. 91.

[236.](#) For an extensive treatment of this phrase, “relinquish Kyo and enter into Sŏn,” see Kim, “Korean Sŏn Buddhism,” pp. 82–93.

[237.](#) These verses appear in *Yŏngwŏltang taesa munjip*, *HPC* 8.234b–235b; see the discussion, with a very tentative rendering, in Kaplan, “Transforming Orthodoxies,” pp. 53–58.

[238.](#) See Kaplan, “Transforming Orthodoxies,” pp. 39–40.

[239.](#) *Yŏngwŏltang taesa munjip*, *HPC* 8.234c12–16.

[240.](#) This is the order followed in many seminaries of the modern Chogyŏ Order (at least until very recently). See Yi Chi-gwan’s *Sajip sagi*, an exhaustive set of study notes on all four texts of the *Sajip* prepared in 1968 for reference by Korean seminary students, and the complete, annotated translation of the

entire *Sajip* published a decade later by Han Chöng-söp and Chöng Chi-ch'öl, *Sajip yökhae*.

- [241.](#) A chart of Yi Nŭng-hwa's curriculum from his *Han'guk Pulgyo t'ongsa*, along with a treatment of other Korean studies of Yi's account, appear in Kaplan, "Transforming Orthodoxies," pp. 61–64. For Yi Nŭng-hwa's role in building the field of modern Buddhist studies in Korea, see the article by Jongmyung Kim, "Yi Nŭnghwa, Buddhism, and the Modernization of Korea."
- [242.](#) For a convenient overview of Zongmi's subsequent influence in East Asian Buddhism, see Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 39–45.
- [243.](#) For Zongmi's influence on Xixia Zen, see the fascinating series of articles by the Russian scholar Karill J. Solonin, e.g., "Tangut Chan and Guifeng Zongmi," "Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia," and "Sinitic Buddhism in the Tangut State." See also the summary of Solonin's conclusions in Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 45–50. I am grateful to George Keyworth for calling my attention to the range of Solonin's articles on Tangut Buddhism.
- [244.](#) For these Japanese xylographic printings of Zongmi's *Preface*, see Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 44–45, 59.
- [245.](#) Yuanmiao's "three essentials" are prominently covered, and attributed to Gaofeng by name, in Hyujöng's *Sön'ga kwigam*, HPC 7.619c21, 627a13–14, Jorgensen, *Hyujeong: Selected Works*, p. 75, and Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, pp. 94–95. Gaofeng's original passage on these three essential appears in *Chanyao*, XZJ 1401:70.708b.
- [246.](#) For a fascinating overview of the range of contemporary responses to the traditional monastic curriculum, see Kaplan, "Transforming Orthodoxies," pp. 113–145.
- [247.](#) See, as but one of many examples, the recent edition of the *Chöryo* and the rest of the *Sajip* texts: *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok chöryo pyöngip sagi*, published in 2008 by the Education Department of the Chogyae Order.

Notes

1. *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok chöryo pyöngip sagi*, in *Han'guk Pulgyo chönsö* (Collected works of Korean Buddhism), vol. 4, pp. 741a–766b; hereafter cited as *HPC* 4.741a–766b.
2. For a convenient table of these different schematic outlines, see the discussion in Ch'oe Yön-sik, “*Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok chöryo pyöngip sagi rül t'onghae pon Pojo sammun ũi sönggyök*,” esp. pp. 118–124. For these schematic outlines as a type of hermeneutical superstructure, see my discussion in Buswell, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment*, pp. 36–38. For Han Chöng-söp's section headings, see his Korean-language translation in Han Chöng-söp and Chöng Chi-ch'öl, *Sajip yökhae*.
3. *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok chöryo sagi hae*, by Hoeam Chönghye (*HPC* 9.546a–560b; this text is also known by the title *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok chöryo sagi hwajok*); *Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok chöryo kwamok pyöngip sagi*, by Yöndam Yuil (*HPC* 10.196a–213b).
4. The most widely used modern edition of the *Chöryo*, compiled by An Chin-ho and published by Pömnyunsa in 1957, contains several serious misprints or misreadings that considerably alter the meaning of the text. Pak Sang-guk, in his study of the *Chöryo*, corrected these errors on the basis of readings appearing in different Chosön-dynasty xylographic editions of the text. For his list of alternate readings, see Pak Sang-guk, “*Pöpchip pyörhaeng nok chöryo pyöngip sagi rül t'onghae pon Pojo ũi Sön sasang yön'gu*,” pp. 14–24. Most of these errors, fortunately, have been corrected in the contemporary edition of the *Chöryo* that appears in the *Han'guk Pulgyo chönsö*, the edition I used in preparing this translation. In the few cases where I find one of the alternate readings compiled by Pak to be preferable, I note them in the annotation.

5. Moguja 牧牛子 (The Oxherder) is Chinul's personal sobriquet. Chinul's characterization of Shenhui draws from the Sixth Patriarch Huineng's own description as recounted in an exchange from the Song-dynasty edition of the *Platform Sūtra*. There, the Sixth Patriarch denigrates Shenhui's use of Buddhist doctrinal concepts in response to his questions as displaying merely "intellectual understanding" (*chihae/zhijie* 知解); see *LZTJ*, p. 359c4, and cf. McRae, *Platform Sutra*, p. 98. (I should note that this exchange, with its denigration of Shenhui, does not appear in the eighth-century Dunhuang edition of the *Platform Sūtra*.) Chinul quotes this same passage at the end of his *Excerpts* (see chap. 3, "Understanding Derived from the Dead Word" section); I provide in my annotation there (*Excerpts*, n. 294) Yuil's exegesis of the term. As both Zongmi and Chinul describe the teachings of Shenhui, Shenhui deployed readily understandable concepts to explain Chan to his students. In the final section of this text, Chinul describes "intellectual understanding" as an obstacle to mastering the shortcut expedient of *kanhwa* Sŏn. The compound "esteemed master of intellectual understanding" (*chihae jongsa* 知解宗師) is sometimes parsed even more pejoratively as a *chihaejong sa*, viz., "teacher in the school of intellectual understanding," suggesting that Shenhui did not have the direct experience of awakening expected of a true Sŏn/Chan master but was instead little more than a Kyo scholiast. This is the interpretation of the compound given in T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl's 退翁性徹 (1912–1993) devastating critique of Chinul and, by extension, of Zongmi and Shenhui, in his *Sŏnmun chŏngno* (p. 202). See my discussion of Sŏngch'ŏl's critique in the introduction to this volume.

6. "Direct heir" or "formal dharma successor" (*chŏcha/dizi* 嫡子): lit., a son (often the firstborn son) of one's primary wife. This term came to be used in the Chan school to refer to the immediate successors in the main lineage of a teacher (as in *Dongshan Liangjie yulu*, T 1986B:47.524c3). It is interesting to note here that Chinul, writing nearly four hundred years

after Zongmi, does not support Zongmi's contention that Shenhui was the legitimate successor of Huineng. Zongmi had gone so far as to call Shenhui the seventh patriarch of the school in a number of passages: e.g., *CXT*, p. 867b (see also Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 71–74); and *YJJDSC* 3b, p. 535a6–7 (see also Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 187–188). The obvious success of the rival Nanyue 南嶽/Hongzhou lineage in establishing Chan solidly in China, coupled with the extinction of the Heze line following its brief respite under Zongmi, may explain Chinul's acceptance of the Hongzhou school's epistemological position and practice in later sections of his *Excerpts*.

7. As Chinul's commentators explain, individuals of average and inferior capacities in spiritual matters require the help of scriptural instruction to guide them toward enlightenment. They should first use the conceptual descriptions of the Heze school to assess the absolute and provisional aspects of the mind and to outline the proper course and expected results of meditation. This is an expedient method of encouraging their practice. Once they are clear about the path of practice, they should abandon these provisional descriptions and enter the "living road to salvation" via the path of *hwadu* practice. See *CYH*, *HPC* 9.546b; *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.196b. See also Chinul's summary of this position in chap. 3 of *Excerpts*, at the beginning of the section "The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation."
8. "Vade mecum" or "handbook" (lit., "tortoise-speculum"; *kwigam/guijian* 龜鑑): tortoise shells and metal mirrors or speculums were both used as divination devices from earliest times in China. "To undertake a tortoise divination" (*chakku/zuogui* 作龜; see *Liji* 禮記 26, "Jiao Te Sheng" 郊特牲 sec., fol. 4a9; in *Shisan jing zhu shu* 5, p. 498) and "to consult the tortoise" (*pokku/bugui* 卜龜; see *Shang shu* 尚書 13.9b8, in *Shisan jing zhu shu*, p. 187a) are common expressions used in early Sinitic literature to refer to the practice of applying heat to a tortoise shell and then forecasting events according to the cracks the heat makes in the shell.

Speculums (*kam/jian* 鑑/監), magic mirrors, also appear early on in classical Chinese texts, conveying a sense of reflecting the true and essential, especially in conduct (cf., *Shang shu* 19.24a1, in *Shisan jing zhu shu*, p. 299b). Moreover, the use of speculums as divination devices is implied in the secular literature as well—for example, “these were all previously predicted portents” (*cha kae chŏn’gam chi hŏm/zi jie qianjian zhi yan* 此皆前監之驗; see Sun Zijing’s 孫子荊 *Wei Shi Zhongrong yu Sun Hao shu* 爲石仲容與孫皓書, *Wen xuan* 393.43.11a). By the Tang period, the two characters appear together as a compound implying a “guide (to conduct or practice),” “handbook,” or “vade mecum”; see *Tang shu* 唐書 140c, 12a11, *Bonaben ershisi shi* 20, p. 15695; and *Song shi* 宋史 75.2b2, *Bonaben ershisi shi* 29, p. 22928. From at least the late eighth century onward, we find the compound turning up in Buddhist compositions; see, for example, Chengguan’s *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* 2, XZJ 227:5.64a; *Biyan lu* 5, case 50, T 2003:48.185b5; and the title of the Korean master Hyujŏng’s *Son’ga kwigam*.

9. The “successive transmission of the esoteric intent” is an oblique reference to the transmission of the mind from the Buddha to the patriarchs, claimed by the Sŏn school to be a transmission entirely separate from the teachings found in the scriptures. The arrival of Bodhidharma, the putative founder of the Chan/Sŏn school, in China with the Chan lineage is referred to in the literature as his “esoteric intent in coming from the West”; see, e.g., *Congrong lu* 4, T 2004:48.266b15–16. Therefore, some Sŏn adepts denigrate the sūtras as containing only the words—conceptual descriptions of dharma—rather than the mind—the enlightened insight—of the Buddha himself, which is what Sŏn transmits. As Chinul and Zongmi understood this “esoteric intent,” the Sŏn ideals presented in its “separate transmission” were not intended to disparage the teachings of the sūtras or to incite students to ignore their doctrines. Rather, the Sŏn message was meant to point out that the truth lies beyond the conceptual descriptions found in words, thus encouraging the student

toward direct realization of that truth. Chinul believed that abandoning the scriptures completely was as much a fault as clinging to them; he therefore tries here to vindicate the utility of conceptual understanding in developing meditative cognition.

10. “Minds in a haze” is a relatively free rendering for *myōnghaeng yŏn/mingxing ran* 冥淖然, which has the sense of dimness or diffuseness. See *Huainanzi* 8.5b7, and *Zhuangzi* 3, Tian di 天地 sec. 13, p. 619.

11. “Numinous, aware, and never dark” (alt., “numinous awareness is never dark”) (*yōngji pulmae/lingzhi bumei* 靈知不昧): according to Zongmi (*Yuanjue jing lüe shu zhu* 1, T 1795:39.533c7), the locus classicus for this phrase is the *Foding jing* 佛頂經—usually an alternate title of the *Shoulengyan jing* (**Śūraṃgamasūtra*). I have not been able to locate the quotation in that indigenous scripture, but the idea is clearly conveyed at *Shoulengyan jing* 1, T 945:19.107a29–107b1. The phrase is commonly used by both Zongmi and Chengguan (see the latter’s *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu chao* 1, XZJ 200:7.801a.16; and *Xinyao jian*, in CDL 30, p. 459b23–24) and appears in Sŏn texts as well (see *Biyan lu* 10, case 99, T 2003:48.222c24). For a fuller discussion of the meaning of “awareness” in this context, Zongmi, in his preface to *YJJDSC*, explains, “The mind is quiescent and yet aware. [Note:] Quiescence is the real essence, which is firm, steady and immovable. It has the meaning of immutability. Awareness is the awareness of and attentiveness to that essence itself, which is bright and never obscured. It can neither be rejected nor clung to. It has the meaning of revealing the essence.” *YJJDSC*, p. 468a16–20; and see *Yuanjue jing da shu xu*, ZZ 243A:9.323c.

12. “The aspect of ‘person’” refers to the soteriological stratagems of Sŏn; see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Approaches of Dharma and Person,” and the discussion in the introduction. Yuil explains why the other schools are “deeply imbued with excellent expedients” as follows: “The Hongzhou school explains the adaptable function of the numinous awareness to

those who languish in the nonverbal. The Oxhead school explains the immutable essence of the numinous awareness to those who languish in names and characteristics. Since neither the Hongzhou nor the Oxhead schools is separate from the essence and function of the numinous awareness of the Heze school, why would one accept the Heze school but reject the Hongzhou or Oxhead school?" (CYKM, HPC 10.196b14–18). Chŏnghye offers the same interpretation in CYH, HPC 9.546b11–13.

13. Yuil glosses "source" here as referring to "the numinous awareness of the Heze school, which is the source of the dharma taught by the Hongzhou and Oxhead schools." CYKM, HPC 10.196b18–19.
14. "All-encompassing perspective" (*yunghoe/ronghui* 融會) is an essential component throughout the whole of Chinul's thought. By knowing the essence of the mind—the numinous awareness that is the source of all the provisional descriptions of reality found in the various traditions of both Sŏn and Kyo—one is able to recognize the soteriological value of all those teachings.
15. See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation."
16. "Genuine masters in our tradition" (*ponbun chongsa/benfen zongshi* 本分宗師): a Chan/Sŏn term for enlightened masters who have understood their "original share" or "original endowment" (*ponbun/benfen* 本分), i.e., what is most fundamental about the mind and practice; cf. *Biyan lu* 1, case 10, T 2003:48.140a1; see also the discussion in Jorgensen, *Seon Dialogues*, pp. 24–25. The term is often used within the *kanhwa* Sŏn tradition to refer to teachers whose awakening experience has been sanctioned by an enlightened master and who are thus considered to be successors in a recognized transmission lineage.
17. "Living road that leads to salvation" (*ch'ulsin hwallo/chushen huolu* 出身活路): "leads to salvation" (*ch'ulsin*, lit., "escaping the body") refers to the sphere of perfect freedom attained as a result of following the shortcut approach of *kanhwa* Sŏn;

see *Yunmen guanglu* 1, *T* 1988:47.545c19. “Living road” (*hwallo*, lit., “road to life”) is a synonym for *hwadu* practice, which does not allow for any understanding along the pathways of words and letters; see *Biyan lu* 8, case 77, *T* 2003:48.204c. See also *Biyan lu* 7, case 70, *T* 2003:48.199c5–6, which specifically correlates the “road to salvation” with “investigation of the live word” of the *hwadu*.

18. Previously, Chinul had criticized Sōn students’ contempt for the scriptural teachings. Here he points out the hypocrisy of those who use the statements in the Sōn scriptures as an excuse to reject the scriptural teachings of Buddhism but even then do not practice meditation. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.196b–c.
19. The *Awakening of Faith*, *DSQXL*, p. 575c; cf. Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 28.
20. For ease in comparing the text of the *Pōpchip pyōrhaeng nok* with similar passages in other works of Zongmi, I will note all parallel passages in Zongmi’s *Zhonghua chuanxindi Chanmen shizi chengxi tu* (*CXT*), *Yuanjue jing da shu chao* (*YJJDSC*), and *Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu* (*DX*). For this passage see *CXT*, p. 870a1-4 (*XZJ* 110:435c1-4; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 295).
21. *CXT*, pp. 871b14–872a9 (*XZJ* 110:436b14–436c9; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 317); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 87–88. The Heze school is the last of the seven Chan schools covered in the *YJJDSC*; the description there, however, differs considerably from what we have here. See also *DX* 1–2, pp. 402c27–403a10; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 187–188.
22. A metaphor common especially to the Prajñāpāramitā texts; see, e.g., *Mohe bore boluomi jing* 1, *T* 223:8.217a22, and *Jin’gang jing*, *T* 235:8.752b27. The *Dazhidu lun* explains, “‘Like a dream’ means that there is nothing real that can be called reality. When we awaken from a dream we know that there was nothing real and we only laugh. With people, it is exactly the same. In the sleep of being bound by the fetters, there is really nothing binding us. Likewise, when we attain

the path and awaken, we can only laugh. For this reason, it is said to be ‘like a dream’” (*Dazhidu lun* 6, T 1509:25.101c, 103b29–c1).

- [23.](#) “Magic and miracles” (*sinbyōn/shenbian* 神變) refers to the various supernatural powers (*abhijñā*) that buddhas and bodhisattvas display in order to inspire sentient beings toward enlightenment. Generically, these may refer to their use of body, speech, and mind to instruct others. The *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* (*Dabaoji jing*) includes an entire scripture on various types of magic and miracles displayed by bodhisattvas, starting with speaking the dharma, admonishing others, and such supernatural powers as telekinesis; see *Dabaoji jing* 86, T 310:11.492b–493c. A list of eighteen types of magic and miracles is commonly offered in Mahāyāna literature, including shrinking or expanding the size of one’s body, flying through the air, or raining fire or water from one’s torso.
- [24.](#) See my introduction, the section titled “Numinous Awareness and Tracing Back the Radiance,” for discussion of this crucial term. In other texts we find instead of “source” (*wōn/yuan* 源) the phrase “awareness is the gateway (*mun/men* 門) to all wonders” (e.g., *DX* 1-2, p. 403a2). This phrase is adapted from *Laozi* 老子 1; see Chengguan’s discussion at *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 1, T 1736:36.2b. Both here and in the *CXT* reading (p. 871b18) we find “source,” which is an important difference: as the source, this awareness is essentially nondual but nevertheless dynamic enough to manifest in any dualist form (viz., as “wonders”).
- [25.](#) The six rebirth destinies (*yukto/liudao* 六道, *ṣaḍgati*) are the six levels of existence into which a sentient being can be reborn: (1) the hells, (2) animal realms, (3) hungry ghosts, (4) demigods, or *asuras*, (5) humans, (6) and heavenly beings. (*Asuras* are sometimes omitted, leaving five destinies.) See Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “*gati*”; *Daji famen jing* (*Saṅgītisūtra*) 2, T 12:1.221b10-11.

- [26.](#) Chinul quotes this passage again later in his exposition; see *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “A Comparison of Chengguan and Zongmi.”
- [27.](#) This phrase, “they all have no-thought as their source” (以無念爲宗), the hallmark of the so-called Southern school of Chan/Sŏn, appears in the Dunhuang edition of the *Liuzu dashi fabao tan jing*, T 2007:48.338c15-16; the later Song edition instead reads “have samādhi and prajñā as their source” (以定慧爲宗) (LZTJ, p. 352c13). See also Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, p. 137n.69, for detailed references to no-thought in canonical materials and in the works of Shenhui.
- [28.](#) “Quiescent radiance” (*chŏkcho/jizhao* 寂照) is a term typically glossed to mean that the essence of mind is characterized by quiescence, its functioning or outward manifestation by radiance. I also find intriguing Jan Yün-hua’s rendering of this term as “nirvāṇa-illumination,” in his translation from Zongmi’s *Preface*; see Jan, “Tsong-mi,” p. 40. Jan’s suggestion clarifies that nirvāṇa, often thought to be simply a state of extinction (a typical Sinographic translation for nirvāṇa is *chŏngmyŏl/jimie* 寂滅, or “quiescent extinction”), is actually a fully dynamic state.
- [29.](#) CXT, p. 870a13–b2 (XZJ 110:435c13–435d2; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 298); Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 231–234; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 84; YJJDSC, p. 532c21–533a1 (where this is the first school covered); DX 1–2, p. 402b21–29.
- [30.](#) CXT, pp. 870b4–871a11 (XZJ 110:435d6–436a11; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 307); Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 236–238; Broughton, pp. *Zongmi on Chan*, 84–87; YJJDSC, p. 543b7–24 (where this is the fourth school covered). The critique is at YJJDSC, p. 543b24–c1, and DX 1–2, p. 402c20–27.
- [31.](#) See the parallel in the *Awakening of Faith* using pottery and clay; DSQXL, p. 577a; Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 45. For the Indian locus classicus of this simile, see *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.44ff. (Hume, *Upanishads*, pp. 240–241).

- [32.](#) “The four great material elements” (*mahābhūta*), or elementary qualities, are earth (viz., solidity), water (viz., cohesion), fire (viz., warmth, maturation), and wind (viz., mobility).
- [33.](#) *Lengqie jing* (*Laṅkāvatārasūtra*) 4, *T* 670:16.510b and 512b. The “four modes of birth” (*saseng/sisheng* 四生, *yonī*) is a classification of living beings based on mode of conception: (1) oviparous, (2) viviparous, (3) moisture-born, like insects or worms, and (4) apparitionally born, like the divinities or hell-denizens. See *Jin’gang jing*, *T* 235:8.749a6–7; Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books*, p. 25; Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v., “*yonī*.”
- [34.](#) This quote does not appear precisely as stated in any of the three Chinese translations of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*. In the CXT, the quotation appears as *u pul ō sin/you fo yu xin* 又佛語心, which occurs in the chapter titles of the four-roll translation by Guṇabhadra (*T* 670:16.480a). In Chan literature, however, the quote is commonly cited as it appears here: see, e.g., Mazu, *CDL* 6, p. 246a; Yanshou’s *Zongjing lu* 57, *T* 2016:48.742c.
- [35.](#) *Lengqie jing* 2, *T* 670:16.493a27–b1, with slight adaptations.
- [36.](#) CXT, p. 871a14–851b2–3 (XZJ 110:436a14–436b3; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 313); Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 234–236; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 86–87; YJJDSC, p. 534c11–16 (where this is the fifth school covered); *DX* 1–2, p. 402c3–10.
- [37.](#) This specific formulation (*yōk yō monghwan/yi ru menghuan* 亦如夢幻) is found most commonly in Chan sources. See, e.g., *Zongjing lu* 34, *T* 2016:48.0614b04). For its locus classicus, see *Mohe bore boluomi jing* (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*) 8, *T* 223:8.276b4.
- [38.](#) Adapted from the opening lines of the *Heart Sūtra*, *Bore boluomituo xin jing*, *T*. 251:8.848c7.
- [39.](#) CXT, p. 871b3–10 3 (XZJ 110:436b3–436b10; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 315); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 87.

- [40.](#) “A boat that crosses over” refers to the previous loving-kindness and wholesome actions because good actions ferry one across to the other shore of nirvāṇa. “A boat that capsizes along the way” refers to greed and hatred that drown one in the sea of suffering.
- [41.](#) CXT, p. 875a18–b6 (XZJ 110:438a18–b6; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 343); Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, p. 238; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 99–100.
- [42.](#) In the text of the *PCPHN*, Zongmi clearly intended to extol the approach of the Heze school alone. Chinul, however, through his broad acquaintance with Zongmi’s writings (and probably also with the advantage of over three centuries of hindsight), wants to vindicate, at least partially, the views of the rival schools. Chinul sees a more profound intent behind the conclusions Zongmi draws here and will quote from another of Zongmi’s works, his *Preface*, to demonstrate it. His detailed commentary here seeks to show that Zongmi did not really intend to slight the other three schools and extol only that of Heze; rather, Zongmi was employing expedients to guide his readers, regardless of their sectarian persuasions, to a deeper understanding of Sŏn.
- [43.](#) Zongmi’s massive sourcebook on Chan, the *Comprehensive Expressions of the Fount of Chan Collection* (*Chanyuan zhuquan ji*), reputedly compiled in one hundred rolls, is no longer extant; doubts raised by contemporary scholars about its authenticity are, I think, adequately countered by Jan Yün-hua (“Two Problems,” pp. 39–42). Whenever Chinul refers to the full *Chan Collection*, he is always referring to its *Preface*.
- [44.](#) DX 1–2, p. 402b–c. For the Northern school, see p. 402b18–402c3; for the Oxhead school, see p. 402c3–15. See the extensive treatment of these three broad categories of Chan schools in Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, chap. 9; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 120–124.
- [45.](#) The “embryo of sanctity” (*sŏngtae/shengtai* 聖胎) refers to the adept on the three stages of worthiness (*samhyŏn/sanxian* 三

賢), the three initial stages of the bodhisattva path prior to the bodhisattva bhūmis: viz., the ten abidings, ten practices, and ten dedications. In Sōn texts, the phrase “constantly nurture the embryo of sanctity” refers to cultivation that follows the initial understanding-awakening, during which the inchoate embryo of buddhahood is nurtured until finally the fetus matures and is born into the “family,” or lineage, of the buddhas at the initial level of the ten bhūmis. This phrase is adapted from the *Mazu Daoyi chanshi guanglu*, XZJ 1304:119.811a10.

46. DX 1–2, p. 402c15–29. For the Hongzhou and Heze schools, see pp. 402c15–403a11.
47. Ibid., p. 403a11–15.
48. Ibid., p. 402b. The simile is taken from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Dabanniepan jing* [Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra] 2, T 374:12.376c11–17; *Nanben niepan jing* 2, T 375:12.616b11–12). The Sanskrit Siddham letter for the high front vowel *i* 伊 was a triangular arrangement of three dots; hence, if any dot were out of place or missing, the letter was not formed properly. See Chengguan’s description in *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 7, T 1736:36.47a–b. For an example of the orthography, see *Xitan zuji*, T 1232.54.1187c3. Siddham is the Sanskrit script that was most commonly known to the East Asian Buddhist tradition and was used especially in Chinese incantatory materials. It was a North Indian written script that was derived from Brahmī and was itself the predecessor of the Devanāgarī script used today in India. For background on this script, see Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Siddham.”
49. *Wanshan tonggui ji* 3, T 2017:48.972b. This important text by Yongming Yanshou has been studied, with a translation of some selected passages, by Albert Welter in his *Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*.
50. CXT, p. 872a10–14 (XZJ 110:436c10–14; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 320); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 88–89.

51. For this and the following sections on the jewel simile and its ramifications in each of the Sōn schools, see CXT, pp. 872a14–873b7 (XZJ 110:436c14–437b4; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, pp. 320–327); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 89–93.
52. Zongmi draws this simile from one of his favorite scriptures, the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*: “My good man. It is like the translucent, precious *maṇi*-jewel that reflects each of the five colors according to what is facing it. Foolish, ignorant people see that *maṇi*-jewel and assume it really possesses those five colors.” “Puyan pusa zhang” 普眼菩薩章, *Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.914c6ff.; see also the treatment of this simile in Charles Muller, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, p. 106; and see *ibid.*, pp. 20–22, where he discusses the importance of this scripture in *Excerpts* and other of Chinul’s works. For a discussion of the same simile see Zongmi’s *Yuanjue jing lüeshu* 1, T 1795:39.541c; *zhuan* 2, T 1795:39.533b–c.
53. Chinul alludes to the usual definition of nature origination (*sōnggi/xingqi* 性起) found in the works of the early Huayan patriarchs: for Zhiyan’s 智儼 (602–668) definition, see his *Huayan jing nei zhangmen dengza kongmu zhang* 4, T 1870:45.580c8; for Fazang 法藏 (643–712), see *Huayan jing yihai bomen*, T 1875:45.632b16, and *Huayan youxin fajie ji*, T 1877:45.649b7. See discussion in Shim, “Philosophical Foundation of Korean Zen Buddhism,” pp. 63–67. The most thorough treatment of nature origination and its relation in Zongmi’s work to conditioned origination (*yōn’gi* 緣起, *pratītyasamutpāda*) appears in Gregory’s definitive *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (pp. 187–192, 242–243).
54. As Yuil explains Chinul’s account, to “leave behind the spurious to search for what is authentic” is the view of the Northern school; to “presume that the spurious is the authentic” is the view of the Hongzhou school. Both approaches are deficient. However, a combination of the views of Hongzhou (“deluded thoughts originate from the nature”) and Oxhead (“their origination is in fact their nonorigination”) quiets all deluded thoughts. Through this

combination, the understanding of Heze is achieved and all limited views, like those of the three deficient Sŏn schools, drop away. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.198a21–b3.

[55.](#) “Soapberry,” or “bodhi nut” (*hwanja/huanzi* 榲子) is the *Sapindus mukurossi*, which is used to make rosaries.

[56.](#) I follow here Jan Yun-hua’s rendering of “rice gum” for *mich’wi/michui* 米吹; see his “Tsung-mi,” p. 52.

[57.](#) The “fools” in the Hongzhou school whom Zongmi criticizes here were actually his own contemporaries. In a later passage, Chinul reinterprets the line to apply to any student of Sŏn who praises his own school at the expense of others. In his treatment, Zongmi criticizes the Hongzhou approach for ignoring the numinous awareness itself in the development of its tenets. However, Chinul, in his treatment of the passage (“if people who are cultivating the mind comprehend that the nature of both the wholesome and unwholesome is void..., [they] do not succumb to the view of these fools”), shows that if one can maintain the state of no-mind through following the Hongzhou school, then that approach will be impeccable. “On the other hand, when the no-thought that is thoroughly aware in and of itself is not in contact with external conditions, should people give rise to any further intellectualization, the net of views will become even more tightly meshed”: Yuil explains that Chinul here is referring to the Heze school, which may be prone to a purely intellectual understanding of numinous awareness. Chinul suggests here the central role that no-thought/no-mind practice plays in Sŏn training. No-thought can be cultivated in the Hongzhou, Oxhead, and Heze schools, and it is an ideal technique for inducing his all-encompassing vision of the synergy between Sŏn and Kyo. Explication will follow in the course of Chinul’s exposition. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.198b11–17.

[58.](#) Only the Heze school teaches the need to realize the “luster of the jewel,” viz., the eternal, immutable essence of the mind. Hence, Yuil notes, it is singled out for “special practice.” See *CYKM, HPC* 10.198b25–c1.

- [59.](#) The lustrous essence of the jewel (“the profound”) can reflect (“subsume”) any shade of color (“the shallow”). Because the mind-essence (the essence of the lustrous jewel) is realized through the approach of Heze, both the perspectives of Oxhead (“black is not black”) and of Hongzhou (“blackness is in fact the jewel”) are incorporated into the Heze position. After knowing the luminous nature of the jewel, whether one accepts the reality of everything (as did Hongzhou) or rejects it (as did Oxhead), one can adapt freely to either perspective and is consequently free from all limitations (“At that point it no longer matters whether [colors] are present or not, for [the jewel’s] luster and the blackness are completely interfused”). As Zongmi says, when the other Sŏn schools are considered from the standpoint of the Heze school, they are all the same because they derive from the same quiescent and aware mind-essence. This is also why, in this rearrangement of the selections from the *Special Practice Record*, Chinul placed the Heze account at the beginning rather than leaving it at the end, as Zongmi had done. As Chinul interprets the text, the purpose of the *Special Practice Record* was not to extol the virtues of the Heze school exclusively but to guide the student toward a comprehensive vision of the nondual reality where all the schools converge. Cf. Yuil’s commentary in *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.198c1–6.
- [60.](#) These next three sections also appear in *CXT*, pp. 873b7–874b13 (XZJ 110:437b7–437d13; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 327ff.); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 93–97.
- [61.](#) Reading *chagyŏn* 遮遣 (apophatic discourse) for *ch’agwa* 遮過 (to cover up mistakes), following a Chosŏn-dynasty xylograph; see the listing in Pak Sang-guk, “*Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok yŏn’gu*,” pp. 14–24.
- [62.](#) This translation of the term *tangch’e/dangti* 當體 as “the thing itself” derives from a rendering proposed in Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 94, and see p. 242n.68.
- [63.](#) Chinul omits the remainder of this passage from Zongmi’s *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng nok* because he had already recorded it

in his *Kwŏnsu Chŏnghye kyŏlsa mun* (Encouragement to practice: The compact of the Samādhi and Prajñā Society); see my translation (along with the original Sinographic text) in *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 154–155. The full passage is as follows (note that Chinul quotes just the first two sentences here in *Excerpts*):

From the initial activation of the *bodhicitta* up through the attainment of buddhahood, there is only quiescence and only awareness, immutable and uninterrupted. It is only according to the respective stage [along the bodhisattva path] that their designations and attributes are slightly different. [1] At the moment of awakening they are called principle and wisdom [alt. ideal wisdom]. (Principle is quiescence; wisdom is awareness.) [2] When one first arouses the *bodhicitta* and begins to cultivate, they are called *śamatha-vipaśyanā* [calmness and insight]. (*Śamatha* brings external conditioning to rest and hence conforms to quiescence; *vipaśyanā* illuminates nature and characteristics and hence corresponds to awareness.) [3] When the practice continues naturally in all situations, they are called samādhi and prajñā. (Because it fuses the mind in concentration through its efficacy in stopping all conditioning, samādhi is quiescent and immutable. Because it generates wisdom through its efficacy of illuminating insight, prajñā is aware and undiscriminative.) [4] When the afflictions have been completely extinguished, efficacious practices completely fulfilled, and buddhahood attained, they are called bodhi and nirvāṇa. (Bodhi is a Sanskrit word meaning enlightenment; it is awareness. Nirvāṇa is a Sanskrit word meaning quiescent-extinction; it is quiescence.) Hence, you should know that from the time of the first arousal of the *bodhicitta* until the ultimate [achievement of buddhahood], there is only quiescence and only awareness. (Here, when we refer to “only stillness and only awareness,” this means alertness and quiescence.)

According to Yuil’s exegesis of this passage (*CYKM, HPC* 10.199a11–13), the first level (“at the moment of awakening”) refers to the initial stage of the ten faiths, the preliminary stage before entering the path proper. The second level (“when one first arouses the aspiration for enlightenment [*bodhicitta*] and begins to cultivate”) refers to the first abiding stage and the three stages of worthiness: the ten abidings, ten practices, and ten dedications. The third level (“when the practice continues naturally in all

situations”) refers to the ten bhūmis. Finally, the fourth level (“when the afflictions have been completely extinguished, efficacious practices completely fulfilled, and buddhahood attained”) refers to the full fruition of the path, buddhahood, in other words. This answer has exposed the main deficiency of the Oxhead approach: its excessive emphasis on an apophatic description of the absolute. The Heze school, on the other hand, gives a description that combines both apophatic and kataphatic perspectives. Chŏnghye’s exegesis parallels that of Yuil; see *CYH, HPC* 9.549a8–10. See also the discussion of this passage in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “At What Point along the Path Does Awakening Occur?,” and *Excerpts*, n. 158.

64. Zongmi explains elsewhere (*YJJDS* 3b, p. 537a21–22) that “blankness” [*mugi/wuji* 無記, perhaps *avyākṛta*, meaning ‘indeterminate,’ ‘indistinct,’ or ‘neutral’], is *samādhi* not [accompanied by] *prajñā*.”

65. The “chief of the Hwaŏm commentators” refers to Chengguan. For the quote, see *Xinyao jian*, in *CDL* 30, 459b23–24.

66. Although numinous awareness and numinous attention may seem nearly identical, their roles in the teachings of Heze and Hongzhou are different. Numinous attention was intended only to allow people to make the logical inference (*anumāna*) that they possess the quality of sentience, which is the buddha-nature. Heze’s numinous awareness, on the other hand, is a direct pointing to the mindessence itself, which can bring about direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) of the true nature of the mind. See also the following discussion in “The Hongzhou School Only Infers the Reality of the Buddha-Nature” section in chap. 2 of *Excerpts*. Cf. *CYKM, HPC* 10.199a14–19.

67. “Apophasis” and “kataphasis” refer to the second and third traditions of Chan and Sŏn discussed in Zongmi’s *DX*: the school that teaches absolute annihilation (*minjŏl mugi chong/minjue wuji zong*) (*DX* 1–2, p. 402c3–15)—corresponding, Chinul says, to the Oxhead school—and the school that directly reveals the mind-nature (*chikhyŏn simsŏng chong/zhixian xinxing zong*) (*DX* 1–2, pp. 402c15–

403a11)—corresponding to the Hongzhou and Heze schools. For discussion of these two traditions, see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “Chinul’s Exegesis of the Four Schools.” To teach through apophasis, or negation, involves describing the absolute in rigorously apophatic terms—explaining what it *is not* until some idea of what it *is* gets across. This is the approach of the Oxhead school of Sŏn, and the Madhyamaka school and the Prajñāpāramitā texts of the Kyo traditions. Revelation—using kataphatic descriptions of the qualities attributable to the absolute in order to catalyze understanding—is typical of the Hongzhou and Heze schools of Sŏn, and the Hwaŏm school and some tathāgatagarbha materials of Kyo. These two approaches correspond to the radical rejection and radical acceptance approaches that will be discussed later in *Excerpts*.

[68.](#) For discussion on how these sources of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) are deployed in Zongmi’s discussions of Sŏn, see Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 227–228, 247. Zongmi’s implication here is that Hongzhou practice does not lead to direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) of the true nature, but only inferential knowledge (*anumāna*) of it. For this reason, its adherents have no assurance that they have achieved authentic insight, which would ensure that their spontaneity in practice does not degenerate into antinomianism.

[69.](#) This is the opening question of *CXT*, which probably opened the *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* as well. To preserve the continuity of his rearrangement of these excerpts, Chinul apparently moved this question into his personal notes here rather than including it with the main text. See *CXT*, p. 866a (XZJ 110:433c; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, p. 267); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 69–70.

[70.](#) *Linjian lu*, by Juefan Huihong 覺範慧洪 (1071–1128), a third-generation master in the Huanglong 黃龍 branch of the Linji/Imje 臨濟 school, proponent of the so-called Lettered Chan (Wenzi Chan 文字禪) movement, and noted Song

Buddhist historian. The most extensive coverage of Huihong in a Western language appears in Keyworth, “Transmitting the Lamp of Learning,” pp. 367–368. The quotation:

Master Mi considered the path of Mazu [the Hongzhou school] to be like the blackness of the jewel. This is a great mistake. In Master Ma[zu]’s explanation of the dharma, his statement that the authentic is the same as the spurious is simply an expedient description. Anyone with only summary knowledge of the vehicle of the Teachings would be able to realize this. How else could Mazu have been able to make such deep repentance to his holy teacher [that is, receive transmission from his teacher Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744)] and become the master of the dharma in China? His lineage produced such disciples as Nanquan [Puyuan 南泉普願; 748–835], Baizhang [Huaihai 白丈懷海; 720–814], Dada [Wuye 大連無業; 760–821], and Guizong [Zhichang 歸宗智常; d.u.], who are all extensively recorded in the canon. He had fully mastered various theories concerning the authentic and the spurious. Why would honored monks have revered him [if, as Zongmi says,] his path stopped merely at [understanding] the blackness of the jewel?

Furthermore, [Zongmi] considered Oxhead’s path to be “Everything is a dream. Authentic and spurious are both nonexistent.” This is absolutely incorrect. If we examine [Farong’s] composition, *Inscription on the Mind-King* (*Xinwang ming*), it says,

The past is void;
Where there is knowledge, there is delusion about the source.
[The mind-nature] clearly shines over sense-objects,
But follow after that radiance and all becomes hazy....
Horizontally and vertically [viz., spatially and temporally] there is
no radiance—
This is what is most subtle and sublime.
To know the dharma means there is nothing to know,
Knowing nothing is to know what is important.

All this cures the maladies of knowledge and vision. And yet it can be seen that Heze openly established superiorities and inferiorities in regard to knowledge and vision. And still [Zongmi] said that [Oxhead’s] path was like a jewel in which neither light nor black existed. How could he not have been greatly deceiving us?

This passage is quoted from *Linjian lu* 1, XZJ 1594:148.592b–593a; the quotation from the *Xin* [wang]

ming appears in *CDL* 30, pp. 457b27–28 and 457c1–2. There is a rather different version of this quotation excerpted in Yuil’s *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.199b.

71. “We should rather use this gleaming mirror ... discerning between what is spurious and what authentic ...”: Yuil explains that it is a mistake to inherit wrongly the teachings of Sōn by not distinguishing between proper and improper approaches. In such a case, the gleaming mirror of Zongmi’s instructions should be used to rectify that error. However, to grasp wrongly at Zongmi’s analysis and discriminate between the different Sōn approaches, exalting some while rejecting others, is also a mistake. In such a case, the gleaming mirror of Huihong’s instructions should be used to rectify that error. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.199b11–15.
72. For the full discussion that follows on sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, see *CXT*, pp. 874b14–875a17 (*XZJ* 110:437d14–438b; Kamata Shigeo, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, pp. 340–341); Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 97–100. To this point in his text, Zongmi has sought to demonstrate the superiority of the Heze approach to that of the other schools. In this final section of the text, Zongmi gives a detailed explanation of that school’s emblematic soteriology: the moderate subitism of an initial sudden awakening followed by continued gradual cultivation.
73. To “awaken abruptly” resolves beginningless delusion and corrupted views. “The numinous, bright knowledge and vision” overcome the misconception that deluded thoughts are the mind. “The mind is originally ... the *dharmakāya*” resolves the misconception that the four great material elements are the body. “The nonduality of body and mind” counters the idea that this spurious body and mind are the authentic self. “It has not the slightest difference with that of all the buddhas” reveals that enlightenment is the same for all beings. See *CYH*, *HPC* 9.549b22–c3; *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.199c6–8.
74. *Weimojie suoshuo jing* 2, *T* 475:14.544b.

- [75.](#) “Grand minister” (*paesang/baixiang* 拜相) is equivalent to the grand ministers (*chaesang/zaixiang* 宰相) who directed the three departments of the government during the Tang dynasty. See des Rotours, *Traité des Examens*, pp. 3, 12–13.
- [76.](#) “Superintendent of employees” (*wi/wei* 尉) was a petty bureaucrat who directed the employees of a prefecture; see *ibid.*, p. 735n.2.
- [77.](#) *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jin’gang jing*, T 235:8.752b).
- [78.](#) Chŏnghye explains (*CYH*, *HPC* 9.549c7–8) that Chinul attempts here to encourage all students of both Sŏn and Kyo to start out correctly on the path of practice through a proper understanding of initial sudden awakening and subsequent gradual cultivation. “Evaluate ... from every perspective”: lit., “progressing, regressing, thinking, examining.” Yuil explains that this means “progressing” to “think” about the dharma of sudden awakening and “regressing” to “examine” the analogy. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.199c14–15. “How can you say your cultivation is authentic?”: since students of Kyo do not believe in sudden awakening, they should be urged toward such an awakening. Since students of Sŏn are languishing in their experience of sudden awakening and do not accept the reality of the need for gradual cultivation, they should be urged to undertake continued practice. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.199c15–17.
- [79.](#) This is the standard definition of the “sudden teaching” (*ton’gyo/dunjiao* 頓教) in Kyo doctrinal materials such as the Hwaŏm works of Fazang and Chengguan. There, the sudden teaching refers to the ineffable quality of enlightenment that can only be intuited via no-thought. Chan/Sŏn materials strongly object to this characterization of their version of the sudden teaching. Chinul deals with this question at length in his *Treatise on the Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood* (*Wŏndon sŏngbullon*), translated in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*. See also the extensive discussion of the different characterizations of the sudden teaching in Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, chap. 5.

- [80.](#) Chinul alludes here to the main premise of Li Tongxuan's soteriological analysis in his *Xin Huayan jing lun*, which deeply influenced Chinul. Li's premise is that practitioners are able to attain an authentic awakening even at the initial level of the ten faiths (*sipsim/shixin* 十心). In the elaborate fifty-two-stage *mārga* schema laid out in the Hwaŏm school, the ten faiths are usually presumed to be a stage preliminary to the true access to the path at the first level of the ten abidings (*sipchu/shizhu* 十住). Hence, even at the very inception of practice, awakening can be achieved. See Chinul's extensive discussion on this issue in his *Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*.
- [81.](#) *XHYJL* 14, p. 809b6–7. The “ordinary person of great aspiration” (*taesim pŏmbu/daxin fanfu* 大心凡夫) is defined by Li Tongxuan (*XHYJL* 6, p. 756c) as a person who “seeks only the inscrutable vehicle of the tathāgatas” and is unsatisfied with the provisional teachings of the three vehicles. This refers specifically to a person who has achieved the initial understanding-awakening and is engaged in the gradual cultivation that will eventually lead to the realization-awakening. Note also Chinul's comment (*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chinul's Critique of Radical Subitism”) that “the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation ... has been established specifically for ordinary people of great aspiration.” For further background on this talented sort of person, see the discussion of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation in my introduction.
- [82.](#) Yuil explains that once a person “meshes with ... the fruition of buddhahood,” students of Kyo will not be self-denigrating—for example, assuming that it will take them three “infinite eons” (*asamkhyeyakalpa*) to attain buddhahood, while Sŏn practitioners can gain enlightenment in one lifetime. Similarly, when students of Sŏn so “mesh,” they will not be haughty, for they will have realized that they are exactly the same as all the buddhas. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.199c17–19.

- [83.](#) “Gradualness [from the perspective] of the consummate [teachings]”: the Ch’ōnt’ae/Tiantai 天台 school distinguishes four major divisions of sudden and gradual: First, gradualness from the perspective of the gradual teachings (*chǒmjǒm/jianjian* 漸漸) refers to gradual cultivation/gradual awakening. Second, consummateness from the perspective of the gradual teachings (*chǒmwǒn/jianyuan* 漸圓) refers to gradual cultivation/sudden awakening. Third (and the alternative described here), gradualness from the perspective of the consummate teachings (*wǒnjǒm/yuanjian* 圓漸) refers to sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. Finally, consummateness from the perspective of the consummate teachings (*wǒnwǒn/yuanyuan* 圓圓) refers to sudden awakening/sudden cultivation. See *Mohe zhiguan* 6, *T* 1911:46.33a ff., and Yanshou’s explanations in *Zongjing lu* 36, *T* 2016:48.627a ff. See also *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “A Comparison of Chengguan and Zongmi,” and chap. 3, n. 130.
- [84.](#) An allusion to *Laozi* 48: “Keep on diminishing and diminishing until you reach the state of no-ado [*muwi* 無爲]” (translation from Wu, *Lao Tzu*, pp. 68–69). Chinul makes this same allusion in his *Encouragement to Practice* and *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, exchange no. 7 (Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 189 and 226, respectively).
- [85.](#) “Mundane matters” refers to analogies like the ones just offered. The dharma as immanent suchness is the essence of all particularities and consequently can manifest in an infinite variety of ways. Mundane matters, meaning those particularities themselves, have only a limited number of characteristics and hence are confined to a specific role. Here, such an analogy is intended to explain one attribute of the dharma, not to be applied willy-nilly to all situations.
- [86.](#) *Da banniepan jing* (*Mahāparanirvāṇasūtra*), *T* 374:12.365a–603c. This sūtra is replete with similes and analogies; the traditional number of eight hundred is probably a conservative estimate.
- [87.](#) Adapted from *DSQXL*, p. 576c: cf. Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 41.

- [88.](#) “Tenaciously clinging to the four great material elements until their paired [personal and impersonal] forms are obstructed”: the commentaries interpret this passage as referring to personal and impersonal forms of materiality (the four great elements); thus, this is clinging to the mistaken view that the four material elements that make up one’s own body are distinct from the four material elements that make up the objects in the external sense-spheres. Following the commentaries, this passage then might be rendered more freely as “clinging to [personal and impersonal forms] of the four great material elements as being entirely distinct from one another.” See *CYH, HPC* 9.200a23–b1; *CYKM, HPC* 10.549c13.
- [89.](#) See in the *Lotus Sūtra* the simile of the medicinal herbs, in which the sublime dharma that benefits all sentient beings is likened to rainfall that nourishes all plants; *Miaofa lianhua jing* 3, *T* 262:9.19a–20b; Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, pp. 101–103. For the expression the “great rain of dharma,” see *Miaofa lianhua jing* 3, *T* 262:9.24b7.
- [90.](#) The “many complex interpretative taxonomies” follows Yuil’s gloss; he takes this line as referring to the taxonomies of sudden and gradual that Chinul comments on in the following discussion. Yuil explains that *kae/kai* (lit., “to open up,” viz., for analysis, in some contexts their “specific import”) refers to Chengguan’s *Zhenyuan Commentary* and Zongmi’s *Fount of Chan Collection*; that is, they “open up” the problem of sudden and gradual and offer detailed analyses of the different alternatives concerning them. *Hap/he* (lit., “to combine,” viz., into a synthesis, in some contexts their “correlation”) refers to Yanshou’s *Common End of Myriad Good Deeds*, in which all the variant interpretations of sudden and gradual are brought together and reconciled. Chinul gives detailed expositions of each of these texts in the sections that follow. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.200c16–18. For this hermeneutical binary of *kae* and *hap*, which is used extensively in the works of the Korean scholiast Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617–686) and in East Asian commentarial writings more

generally, see Buswell, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment*, pp. 41–42 and 334–335n.102.

91. The *Zhenyuan Commentary* is the popular title for the *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shu* (also known as the *Xinyi Huayan jing shu* or *Zhenyuan xinyi Huayan jing shu*), in ten rolls, by Chengguan; XZJ 227:5.48b–198b. The passages from the commentary that Chinul quotes here are taken from roll 2 of the text, XZJ 227:5.64a–b. This is a commentary to the third and final Chinese translation of the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, in forty rolls, translated by Prajña between 795 and 798. Since this translation was made during the Zhenyuan 貞元 reign period (785–804) of the Tang emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805), Chengguan’s commentary has sometimes been known as the *Zhenyuan Commentary*. Yuil offers a detailed exegesis of the title (CYKM, HPC 10.200c18–23):

“The *Zhenyuan Commentary*’: the commentary currently circulating [viz., Chengguan’s *Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu*, T 1735] was composed during the fourth year of Emperor Daizong’s 代宗 (r. 762–779) Jianzhong 建中 reign-period (783) [sic: this is actually the first reign-period of the subsequent emperor Dezong]; therefore, it is called the *Jianzhong Commentary*. This [is a commentary to] a new translation of the forty-roll “[Accesssing] the *Dharmadhātu* Chapter” [viz., the third and final translation of the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, made by Prajña] made during cyclical year *bingzi* (796) of the Zhenyuan 貞元 [reign-period (785–804)]; Qingliang composed a commentary to this new sūtra, which therefore came to be designated the *Zhenyuan Commentary*. It is not circulating now in Tongguk [Korea], where only this commentary to the ‘Original Vows Chapter,’ in one roll, is currently circulating. [The ‘Original Vows Chapter’] is the concluding roll of the forty rolls [of the full sūtra translation].” (See CYKM, HPC 10.200c18–23)

92. This is the fifth of the ten major sections of this commentary; for the full list of these sections, see ZZ 227:5.49a1–4.
93. Attributed to Bodhidharma, from the opening lines of his *Damo xiemo lun*, ZZ 1218A:63.2a24; XZJ 1203:110.809a.
94. As Chŏnghye notes, Chengguan here is referring to the putative division of the Buddhist lineage into a northern current that transmitted Kyo and a southern current that

transmitted Sŏn; see *CYH, HPC* 9.550c1–2. Attempts to certify the orthodoxy of different schools of Buddhism by tracing their lineages back to important Indian personages or even to the Buddha himself prompted considerable infighting among the contending schools of East Asian Buddhism. An exhaustive treatment of these lineage strategies appears in Young, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*. Chan lineages build their retrospective histories from the *Fu fazang yinyuan zhuan*'s account of the martyrdom of the twenty-third (sometimes twenty-fourth) and last Indian patriarch, Śiṃha (Saja/Shizi 師/獅子) bhikṣu.

Furthermore, there was a bhikṣu named Śiṃha who was performing great Buddhist functions in Kashmir. At that time, the king of the country was named Mihirakula; his perverse views had begun to rage and his mind was without reverence or faith. In the kingdom of Kashmir he was destroying stūpas and monasteries and murdering the monks. Then, with a sharp sword, he beheaded Śiṃha. No blood came from [Śiṃha's] head; only milk flowed out. The successive transmission of the dharma between individuals was cut off from this time on. (*Fu fazang yinyuan zhuan* 6, T 2058:50:321c14–18)

For this influential apocryphal doxography, see Young, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, pp. 73–79, and Maspero, “Sur la date et l'authenticité du *Fou fa tsang yin yuan tchouan*,” pp. 129–149. For background on this period in Indian history and the actions of Mihirakula, the second Hephthalite Hūṇa ruler, see Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time*, pp. 110–117. The Chan schools, looking to strengthen their own claims to orthodoxy against the doctrinal schools of Kyo, build upon this account to claim that before his martyrdom Śiṃha bhikṣu had secretly passed on his dharma to the Kashmiri monk Śaṇavāsa, who then fled south and continued the Chan/Sŏn lineage in secret. See *CDL* 2, p. 215a–b, and esp. p. 215b11–12; and cf. Zongmi's treatment of this question in *YJJDS* 3b, p. 532a1–6. Scholars of other Buddhist schools openly questioned the authenticity of the Chan school's claim of transmission after Śiṃha. Jan Yün-hua (“Buddhist

Historiography,” p. 367n.25) notes the comment of the Tiantai monk Shenqing Lingyu 神清靈庾 (d. 814?; see Chen Yuan, *Shishi yinian lu*, 4.26b), who states that the records concerning the four Indian patriarchs who reputedly followed Śiṃha bhikṣu were certainly falsified (see *Beishan lu* 6, *T* 2113:52.611b22–23; for Shenqing’s biography see *Song Gaoseng zhuan* 6, *T* 2061:50.740c–741a). In the standard Tiantai history, the *Fozu tongji*, the orthodox transmission is considered to have ended with Śiṃha bhikṣu (*Fozu tongji* 5, *T* 2035:49.177b); Tiantai traces the philosophical, but not the genealogical, origins of its tradition to Nāgārjuna (*Fozu tongji* 6, p. 178b, and 24, p. 250c). For this important Tiantai text, see Jan, “*Fo-tsu t’ung-chi: A Biographical and Bibliographical Study*.”

95. “Description” or “expression” (*nǚngjǒn/nengquan* 能詮, *abhidhāna*) refers to the expedient teachings as articulated in the words of the teachings or in the scriptures themselves. “Described” (*sojǒn/suoquan* 所, *abhidheya*) refers to the content of those words. As the words of the teachings describe the methods of training and the analyses of dharmas, they represent the training in prajñā as described in the doctrinal schools. The content revealed through those words is ultimately ineffable and is characterized by quiescence; consequently, it represents the training in samādhi exemplified in the Sōn school. See *Sijiao yi* 2, *T* 1929:46.725b14–15; *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.201a11.
96. These two trainings are explained in the second section of Chengguan’s *Zhenyuan Commentary*, “Expedient and Real involving the Teachings,” *XZJ* 227:5.53a–56b. There, the real is the teaching involving the nature (*sǒnggyo/xingjiao* 性教); the expedient is the teaching involving characteristics (*sanggyo/xiangjiao* 相教).
97. Following Yuil’s interpretation. Yuil notes that Chengguan here categorized sudden awakening/gradual cultivation as a gradualist soteriology, whereas Zongmi previously classified it as a subitist soteriology. This will result in further differences

in their respective soteriological taxonomies. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.201b7–10.

[98.](#) Approaches that assume the intrinsic purity of the mind may employ expedient counteragents to clear away the taints that, it is presumed, are obscuring that purity. This is the approach of gradual schools like the Northern school of Chan. Nevertheless, some schools following the sudden approach use similar expedient methods—for example, the Oxhead school. Hence, such descriptions belong primarily, but not exclusively, to the gradual schools. Similarly, the gradual schools may sometimes employ descriptions of the absolute state of mind, such as “the nonabiding void-quietness,” that are similar to those of the sudden schools. Finally, all explanations about the dharma can be classified as deriving either from the nature (the sudden schools) or from characteristics (the gradual schools). But since both nature and characteristics are aspects of the same one mind, such descriptions “can be employed concurrently.” See *CYKM, HPC* 10.201b14–21.

[99.](#) The bracketed explanations in the translation are taken from Yuil (*CYKM, HPC* 10.201c). Yuil interprets “two-legged” metaphorically as a reference to the fact that the buddhas are endowed with the two qualities of merit (*punya*, which he glosses as *samādhi*) and *prajñā*.

[100.](#) Quoted from Zongmi’s *Preface*; *DX* 1–1, p. 400a4–5.

[101.](#) Yuil explains why such an approach is difficult for most practitioners: “‘Combined descriptions [that merely refer to] quietness within reflection and awareness within no-thought,’ and so forth, still involve notions of a sequence [of training] and remain attached to quietude, and the like; for this reason, they retain a sense of superior and inferior and cannot leave behind the four conceptions. Therefore, ‘it is difficult for them to gain access’” (*CYKM, HPC* 10.17–20). The four conceptions (*sasang/sixiang* 四相) refer to four false conceptions (*saṃjñā*) of personhood, according to the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jin’gang jing*, *T* 235:8:749a10–11). In their usual Chinese listing, these are given as: (1) conception of a

self (我相, *ātmasaṃjñā*), (2) conception of a person (人相, *pudgalasaṃjñā*), (3) conception of a living being (衆生相, *sattvasaṃjñā*), (4) conception of a soul or personality (壽者相, *jīvasaṃjñā*).

- [102.](#) Chinul had previously quoted this same line, and included much of the following discussion, in his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (*Susim kyŏl*), exchange no. 8 (in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 230–231).
- [103.](#) *LZTJ*, p. 358c; the second half of the quotation appears at p. 352c.
- [104.](#) “By not excising gain and loss”: that is, the views that there is a goal to be achieved and afflictions to be subdued. Cf. *LZTJ*, p. 352c. The “four [mistaken] conceptions” refer to four misperceptions about the nature of the self, as described in the *Diamond Sūtra*; see n. 101 *supra*.
- [105.](#) “An authentic practice” (lit., “a practice that conforms with authenticity”): Chinul alludes here to a statement by Zongmi in his *Notes to a Brief Commentary on the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*: “This all-encompassing and sublime practice of all the bodhisattvas, which is fully accomplished without illusion, is a practice that conforms with authenticity” (see *Dafangguang Yuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyi jing lue shu zhu* 2–1, *T* 1795:39.558c8).
- [106.](#) See “Chengguan’s *Zhenyuan Commentary*” section *supra*.
- [107.](#) From the *Verses of Zhixian* (*Zhixian song*), by Xiangyan Longdeng 香嚴 襲燈 (d. 898), a student of Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (749–814) in the Hongzhou lineage; see *CDL* 29, p. 452b24–25.
- [108.](#) “No-mind that conforms to the path” (*musim hapto/wuxin hedao* 無心合道) is a phrase first used by Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价 (807–869). See *Dongshan Liangjie yulu*, *T* 1986b:47.525a.24; noted by Yi Chong-ik (“Chosasŏn e issŏsŏ ūi musim sasang,” p. 241), who cites the *XZJ* edition of the text; see also pp. 241–243 for Yi’s discussion of the term. For *musim* 無心, see Yampolsky, *Platform Sutra*, pp. 137–138n.69.

- [109.](#) “The one approach that surpasses all precedents” (*kyōgoe imun/gewai yimen* 格外一門) refers to the teaching of Supreme-Vehicle Sōn; for discussion see *Excerpts*, chap. 3, n. 36 *infra*. Since Sōn is said to transcend all provisional descriptions of the dharma found in the teachings of the doctrinal schools, it “surpasses all precedents.”
- [110.](#) This and the following quoted passages are taken from Yanshou’s *Zongjing lu* 45, *T* 2016:48.679c–680b. For a definitive study of this text, with a translation of its first fascicle, see Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan*.
- [111.](#) Luoshan Daoxian 羅山道閑 (d.u.; ca. 9th–10th centuries), a disciple of Yantou Quanhuo 嚴頭全叢 (828–887); see *Congrong lu* 3, *T* 2004:48.255a6–7.
- [112.](#) In the apocryphal *Śūraṃgamasūtra*, the Buddha asks his attendant Ānanda about the location of the mind. Ānanda gives seven different answers, but the Buddha rejects them all. See *Shoulengyan jing* 1, *T* 945:19.679c–680b.
- [113.](#) Here Yanshou refers to the oft-cited occasion when the Second Patriarch Huike 慧可 (c. 487–593) asked Bodhidharma to give him peace of mind. Bodhidharma told his disciple to bring him his mind so that he could pacify it; when Huike could not comply, Bodhidharma said that he had thereby pacified his mind. As soon as Bodhidharma had spoken, Huike was enlightened. *CDL* 3, p. 219b21–22.
- [114.](#) In the realization of no-mind, even samādhi and prajñā are redundant; cf. *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.202c14.
- [115.](#) Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790), the premier disciple of Qingyuan Xingsu 青原行思 (d. 740), himself a reputed disciple of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng; *CDL* 14, p. 309b.
- [116.](#) For this entire passage, see *XZJ* 227:5.64b22–64c.
- [117.](#) There has been a surprising amount of controversy among contemporary scholars in Korea concerning whether Chengguan discusses six or seven different alternatives of sudden and gradual here. (For a summary of these different views, see Pak Sang-guk, “*Pōpchip pyōrhaeng nok*,” pp. 43–46; following his mentor, Yi Chong-ik, Pak accepts a sixfold

division.) Zongmi in his *YJJDSC* clarifies the numbering of Chengguan's taxonomies of sudden and gradual and lists all the alternatives mentioned here—seven in number—plus two additional ones, totaling nine different approaches to sudden and gradual. Zongmi states that the schema below (2.4), concerning “the fact that we are originally endowed with all the qualities of buddhahood,” is to be considered a separate alternative (*YJJDSC* 3b, p. 536b9–10). Chinul himself states explicitly that there is one aspect of suddenness that is “an extension of the three aspects of suddenness covered in the *Commentary*” (*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chinul’s Critique of Radical Subitism”)—which again gives seven, not six, alternatives. Both of the Chosŏn-dynasty commentators agree with Zongmi’s assessment: Chŏnghye notes specifically that “there are a total of seven alternatives” (*CYH*, *HPC* 9.1–2). Yuil notes, “Next is a separate elucidation of seven alternatives of sudden and gradual. There are three gradual, three sudden, and one separate one” (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.203b1–2). I follow Yuil’s division here. The seventh separate proposition is consonant with the approach that regards sudden awakening and sudden cultivation as simultaneous; it simply uses different terminology. Hence there are really only three major interpretations of suddenness and three of gradualness.

[118.](#) This same analogy of climbing a tower until one can see everything is used in the *Humane Kings Sūtra* (*Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing* 2, *T* 246:8.842c2–3) to refer to the realization of the *vajrasamādhi* (*kūmgang sammae/jin’gang sanmei* 金剛三昧), alt. *vajropamasamādhi*, the “adamantine” or “adamantlike” samādhi that leads to the consummation of the bodhisattva path. See Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “*vajropamasamādhi*.”

[119.](#) Although all editions of *Excerpts* agree with the reading “neither to examine nor to purify” (*pulgan pulching* 不看不澄), current editions of the *Zhenyuan Commentary* and Zongmi’s *Yuanjue jing da shu* (ZZ 243b:9.334c11) both read “neither attachment nor endorsement” (*pulchō pulchŭng* 不著不證).

Zongmi comments on this alternative of initial sudden awakening followed by sudden cultivation (schema 2.1):

Due to the sudden comprehension that the body, the mind, and sensory objects are all void, there is no attachment to signs. Since one does not endorse [the separate existence] of the mind-nature, that mind-nature is originally unmoving. Furthermore, due to the sudden comprehension that the meritorious qualities as numerous as the sands of the Ganges are all complete, every thought merges with them. This is called “to unite oneself with the path.” As awakening comes first here, this alternative involves the understanding-awakening. (*YJJDSC* 3b, p. 536a14–17)

[120.](#) Samādhi is the essence of the self-nature; prajñā is the function of that self-nature. In this first alternative of initial sudden awakening followed by sudden cultivation (schema 2.1), practice begins after awakening to the nondual mindnature, which is equated with the essence, samādhi. This is, consequently, an approach through samādhi. When sudden cultivation occurs before the achievement of sudden awakening, as in the next alternative (schema 2.2), the discriminative examination of phenomena (viz., prajñā, the function) precedes the sudden awakening to the nondual essence (viz., samādhi). Hence, it is an approach through prajñā. The final alternative (schema 2.3)—that sudden cultivation and sudden awakening are simultaneous—relies on both samādhi and prajñā equally. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.203b4–6.

[121.](#) Zongmi comments on schema 2.2:

“Cultivation is like taking medicine” means that as soon as the medicine is ingested, it is instantly absorbed. “Awakening is like the malady being cured” means that all four limbs and the hundred joints [the entire body] are immediately relieved from a high fever. There is no implication here that there is a gradual recovery. Because this awakening occurs after cultivation, it is realization-awakening; however, these realization and understanding awakenings are nondual. (*YJJDSC* 3b, p. 536a19–22)

[122.](#) The glosses here follow Yuil (see *CYKM, HPC* 10.203b7). Zongmi’s explanation of schema 2.3:

Here the signless is cultivation; clarity is awakening. Awakening is prajñā and function; cultivation is samādhi and essence.... The *Epistle on the Essentials of the Mind* also says, “Since even a single thought does not arise, the limits of past and future are transcended. (This is sudden cultivation). The essence of [the mind’s] radiance is autonomous, and self and objects are all such. (This is sudden awakening).” Heze said, “If one does not think of good or evil, then through the words [of a master] one will eradicate all signs of thought (cultivation). When there is no thought or ratiocination, the mind will only be self-knowing (awakening).” (YJJDS 3b, p. 536a22–536b6)

[123.](#) “This also subsumes both the understanding and realization [awakenings]”: Zongmi comments on schema 2.4:

“This also involves two aspects. The first should be understood as above. The latter aspect needs to be explained. Suppose it is explained from the standpoint of the understanding-awakening: merely to cling to the original enlightenment that is free from the contaminants is awakening; it does not add to the enlightened mind. Merely to cling to the meritorious qualities inherent in the nature is practice; practice does not mean to wait for mental pacification.... Suppose it is explained from the standpoint of the realization-awakening: at the time that the inception-enlightenment is united with the source, there is no separate inception-enlightenment that can be distinguished.” (YJJDS 3b, p. 536b10–14)

[124.](#) Throughout Chinul’s writings, quotations attributed to Zongmi’s *Fount of Chan Collection* are always taken from its *Preface* (*Tosŏ/Duxu*). For a description of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation in the *Preface*, see DX 2–1, p. 407c12–408a16.

[125.](#) Supreme-Vehicle (Śreṣṭhāyāna) Sŏn (Ch’oesangsŭng Sŏn/Zuishangsheng Chan 最上乘禪) is the fifth of the five types of Sŏn outlined by Zongmi, who uses the term to refer to the way of patriarchal Sŏn. The other four types follow: (1) Sŏn of the non-Buddhists (Woedo Sŏn/Waidao Chan 外道禪) refers to the various types of meditation practice taught in other religious traditions that do not lead to enlightenment as it is understood in the Buddhist teachings. This sort of Sŏn does not overcome dualistic modes of thinking. (2) Sŏn of the ordinary person (Pombu Sŏn/Fanfu Chan 凡夫禪) consists of practices that, though still involved in dualism, have proper

understanding of the principle of cause and effect. (3) Sŏn of the two vehicles (Yisŭng Sŏn/Ersheng Chan 二乘禪), also called Hīnayāna Sŏn (Sosŭng Sŏn/Xiaosheng Chan 小乘禪), consists of practices in which there is realization of the voidness of self. (4) Mahāyāna Sŏn (Taesŭng Sŏn/Dasheng Chan 大乘禪) is cultivation based on awakening to the emptiness of both self and dharmas. See *DX* 1–1, p. 399b12–22; Broughton, *Tsung-mi on Chan*, p. 103. Chinul also lists and discusses these five types of Sŏn in his *Encouragement to Practice: The Compact of the Samādhi and Prajñā Society* (Kwŏnsu Chŏnghye kyŏlsa mun), in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 137–138. “Tathāgata Sŏn” is a term first used in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (see *Lengqie jing* 2, *T* 670:16.492a22–24, for a description); in Sŏn usage it refers to the most profound explanations of Sŏn found in the sūtras. The term “pure Sŏn of the tathāgatas” (yŏrae chŏngjŏng Sŏn/rulai qingjing Chan 如來清淨禪) appears at *Lengqie jing* 2, *T* 670:16.492a27; and see Chinul’s use of this term in his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 227.

“Single-practice samādhi” (*irhaeng sammae/yixing sanmei* 一行三昧) means to take the *dharmadhātu* itself as the object of meditation, thus requiring no successive development of any meditative techniques. This absorption is described in the *Awakening of Faith* as the samādhi in which “the *dharmakāyas* of all the buddhas and the ordinary bodies of sentient beings are equivalent and nondual.” See the account in *Awakening of Faith*, *Dasheng qixin lun*, *T* 1666:32.582b1; cf. Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 97. The term is used frequently in Chan materials to refer to the absorption in suchness that is maintained during all daily activities; it is also used in conjunction with the practice of seated meditation and no-thought meditation. See Faure, “Concept of One-Practice Samādhi.”

“The samādhi of true suchness” (*chinyŏ sammae/zhenru sanmei* 真如三昧) also appears prominently in the *Awakening of Faith*. This is the basic absorption that helps to develop all

other types of samādhi; it is produced through perfecting *śamatha* practices. Through this absorption, one realizes the oneness of the *dharmadhātu*. Zongmi follows the *Awakening of Faith*'s account of this samādhi, where it is described as the "foundation of all other samādhis," which, "if people practice it, they will gradually be able to generate infinite numbers of other samādhis" (see *Dasheng qixin lun*, T 1666:32.582b3–4; cf. Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 97). Notice here, however, that Zongmi takes this definition of the samādhi of true suchness and extends it to include all these other types of samādhis that are associated with Sōn in the Bodhidharma lineage.

[126.](#) DX 1–1, p. 399b16–22; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 103. This is the fifth kind of Chan covered in Zongmi's *Preface*.

[127.](#) "Seem to be opposites": Once students have had a sudden awakening to the fact that they are originally endowed with all enlightened qualities of the nature and that the afflictions are originally nonexistent, there is nothing further that apparently needs to be cultivated. Because the effects of cultivation are only gradually accumulated, however, leading eventually to the ending of delusion and the perfection of meritorious qualities, it may seem inappropriate to talk about awakening being sudden. Thus they "seem to be opposites." "In full conformity" means, for example, that a baby may be born in an instant, but only gradually matures into an adult human being (as in the analogy for sudden awakening/gradual cultivation). One suddenly recognizes a person as being of exceptional capacity, but that person must, for example, gradually train in the (traditional Confucian) virtues of humaneness, propriety, rites, and music in order to realize that capacity. Hence these two ideas are "in full conformity." See Yi Chi-gwan, *Sajip sagi*, p. 441.

[128.](#) Suddenness here corresponds to the first of Chengguan's subitist alternatives (schema 2.1) discussed in the *Zhenyuan Commentary*: initial sudden awakening followed by sudden cultivation (see the quotation from the *Zhenyuan Commentary* above in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, "Chengguan's Taxonomies of

Sudden and Gradual”). Chinul demonstrates here that Zongmi’s conception of gradual cultivation is broad enough to include even certain interpretations of subitism.

[129.](#) Following the interpretation in Yi Chi-gwan (*Sajip sagi*, pp. 441–442).

Ten bodies (*sipsin* 十身): the ten bodies with which each buddha is endowed, according to the Hwaŏm school: (1) bodhi-body, (2) vow-body, (3) transformation-body, (4) resolution-body, (5) body endowed with all the major and minor marks, (6) body of awesome power, (7) mental body, (8) body of merit, (9) dharma-body, (10) wisdom-body. See *Da huayan jing luece*, T 1737:36.705a16–20; there is also an alternate list at *HYJ* 32, p. 174a27–29.

Ten wisdoms (*sipchi* 十智): wisdom exclusive to the buddhas; knowledge of: (1) the three time periods, (2) the buddhadharmas, (3) the unimpeded *dharmadhātu*, (4) the limitlessness of the *dharmadhātu*; (5) being accomplished in all worlds; (6) shining universally over all worlds, (7) supporting all worlds, (8) all sentient beings, (9) omniscience, (10) all the buddhas without limits. There are other lists (see, e.g., Yi Chi-gwan, *Sajip sagi*, pp. 441–442).

Ten supercognitions (*sipt’ong* 十通): ten supercognitions, of (1) others’ states of mind, (2) the heavenly eye, or clairvoyance, (3) past lives, (4) knowing the duration of the kalpa, (5) heavenly ear, or clairauidience, (6) the absence of an essential nature, (7) erudition, (8) physical powers (such as to manifest the body anywhere), (9) all dharmas, (10) the equipoise of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*).

Three radiances (*samgwang* 三光): the three inner radiances are those of a buddha’s permanency, body, and wisdom; the external radiances are those of the sun, moon, and stars. For these lists, see Yi Chi-gwan, *Sajip sagi*, pp. 441–442.

[130.](#) Gradualness [from the perspective] of the consummate teachings refers to sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, which is what is taught by Zongmi in the *Record*; consummateness [from the perspective] of the gradual

teachings refers to gradual cultivation/sudden awakening. See discussion in *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “Chinul’s Exegesis of Sudden Awakening” and n. 83. Note that Zongmi’s ideal approach to practice includes not only the gradual cultivation of the gradual school but also the sudden cultivation of the sudden school. It is, consequently, not solely a cultivation that merely accords with the nondual principle (the sudden cultivation of the sudden school); it also includes the active development of positive qualities and the removal of negative qualities (the gradual cultivation of the gradual school).

- [131.](#) According to the Yogācāra school, manifest actions, or active forces (*hyōnhaeng/xianxing* 現行, *samudācāra*), are conditioned factors (*saṃskṛtadharma*) that emerge from dormancy in the storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) and are made manifest in the present through intentional acts. See Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “*samudācāra*.”
- [132.](#) This precise quote is taken from Yongming Yanshou’s *Zongjing lu* 2, *T* 2016:48.423b25. The statement is the answer that Changsha Jingcen 長沙景岑 (788–868), a disciple of Nanquan Puyuan, gave to a monk who asked him why no teachers today have realized nirvāṇa; see *CDL* 10, p. 274b27.
- [133.](#) In Chengguan’s *Zhenyuan Commentary*; see *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Chengguan’s Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual,” schema 2.1 (“initial awakening followed by subsequent cultivation”).
- [134.](#) In Chengguan’s *Zhenyuan Commentary*; see *Excerpts*, chap. 3., “Chengguan’s Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual,” schema 2.3 (“simultaneous cultivation and awakening”).
- [135.](#) *DX* 2–1, p. 408a5. This premise that all subitism is just the consummation in this lifetime of what is actually a long process of gradual development in past lives is discussed below in Zongmi’s analysis of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation. See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sōn.”

- [136.](#) For “suddenness in the style of instruction” (*hwaŭi ton/huayi dun* 化儀頓), see the discussion in the next section of *Excerpts* (chap. 3, “Zongmi’s *Preface*: Sudden and Gradual in the Scriptural Teachings”).
- [137.](#) The previous Hwaŏm patriarchs—Zhiyan, Fazang, and Chengguan—had listed the sudden teaching (viz., sudden awakening/sudden cultivation) as the fourth of their fivefold classification of Buddhist doctrinal varieties. In one of his most innovative moves, Zongmi follows instead the approach of Zhanran 湛然 (711–782), the eighth-century revitalizer of the Tiantai tradition, and treats sudden and gradual instead as styles of instruction. See *DX* 2–1, p. 407b15–17; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 151–152; Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, chap. 5, and esp. pp. 136–153; Gregory, “Sudden Enlightenment,” p. 6 and n. 16. Sudden style of instruction (*hwaŭi kyo/huayi jiao* 化儀教) refers to the initial period of the Buddha’s teaching career during which he taught the full truth of his enlightenment without the use of expedients, as in the *Avataṃsakasūtra*. This approach was intended solely for bodhisattvas whose practice had matured to the point where they were capable of an immediate realization-awakening. In this approach the principle was directly revealed. On the other hand, gradual instruction was adapted to adepts of average and inferior spiritual faculties who would not understand if they were exposed directly to the principle. This style is found in such sūtras as the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*. See Yuil’s *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi* (*HPC* 10.189c–190a; *Sŏnwon chejŏn chip tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*; p. 284); and cf. *Tiantai sijiao yi*, *T* 193:46.774c. The term is discussed by Ikeda Rosan in “Tannen igo ni okeru goji hakkyōron no tenkai” (pp. 41–42). For “the suddenness that responds to superior spiritual capacity” (*ch’ukki ton/zhuji dun* 逐機頓), see the excerpts from Zongmi’s *Preface* that immediately follow.
- [138.](#) The “Brahmacarya” chapter of the *Avataṃsakasūtra* states that the initial activation of the *bodhicitta*—the aspiration to enlightenment—that occurs at the access to the bodhisattva

path on the first abiding stage is equivalent to the final achievement of buddhahood (*HYJb* 8, p. 449c14). This conflation of soteriological cause and effect is the hallmark of the consummate teachings, the fifth of the five divisions of the teachings delineated by the early Huayan patriarchs. With the awakening to the wisdom of buddhahood that is inherent in one's own self-nature, the bodhisattva is fully endowed with all the qualities of buddhahood in their potential form. Only his or her habitual patterns of thought and behavior must be corrected through gradual cultivation for buddhahood to finally be actualized. Nevertheless, as the bodhisattva has understood through his initial awakening that these residual proclivities of mind are essentially void, he also knows that there is in fact no real cultivation that needs to be done throughout that period. Therefore, once the innate wisdom of buddhahood is recognized at the inception of the bodhisattva path, buddhahood has already been achieved. See Chinul's *Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood* (in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, passim) and Li Tongxuan's *XHYJL* 32, p. 941b, for detailed discussion.

- [139.](#) The *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra* (*Yuanjue jing*) lists a series of three contemplations and twenty-five practices that constitute the gradual cultivation undertaken after the realization of the sublime enlightenment (*myogak/miaojue* 妙覺) of buddhahood. These three contemplations are (1) serenity, which results from *śamatha* (tranquility) practice; (2) exposing the illusoriness of sense-objects, which is a product of *samāpatti* (attainment); (3) quiescence, which results from the development of dhyāna (meditative absorption). See the “Wedezicai Bodhisattva” 威德自在菩薩 section of the sūtra (*Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.917b27–918a21). The twenty-five practices involve different combinations of these three basic contemplations and are discussed in the sūtra's next section on “Pianyin Bodhisattva” 辯音菩薩 (*Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.918a22–919a29). The fact that contemplation-practice is “equivalent to the achievement ... of buddhahood” refers specifically to the “Puyan Bodhisattva” 普眼菩薩 section

(*Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.914b6–915b9, and esp. p. 914c2–27). “Gradually removes the ordinary proclivities of habit” in the following paragraph of the translation refers to the “Maitreya Bodhisattva” 彌勒菩薩 section (*Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.916a15–c25). The extinction of craving and sensuality that is a concomitant part of this practice is explained in the “Jingzhuyezhang Bodhisattva” 淨諸業障菩薩 section (*Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.919b1–920a24). Compare CYKM, HPC 10.204a6 and *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, HPC 10.189c (*Sŏnwon chejŏn chip tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, p. 284). For a full English translation of, and introduction to, this scripture, with an important Korean commentary, see Charles Muller, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

[140.](#) DX 2–1, pp. 407b15–408b26; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 150–151.

[141.](#) “Redirects the mind” (*hoesim/huixin* 迴心) refers specifically to the point in practice at which the mind turns away from the three-vehicle conception of Buddhism (which is still involved in discrimination) toward the one-vehicle conception (which transcends all provisional descriptions of the buddhadharma). Yi Chi-gwan, *Sajip sagi*, p. 446.

[142.](#) Zongmi has implied in the preceding quotation something he states explicitly in a later passage: all sudden development in practice or awakening derives ultimately from gradual practice, and sudden awakening without gradual preparation is inconceivable. Chinul, always the advocate of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, opposes this view. Sudden awakening, if interpreted according to the passage from the *Preface* recorded here, would have to be the final realization-awakening rather than the initial understanding-awakening—the latter of which is the correct interpretation of sudden awakening as Chinul understands it.

[143.](#) “One section of the *Avataṃsakasūtra*”: Yuil explains in his exegesis of the *Chan Preface* that “one section” refers to the passage in this scripture (*HYJb* 8, p. 449c14) where the initial generation of the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*) that occurs at the access to the bodhisattva path on the first

abiding stage is said to be equivalent to complete, perfect enlightenment (*anuttarasamyaksambodhi*). Yuil suggests that here, however, this premise pervades the entire scripture and thus “one section” really means the “entirety” of the scripture. See Yuil’s *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, HPC 10.189c23–190a. The two types of suddenness are the suddenness in style of instruction and the suddenness that responds to superior spiritual capacity; see *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s *Preface: Sudden and Gradual in the Scriptural Teachings*” and *Excerpts*, n. 137 above. The two faculties are the superior faculties of the ordinary person of great aspiration and the matured faculties of bodhisattvas who are already well along in their spiritual development. The explanation of the suddenness that responds to superior spiritual capacity that Zongmi gives here applies to the ordinary person of great aspiration who must rely on expedient training methods to induce sudden awakening. These explanations do not apply to those portions of the *Avatamsakasūtra* addressed specifically to advanced bodhisattvas who can understand the truth without needing any provisional explanations.

[144.](#) “Cause suffuses the fruition that is as vast as the sea.... fruition permeates the causal source” is adapted from Chengguan’s *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 1, T 1736:36.3b16. “[Such enlightened beings] will still be called bodhisattvas even after they have fulfilled all the stages [of the path]”: Yuil explains that this line refers to Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and other transcendent tenth-bhūmi bodhisattvas, who, though fully enlightened like the buddhas, are still referred to as bodhisattvas. See Yuil’s *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, HPC 10.190a4–5 (*Sŏnwon chejŏn chip tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, p. 284 lines 12–14).

[145.](#) DX 2–1, p. 407b26–407c12; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 151–152. “The explanation here of ‘all dharmas’”: as Yuil explains in his explication of the *Chan Preface*, “Previously was the elucidation of the the aspects of the teachings, which are the expression; here is the elucidation of the dharma, which is what is expressed. First it explains the unimpeded

interpenetration between principle and phenomena (*isa muae/lishi wu'ai* 理事無碍), in which 'one mind' is principle and 'all dharmas' are phenomena. 'Are entirely' means that [mind and dharmas, and principle and phenomena] are unimpeded. From 'nature and characteristics are perfectly interfused' onward refers to the unimpeded interpenetration between phenomenon and phenomena (*sasa muae/shishi wu'ai* 事事無碍); see Yuil's *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, HPC 10.190a5–8 (*Sŏnwon chejŏn chip tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, p. 284, lines 13–14). The "ten mysterious gates" (*sip hyŏnmun/shi xuanmen* 十玄門) are two different articulations of the principle of dependent origination and the unimpeded interpenetration between phenomenon and phenomena offered by the Hwaŏm/Huayan school (see Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "shi xuanmen").

146. The *Huayan jin'guan* is a lost work by Chuan'ao dashi 傳澳大師 (d.u.), a disciple of Zongmi; the work is listed as *Huayan jin'guan chao* 華嚴錦冠鈔, in four (alt., two) rolls, in Ŭich'ŏn's 義天 (1055–1101) catalog (*Sinp'yŏn chejong kyojang ch'ongnok Sinp'yŏn chejong kyojang ch'ongnok* 1, T 2184:55.1167b6) of his supplement to the Korean Buddhist canon. Yuil tells us (CYKM, HPC 10.204b12–14) that this text was a four-roll-long explication of Chengguan's massive commentary to the *Avatamsakasūtra*, *Huayan jing shu* (T 1735:35.502a–963a). Chinul most probably did not see the *Huayan jin'guan* himself, but instead derived this quotation from its verbatim citation (including the title attribution) in Yanshou's *Zongjing lu* 100, T 2016:48.953b14–25.

147. "Four *dharmadhātus* encompassed within the three greatnesses": the three greatnesses (of essence, characteristics, and function) encompass all aspects of the *dharmadhātus* of principle and phenomena. "Four contemplations" refer to either the meditations developed in regard to each of the *dharmadhātus* or the four contemplations on true voidness outlined in the *Contemplations on the Dharmadhātu* (*Fajie guan men*) by the first Huayan patriarch, Dushun 杜順 (558–640), as: (1)

reducing form to voidness, (2) identifying voidness with form, (3) the nonobstruction of form and voidness, and (4) absolute annihilation. See *Zhu Huayan fajie guanmen*, T 1884:45.684c26–27; Garma C. C. Chang, *Buddhist Teaching of Totality*, pp. 208–213.

[148.](#) It was precisely on this point that Chinul was first prompted to look for correspondences between Sŏn and the doctrinal teachings. As Chinul relates in the preface to his *Hwaŏm non chŏryo*, after having been chided by a Hwaŏm teacher to contemplate the interpenetration between phenomenon and phenomena as a prerequisite to achieving buddhahood, Chinul wondered, “If you force the mind to contemplate phenomena [that is, perform the contemplations on the first *dharmadhātu* of phenomena and particularly the fourth *dharmadhātu* of the unimpeded interpenetration between all phenomena], those phenomena will then become impediments and will needlessly disturb your own mind; when, then, would there be a moment of understanding? You need only keep your mind clear and your wisdom pure; then, a single strand of hair and the whole universe will be interfused, for perforce there will be nothing that is an external object.” See *Hwaŏm non chŏryo*, HPC 4.867c8–10 (translation from Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 356).

[149.](#) Yuil glosses this phrase to mean being entirely free to come and go at will within the realm of birth and death. “Worldly affairs” (*sosik* 消息) refers to death and birth; *ch’unggyung* 冲融 is rendered here somewhat freely as “be fully absorbed.” See CYKM, HPC 10.204b14–16.

[150.](#) CDL 30, p. 459c20–22. This same passage is quoted in Chinul’s *Hwaŏm non chŏryo*, HPC 4.868c4–6.

[151.](#) The “Three Gates to Contemplation” (*Samgwan mun/San’guan men* 三觀門) is a section in Zhiyi’s *Great Treatise on Calmness and Insight* (*Mohe zhiguan* 6, T 1911:46.25b28–25c3, 10, p. 55b13–18). The three contemplations are (1) all dharmas are products of dependent origination and thus spurious, (2) all dharmas are derived

from dependent origination and thus devoid of own-nature, and (3) the middle way between these two views.

- [152.](#) DX 2–1, p. 407c12–16; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 152–153. These explanations for the similes appear as interlinear annotations in the DX. According to Zongmi, “pay attention only to the bull’s-eye” means to arouse the supreme thought of bodhi; “they will hit it only after long training” refers to the realization/awakening that occurs only after gradual cultivation (YJJDSC 3b, pp. 535c–536a2).
- [153.](#) The three stages of worthiness (*samhyōn/sanxian* 三賢) are the three initial stages of the bodhisattva path following the initial generation of the aspiration to attain enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*): the ten abidings, ten practices, and ten dedications.
- [154.](#) Ten stages of sanctity (*sipsōng/shisheng* 十聖) are equivalent to the ten “grounds” (*daśabhūmi*), the culminating stage of the bodhisattva path that leads to the attainment of buddhahood. For the ten grounds, see the extensive entry in Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “*daśabhūmi*.”
- [155.](#) DX 2–1, p. 407c16–20; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 152–153. Here, too, the similes for these different schemata appear as interlinear annotation in the DX.
- [156.](#) See XHYJL 32, p. 944b, where Li Tongxuan lists ten qualities regarded as the essence of the teachings; although “the buddha-*dharmadhātu* of fundamental wisdom” is not included among them, some (like dharma-nature) are parallel. That Li considers the fundamental wisdom to be the essence of Buddhism is constantly reiterated throughout his writings: “the fundamental wisdom of universal radiance (*kūnbon pul kwangmyōng chi/genben fo guangming zhi* 根本普光明 智) is the essence of the path” (*Lueshi Xin Huayan jing xiuxing cidi jueyi lun* 3, T 1741:36.1022b18–19); “the manifold supplementary practices cultivated by the bodhisattvas cannot be ascertained apart from the fundamental wisdom of universal radiance” (*Huayan jueyi lun* 3, T 1741:36.1024b23–24); and for many similar statements, see Chinul’s *Treatise on the Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood*

(*Wöndon söngbullon*) in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 258–259 et passim.

[157.](#) XHYJL 36, p. 819b4–6.

[158.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Relevance of Numinous Awareness,” and Yuil’s exegesis of that section in *Excerpts*, n. 63. The passage from the *Record* that Chinul references here was quoted in full not in *Excerpts* but only in his *Encouragement to Practice*; see discussion in *Excerpts*, n. 63. Yuil explains,

The statement here that there is a contradiction between the *Record* and the [*Preface to the Fount of Chan*] *Collection* in the level accessed after awakening is something about which only the foolish would have a doubt. Both the *Record* and the *Collection* were written by the very same person, Guifeng, and both of their accounts of the characteristics of the practice of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation are identical. In the quotations above, the *Collection* verifies the *Record* and the *Record* verifies the *Collection*. Therefore, the level in both cases is the first stage of the [ten] faiths.” (CYKM, HPC 10.204b21–24)

[159.](#) “The three types of enlightenment” (*samgagŭi/sanjueyi* 三覺義) refer to the three aspects of the enlightenment of a buddha: enlightening oneself (*chagak/zijue* 自覺), bringing all other beings to enlightenment (*t’agak/tajue* 他覺), and perfecting all the practices that lead to enlightenment for both oneself and others (*kakhaeng kungman/juexing qiongman* 覺行窮滿). See Yi Chi-gwan, *Sajip sagi*, p. 458. These three are sometimes correlated, respectively, with the enlightenments of arhats and pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and the perfectly enlightened buddhas (*samyaksambuddha*).

[160.](#) Chinul’s discussion here is a bit confusing and has left even his commentary Yuil dissatisfied. Later scholars had noted an apparent contradiction in Zongmi’s description of the content of sudden awakening and its placement along the path in the soteriological schema of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. In *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Relevance of Numinous Awareness,” and Yuil’s exegesis of that section in *Excerpts*, n. 63, as well as in CXT p. 875a11,

Zongmi presumes that sudden awakening occurs at the first level of the ten faiths. In the *Preface* selection cited above by Chinul, however, Zongmi quotes from the *Avataṃsakasūtra* and implies that sudden awakening occurs at the time of the initial production of the *bodhicitta*, at the initial level of the ten abidings (*DX* 2–1, p. 407c20–23). Chinul believes there is a contradiction between these statements and tries to resolve it by positing that the understanding achieved through the understanding-awakening can be divided into understanding derived from sensory experience and intellectual understanding. Such a differentiation would, however, wrongly imply that there are various levels to understanding-awakening. In Yuil's opinion, there is no contradiction in Zongmi's statements; Zongmi has merely drawn a parallel between (1) the gradual cultivation that follows the sudden understanding-awakening that occurs on the ten stages of faith and (2) the gradual cultivation through the three stages of worthiness and the ten stages of sanctity that follows the realization-awakening that occurs on the ten abidings (as in the *Avataṃsakasūtra*). Simply because Zongmi quotes the *Avataṃsakasūtra* does not mean that sudden awakening does not occur at the ten levels of faith. Rather, Zongmi is simply trying to indicate here that the *processes* described in that citation refer to the gradual cultivation following the sudden awakening that occurs at the ten levels of faith. In fact, as discussed in n. 158 *supra*, Chinul indicated previously that the statements in Zongmi's *Preface* supported those found in his *Record*. Moreover, since both the *Record* and the *Preface* were written by the same author—and a monk who was renowned for his scholarship at that—it would be astounding for Zongmi to have contradicted himself so blatantly on this important point. It might be worth reemphasizing here that sudden awakening in the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation—as the term is used by Zongmi in *Record*, *CXT*, the *Preface*, and the *Great Commentary to the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*—always refers to the understanding-awakening that occurs at

the initial level of the ten faiths. The gradual cultivation performed after that initial awakening results in the realization-awakening that occurs at the initial abiding stage of the *bodhicittotpāda*. At that point, the bodhisattva path is accessed. See Yuil's discussion at *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.204b16–204c16.

- [161.](#) This is an important qualifying statement that demonstrates Chinul's fundamental Sŏn stance. Although he uses the accounts of Kyo—especially those of the consummate and sudden teachings associated with the Hwaŏm school—as expedient methods of instruction, he uses them to lead students toward Sŏn.
- [162.](#) Yanshou quotes this same passage in *Zongjing lu* 36, *T* 2016:48.627b8–9.
- [163.](#) The preceding is from *DX* 2–1, pp. 407c23–26, 408a2; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p 153. “From hearing [the dharma] once, they have a thousand awakenings” describes the myriads of qualities contained in the essential nature, which are revealed through sudden awakening. “Not even a single thought arises” refers to the practice of sudden cultivation, which instantly transcends all conceptual dichotomies. The quotation attributed to Heze is not found in his extant writings and is otherwise unidentified. (Yongming Yanshou also cites this exact statement from Heze in his *Zongjing lu* 36, *T* 2016:48.627b8, which is probably Chinul's source.) In Heze's quotation, “If just one thought comes into correspondence with the original nature” describes sudden awakening. “[The practice of all the ... pāramitās] is simultaneously put into operation” refers to sudden cultivation. Sudden awakening brings the mind into correspondence with the nature that is endowed with myriads of qualities, and the mind consequently also comes to be endowed with the same qualities; thus, sudden cultivation “is like dyeing a whole spool of thread.” See *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, *HPC* 10.190b9–15 (*Sŏnwŏn chejŏn chip tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, p. 285, lines 3–4).

“Great Master Niutou Farong”: a legend concerning the founder of the Oxhead school, one of the earliest Chan masters, says that while he was dwelling in a cave north of Youxi Monastery 幽棲寺 on Oxhead Mountain (Niutoushan 牛頭山), a hundred birds brought offerings of flowers to him daily. This anecdote can be taken as a metaphor for the myriads of meritorious qualities (bouquets) that come spontaneously to one who can display the wisdom that derives from sudden awakening (the person in the cave). See CDL 4, p. 227a.

[164.](#) Yuil explains, “Objection: ‘Since previously it was said that sudden awakening/sudden cultivation was suited for bodhisattvas whose affinities had matured, how is it now that one points to [an ordinary human being like] Niutou and others as currently having superior faculties?’ This is why he says, ‘This person’s threefold karma ... cannot be measured’” (CYKM, HPC 10.204c16–19).

[165.](#) DX 2–1, p. 408a2–5; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 153–154. See Yuil (CYKM, HPC 10.204c19–20) referencing his commentary to the *Chan Preface*, *Tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, HPC 10.190b15ff. (*Sŏnwon chejŏn chip tosŏ kwamok pyŏngip sagi*, p. 285, line 6ff.).

[166.](#) This quotation is taken from the *Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun*, T 1666:32.581a19–20), with one very minor modification; cf. Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 86. “Holds nothing back” is a free rendering of “neither parsimonious nor avaricious” (*mugant’am/wuqiantan* 無慳貪). The line exactly as Chinul quotes it here appears frequently in the works of such eminent Kyo and Sŏn figures as Chengguan and Yanshou: e.g., Chengguan’s *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishou yanyi chao*, T 1736:36.185c22–23, 303c7–8, 315c4–5 et passim; and Yanshou’s *Zongjing lu*, T 2016:48.605c12, 880b2.

[167.](#) The statement in Chengguan’s *Zhenyuan Commentary* (schema 2.4) that “one thought-moment fully contains the ten pāramitās and the manifold supplementary practices” and the passage from Heze quoted in Zongmi’s *Preface* (see

Excerpts, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn,” viz., the fifth soteriological schema, of sudden awakening/sudden cultivation), which said (citing Heze) that “if just one thought comes into correspondence with the original nature, the practice of all eighty-[four] thousand pāramitās will simultaneously put into operation” are explanations of sudden cultivation given from the standpoint of the fully engaged cultivation (*p’ansa su*, the relative). Hence, the two descriptions are similar. However, Chengguan’s explanation is also given from the standpoint of intrinsic inclusiveness (*sŏnggu mun*, the absolute), so efficacious practices (the relative) have still to be perfected. Zongmi’s account is given from the standpoint of manifest action in the conditioned realm, in which the efficacious practices have had to have been brought to perfection. Hence the explanations are slightly different. See *CYH*, *HPC* 9.552a22–552b7; *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.205a13–17.

[168.](#) This misconception that, since the afflictions do not exist in reality, there actually is nothing to practice and nothing to achieve is an antinomian tendency that Zongmi (and, to a lesser extent, Chinul) attribute to radical subitist soteriological schemata. In the Hongzhou school, all afflictions and negative traits of character are considered to be identical to the monistic buddha-nature (“the approach involving the original purity”); hence cultivation implies nothing more than maintaining the awareness that afflictions are not different from the pure buddha-nature. This is again sudden cultivation conceived from the standpoint of intrinsic inclusiveness, in which the ideal wisdom is stressed. Chinul argues here that, while this approach may be effective in sustaining the cultivation of nothought, it neglects the discriminative power of the mind to differentiate morality from immorality.

[169.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Heze School’s Basic Premise.”

[170.](#) “Obstruction of understanding” (*hae’ae/jie’ai* 解礙): probably synonymous with the cognitive or noetic obscurations (*jñeyāvaraṇa*).

[171.](#) Just so there is no confusion as to the implications of Chinul's analysis here, Yuil reiterates, "Sudden awakening/sudden cultivation turns out to be sudden awakening/gradual cultivation" (*CYKM, HPC* 10.205a21–22).

[172.](#) "Zongmi's intention ... was probably to counter the students' wrong views of annihilationism and permanency in regard to this sequence": Yuil explains that Zongmi's intention was to counter the misconceptions common among many students of both Sŏn and Kyo that either awakening or cultivation had to precede the perfection of the following factor. Since the most accurate view is that awakening and cultivation are simultaneous—a view that would only be held by people whose practice was already authentic—Yuil saw no need to mention it here. To counter the attachment to awakening—that is, grasping at the principle of voidness, which can be equated with the wrong view of annihilationism—Zongmi explained that cultivation of wholesome qualities (viz., all provisional dharmas) must precede awakening. Grasping at cultivation—that is, taking as real the myriads of differences in the characteristics of phenomenal objects, which may be equated with the wrong view of permanency—was countered by proposing that awakening to the truth of voidness must precede cultivation. Consequently, the fact that Zongmi only mentioned these two alternatives and skipped simultaneity was merely an expedient description. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.205a22–205b8.

Chŏnghye explains, however, that Zongmi's purpose here was to counter wrong views about sudden awakening/gradual cultivation. If there is grasping at the conception of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation, a wrong view of sequence might develop: that sudden awakening necessarily preceded gradual cultivation in all cases. Grasping at the aspect of sudden awakening develops into the view of annihilationism because this might involve clinging to the idea that sentient beings and buddhas are identical and there is no difference between self and others, in which case the discriminative powers of the mind might be neglected. Clinging to gradual

cultivation might develop into the view of permanency because there could develop attachments both to the practices that need to be cultivated as well as to the idea that oneself and others have to be ferried across to nirvāṇa, with the result that the understanding of the nondual, ideal essence would be lost. Consequently, the simultaneity of cultivation and awakening was intended to counter the wrong view of sequence. An initial sudden understanding-awakening followed by sudden cultivation thus counters the view of annihilationism. Initial sudden cultivation followed by subsequent realization-awakening therefore counters the view of permanence. See *CYH, HPC* 9.553a16–b3.

[173.](#) *Wanshan tonggui ji* 3, *T* 2017:48.987c5. Chinul will quote this full passage below in the section on “Yanshou’s Assessment of Sudden and Gradual.”

[174.](#) The detailed analyses Chinul offers in this section are intended to substantiate his prior statement that cultivation is authentic cultivation only when it follows the initial understanding-awakening. In these three schemata of gradual cultivation/sudden awakening, sudden cultivation/gradual awakening, and gradual cultivation/gradual awakening—indeed, in any schema where cultivation precedes awakening—real cultivation is mistakenly presumed to be able to start prior to an initial awakening; these approaches are consequently inferior in Chinul’s judgment and of dubious value in promoting authentic progress in practice.

[175.](#) “Bound stage” (*kubak chi/jufu di* 具縛地) refers to ordinary life, where beings remain subject to the afflictions (*kleśa*). It can also refer to the first of the ten bhūmis of the provisional teachings, where ordinary people remain shackled by the afflictions. See *HYJ* 32, p. 174a27–29.

[176.](#) *HYJb* 8, p. 449c14.

[177.](#) See *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Approaches of Dharma and Person,” with slight modifications. Here Chinul takes issue with Zongmi—upholding the approach of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation as Zongmi himself explained it

in his *Record* and corroborating its veracity in the quotations that follow. In the provisional teachings, the teachings have been adapted so that they coincide with the spiritual capacities of ignorant sentient beings. Hence, from this standpoint, Zongmi's statement that there is only gradualness and no suddenness may be correct, because every soteriological schema that involves gradual cultivation prior to awakening has been adapted to the spiritual capacity of a certain type of individual at a particular point in his or her spiritual development. From the standpoint of the *Avatamsakasūtra* and other scriptures that are expressions of the consummate and sudden teachings, however, the teachings (the absolute) have not been emasculated to suit the inferior capacities of ignorant sentient beings (the provisional). These sūtras demand a sudden awakening to the ultimate truth that they express as a prerequisite to beginning the gradual cultivation of that truth. Hence, from their standpoint, the statement that there is only gradual development is incorrect; or, conversely, if that statement is accepted, the *Avatamsakasūtra's* approach would have to be wrong.

- [178.](#) “Amitābha Realizes the Nature Gāthā” (“Mit’a chūngsǒng ke” 彌陀證性偈) is a brief song composed by the Silla scholiast Wŏnhyo, probably to help popularize Buddhism among the common people. The full text of the song, however, is not extant and there are no references to it in Buddhist scriptural catalogues. The song's text does not even appear in Ŭich'ŏn's catalogue of the supplement to the Koryŏ Buddhist canon, *Sinp'yŏn chejong kyojang ch'ongnok* (Newly compiled comprehensive catalogue of the teachings of the various schools of Buddhism), compiled about a generation before Chinul, which lists so many other indigenous East Asian compositions that have otherwise been lost to history. Only two small fragments of the song's text survive in citations. The first is this passage in Chinul's *Excerpts*. There is also a short fragment from it cited by title in the funerary stele for Yose 了世 (1163–1240), *Mandŏksan Paengnyŏnsa Wŏnmyo kuksa pi*

(Funerary inscription to Yose, State Preceptor Wŏnmyo, of Paengnyŏn Society on Mandŏk Mountain); see *Chōsen kinseki sōran*, 1:592; Yi Nŭng-hwa, *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa*, 3:322 l. 10. Yose was a younger contemporary of Chinul's; like his senior, Yose was a leader in the "religious society" (*kyŏlsa*) movement in the southwest of the Korean peninsula. Yose is considered the revitalizer of the Ch'ŏnt'ae (Ch. Tiantai 天台) tradition during the mid-Koryŏ dynasty; he also instituted a religious-society structure for Paengnyŏnsa 白蓮社 (White Lotus Society), which he founded in 1211, one year after Chinul's death. Yose lived for several years at Chinul's Samādhi and Prajñā Society, so he may have learned of Wŏnhyo's "Mit'a chŭngsŏng ke" while he was in residence there. For Yose's role in the religious-society movement, see Ko Ikchin, "Wŏnmyo Yose ŭi Paengnyŏn kyŏlsa wa kŭ sasangjŏk tonggi," *PGHP* 15 (1978): pp. 109–120; Han Ki-du, "Koryŏ Pulgyo ŭi kyŏlsa undong," in *PKC*, pp. 573–578. The passage from the "Mit'a chŭngsŏng ke" that is cited in Chinul's *Excerpts* is published in *HPC* 1.843a; the passage quoted in Yose's stele is, however, not included in that collection.

- [179.](#) Dharmākara bhikṣu (Pŏpchang *pigu*/Fazang *biqu* 法藏比丘) was the name of the Buddha Amitābha prior to his attainment of enlightenment.
- [180.](#) The forty-eight (lit., "six eights") vows made by Dharmākara bhikṣu at the time he expressed his aspiration for future buddhahood. See *Wuliangshou jing* 1 (*Sukhāvātīvyūhasūtra*), *T* 360:12.267c–269b.
- [181.](#) *Jin'gang jing*, *T* 235:8.750b.
- [182.](#) An allusion to *HYJ* 13, p. 68a25; quoted also at *DHYL* 28, p. 930b8.
- [183.](#) Sudden awakening/gradual cultivation "applies throughout all three periods": The previous quotations about Dharmākara bhikṣu and the Buddha Śākyamuni demonstrate that sudden awakening/gradual cultivation was the soteriological schema followed by past cultivators. The quote concerning Shigong that follows in the next section demonstrates that sudden

awakening/gradual cultivation applies to people in the present age also. Obviously, we cannot know that sudden awakening/gradual cultivation will also be applicable in the future, but Yuil presumes such an extrapolation is not unwarranted. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.206a11–13.

[184.](#) *DX* 2–1, p. 408a5. See *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn,” concluding statement. Yuil explains that “they heard [one word of dharma] and immediately awakened” means that “they accumulated pure karma over a long period of time” (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.206a23).

[185.](#) The conduct of both these monks was reputed to have been exemplary from their youths. As mentioned previously (*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi’s Schemata of Radical Subitism in Sŏn,” n. 163), Farong was supposed to have been brought bouquets of flowers every day by a hundred birds; his perfection of the *brahmacarya* was legendary even in his own time (see *CDL* 4, p. 227a). Attendant Huitong 會通侍者 (d.u.), also known as Yuanxiang 元鄉, was a disciple of Niaohe Daolin 鳥窠道林 (741–824) in the Oxhead lineage. A former imperial minister during the reign of the Tang emperor Dezong, Huitong stopped eating meat and drinking liquor while still a layman and did not keep the wives and concubines to which he was entitled. He, too, was pure in conduct even before ordaining. See *CDL* 4, p. 230b–c; *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.206a13–17.

[186.](#) People like Niutou Farong and Huitong who engage in exemplary conduct from very early in their lives must have practiced diligently in past lives in order to have developed such meritorious tendencies; their lives therefore support the theory of gradual development throughout the past and seem to belie the theory that practice begins with initial sudden awakening. (Sudden awakening, of course, would presumably would not occur at birth or while someone was an infant.) Nevertheless, Chinul says in effect, “What about those people whose behavior has not been so perfect and who are subject to all the afflictions that plague ordinary people? If these people become enlightened in this life, how can the fact

of an initial sudden awakening in this lifetime be denied?” Simply because people like Farong have developed themselves gradually in past lives so that they would be ready to reach perfection in this life in no way invalidates the fact that others with no apparent spiritual background have had a sudden awakening without any prior preparation.

[187.](#) Shigong Huizang 石鞏慧藏 (d.u.) was a disciple of Mazu Daoyi. He was originally a hunter and hated monks (presumably because they were vegetarians?). After his enlightenment, whenever someone would ask him a question about the dharma, he would draw his bow and aim his arrow straight at the questioner; see *CDL* 6, p. 248b–c. Huizang and his arrow also appear as case 81 in the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Biyan lu* 9, *T* 2003:48.207b). The term “herding the ox,” a metaphor for the course of Sōn practice, is first attributed to Huizang (*CDL* 6, p. 248b22). Yinfeng 隱峰 of Wutaishan 五臺山 (d.u.) was also a disciple of Mazu Daoyi. He is best known for dying while standing on his head; for his story, see *CDL* 8, p. 259b–c.

[188.](#) Reading 義 (aspect) for 儀 (rite), following all other editions; cf. *HPC* 4.753c10. This may simply be a misprint in the *HPC* edition.

[189.](#) The first aspect of mental development in the past refers to the long-term accumulation of meritorious actions following the initial arousal of the *bodhicitta*. Due to this extended training, such people exhibit perfect conduct in this life and awaken effortlessly, as was the case with Farong in the preceding example. The second aspect refers to people like Shigong (or Aṅgulimālya from among the Buddha’s immediate disciples) who, in some past life, had planted the “roots of merit” or “wholesome faculties” (*kuśalamūla*) that much later would eventually catalyze their sudden awakenings. For Aṅgulimālya, see my translator’s introduction, the section on “Problems with Radical Subitism”; see also Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Aṅgulimāla.”

[190.](#) Due to the power of ignorance, which continues to involve the student in affliction, even after awakening one must continue

with the relative practice that perfects wholesome qualities and counteracts unwholesome tendencies. But because of the power of prajñā, the ideal practice that is always in conformity with the dharma-nature is brought to immediate perfection without any gradual increase in effort; that is, the student is able to practice while knowing that there is really nothing that needs to be practiced. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.206b3–6.

[191.](#) *Da banniepan jing* 16, *T* 374:12.458a.

[192.](#) See *ibid.*, p. 458a–c.

[193.](#) Here Chinul counters the misconception that sudden awakening that occurs due to the presence of the roots of merit is also a result of the gradual development of wholesome actions. His answer raises the inevitable question: How can conditioned practices and provisional causes produce the realization of the unconditioned dharma? The accumulation of pure karma still involves only the operation of the mundane law of conditionality. While that accumulation will help to develop the mind, it can never lead to supramundane realization. This breakthrough can only happen by suddenly adverting the mind toward nirvāṇa through sudden awakening. One can go on accumulating wholesome actions for all eternity and still never gain release from the bondage of saṃsāra—hence Chinul’s stress on the need for the initial sudden awakening so that the attachment to the things of this world can be broken and the practice leading to buddhahood can begin. See *CYKM, HPC* 10.206b6–10.

[194.](#) “The purity ... and the liberation of the self-nature (*chasǒng chǒngjǒng/zixing qingjing* 自性清淨 and *chasǒng haet’al/zixing jietuo* 自性解脫)” are two aspects of the suchness of the mind. They cannot be developed but rather are inherent and realized through sudden awakening. They are the opposites of the “immaculate purity (*igu chǒngjǒng/ligou qingjing* 離垢清淨) and the liberation that is free from all obstacles (*ijang haet’al/lizhang jietuo* 離障解脫)” mentioned in the next sentence; these are the relative purity

and liberation that free one from conditioned afflictions and hindrances and allow the purity and liberation of the self-nature to manifest themselves freely. For an extensive account of these two types of purity, see Chengguan's *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 56, *T* 1736:36.445a20ff. These two types of liberation are also discussed in Chengguan's *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* (e.g., *T* 1736:36.159b25, 607b22), but never together there.

- [195.](#) The following quotation appears in *Wanshan tonggui ji* 3, *T* 2017:48.987b–c. The most extensive treatment of this text in Western scholarship appears in Welter, *Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*. Yanshou draws from Zongmi's discussion at *DX* 2–1, p. 407c, quoted in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Zongmi's Schemata of Moderate Subitism and Gradualism in Sōn.”
- [196.](#) Yuil explains, “‘strong [point]’ refers to the one alternative involving the understanding-awakening [viz., sudden awakening/gradual cultivation]; ‘weak point’ refers to the three alternatives involving the realization-awakening [viz., sudden awakening/sudden cultivation et al.] ‘Rawness’ means that the characteristics of their practice are in contradiction with one another; ‘ripeness’ means that the characteristics of their practice tally with one another” (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.206b21–206c1).
- [197.](#) For this hermeneutical binary of *kae* (to “open up,” or specific import) and *hap* (“to combine,” or their correlation) and the association with Zongmi and Yanshou, see *Excerpts*, n. 90.
- [198.](#) The “eight [worldly] winds” (*p’alp’ung/bafeng* 八風) are four pairs of opposites that constantly buffet the mundane world: gain and loss, fame and disrepute, praise and blame, joy and suffering. See, among many possible references, *Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing* 2, *T* 159:3.300b14.
- [199.](#) For all these terms, see the entries in Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v.v.
- [200.](#) *Zizaiwang pusa jing* 2, *T* 420:13.932a17–18.
- [201.](#) *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Approaches of Dharma and Person,” with slight modifications.

- [202.](#) Yuil explains that “subsidiary” and “from a distance” refer to the buddha-vehicle (viz., the scriptures of Kyo); “primary” and “up close” refer to Zongmi’s *Record*. CYKM, HPC 10.206c16–18.
- [203.](#) Chinul alludes again here to the usual Hwaŏm definition of “nature origination”; see *Excerpts*, n. 53 *supra*.
- [204.](#) This passage appears (with slight differences) at XHYJL 11, p. 789c25, and *zhuan* 21, p. 864c18. See also the account at XHYJL 35, p. 963c: “With the appearance of the effortless wisdom, there is a danger that the practitioner will languish in quiescence. Because it is the great vow [to save all beings] that catalyzes the function of wisdom, one should again recollect the original vow to ferry across all sentient beings and not neglect this stage of practice. Because one is guarded by the dharma, one will not then be able to languish in quiescence.”
- [205.](#) This objection is one of the major themes of Chinul’s earlier works, esp. his *Encouragement to Practice*, exchange no. 2, and *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind*, exchange no. 2 (both in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 127–130 and 212–215, respectively): Why don’t any of the putatively enlightened teachers today have superpowers? Chinul’s explanation there is that the superpowers, etc., are developed as gradual cultivation matures; they do not appear simultaneously with the initial sudden awakening. As Chinul repeatedly declares, developing superpowers is not the point of practice, anyway, they being “only ancillary byproducts of sanctity.”
- [206.](#) DX 2–2, p. 410c9–20; cf. Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 172–173. The interlinear annotations explaining the import of the simile are Zongmi’s.
- [207.](#) “Silent illumination” (*mukcho/mozhao* 默照) was the foil against which Dahui Zonggao established his new *kanhwa* Sŏn/*kanhua* Chan 看話禪 style of training and promoted his own Linji (K. Imje, J. Rinzai 臨濟) school of Chan. Dahui incessantly attacked “silent illumination” as a form of quietism that was detrimental to the prospect of enlightenment and associated it with the rival Caodong (K. Chodong, J. Sōtō 曹

洞) school. *Kanhwa* Sŏn, by contrast, was concerned not with quietude but with an immediate breakthrough into awakening. Chinul will broach this issue toward the end of *Excerpts*, in chap. 3, the “Flawed Approaches to Sŏn Practice” section, though it is not at all clear there that Chinul was familiar with these polemical aspects of Dahui’s treatment of silent-illumination practice. Much of Dahui’s traditional Linji portrayal of Caodong practice as a form of quietism has been debunked by modern scholarship. For one of the more comprehensive treatments of the sudden-illumination style of Chan practice and Dahui’s criticisms thereof, see Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, esp. pp. 116–121 et passim.

[208.](#) This exchange is taken from *DX* 1–2, p. 405b21–26; cf. Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 139. The teaching that explains that characteristics are real is the first of the three varieties of the teachings that Zongmi describes in his *Preface*: the “teaching of recondite import that relies on the [dharma-]nature to explain characteristics” (*mirŭi ūisŏng sŏlsang kyo/miyi yixing shuoxiang jiao* 密意依性説相教). See *DX* 1–2, p. 402b18–19. This elementary style of teaching involves three subdivisions: (1) the teaching of humans and divinities, which involves the instruction in the reality of karmic cause and effect (in order to improve the quality of one’s rebirths); (2) the teaching that eradicates delusions and extinguishes suffering and joy (so one will no longer be subject to rebirth); and (3) the teaching that uses consciousness to eradicate sense-objects (and reveal the true suchness in which dharmas also are demonstrated to be devoid of any underlying substratum of existence). See *DX* 1–2, p. 403a16–c; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 124–128.

[209.](#) Zongmi is certainly referring here to the first of the three varieties of the teachings. I believe that he is, however, also including the expedients deployed in the second of these three varieties of the teachings, the “teaching of recondite import that obliterates signs to reveal the nature” (*mirŭi p’asang hyŏnsŏng kyo/miyi poxiang xianxing jiao* 密意破相顯性教) (*DX* 1–2, p. 403a10).

- [210.](#) The “fundamental school” (*ponjong/benzong* 本宗) refers to the third of the three types of Chan covered by Zongmi in his *Preface*: “the direct revelation of the mind-nature school” (*chik hyŏn simsŏng chong/zhi xian xinxing zong* 直顯心性宗). This school is correlated with the Chan schools of Heze and Hongzhou. See *DX* 1–2, p. 402b ff. and esp. pp. 402c15–403a11; Jan, “Tsong-mi,” pp. 39–40; Gregory, *Tsong-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 224, 251, et passim; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 122ff. The “fundamental teaching” (*pon’gyo/benjiao* 本教) refers to the third of the three varieties of teachings covered in the same work: “the revelation that the true mind is the nature teaching” (*hyŏnsi chinsim chŭk sŏng kyo/xianshi zhenxin ji xing jiao* 顯示真心即性教), which includes the tathāgatagarbha thought of mainstream Mahāyāna. See *DX* 1–2, pp. 404b26–27; Gregory, *Tsong-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, p. 212; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 133ff.
- [211.](#) Quoted from Yanshou’s *Wanshan tonggui ji* 3, *T* 2017:48.987c16.
- [212.](#) “The malady of insouciance” (*imbyŏng/renbing* 任病), which borders on antinomianism, is the second of the four maladies discussed in the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*. See *Yuanjue jing*, *T* 842:17.920b22; see also Charles Muller, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, p. 222.
- [213.](#) *Longmen Foyan Yuan chanshi zuochan ming*, in *Zimen jingxun*, *T* 2023:48.1048b. Longmen Foyan 龍門佛眼 (1067–1120), also known as Qingyuan 清遠, was a disciple of Wuzu Fayen 五祖法演 (1024?–1104) in the Yangqi 楊岐 collateral line of the Linji school. For his biography, see *Xu chuandeng lu* 25, *T* 2077:51.636b–637b.
- [214.](#) Spatially (*hoeng/heng* 橫) and temporally (*su/shu* 豎) are literally horizontally and vertically, respectively. These spatial and temporal dimensions are clearly conveyed in such usages as “Horizontally penetrating the ten directions ... vertically piercing the three time periods” (*Jin’gang jing zuanyao kanding ji* 4, *T* 1702:33.201a16–17; and *Qixin lun pi xue ji*, *T* 1848:44.299a5–8). See also the usage in the

passage from the *Inscription on the Mind-King* quoted at *Excerpts*, n. 70. I provide an extensive discussion of this binary in Buswell, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment*, p. 346n.7.

[215.](#) My interpretation of, and glosses on, this verse derive from Yuil's commentary (see *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.207b5–15). "Its essence transcends all sense of partiality or comprehensiveness": partiality refers to function, comprehensiveness to essence, implying that the mind-nature transcends all limited descriptions in terms of either essence or function and is inscrutable to the discriminative mind. "Golden waves": when the moon of wisdom reflects on the waves of samādhi, they shine like gold. "If production and cessation are quiescent, / Mahākāśyapa will appear": according to Chan legends, the first Indian patriarch, Mahākāśyapa, "after reciting his transmission gāthā, took up his *saṃghāti* robe and entered Cock's Foot (Kukkuṭapāda Mountain) to await [in a deep samādhi] the advent of Maitreya" (*CDL* 1, p. 206b5–6). Hence, Mahākāśyapa symbolizes an absolute state of mental absorption. "How can Sōn not be sitting? / How can sitting not be Sōn?": guarding against mental lassitude is called sitting; freedom from desires while dwelling within desires and freedom from affliction while dwelling among afflictions is Sōn. Alternatively: the suchness of the ideal nature is sitting; the unimpeded interpenetration of all phenomena is Sōn. "Discrimination may persist within": attempts to quiet sensory discrimination can also create internal discriminations (like distorted views) if one wrongly assumes that there is something real that must be put to rest. This is the cognitive or noetic obstruction (*jñeyāvaraṇa*). Although production and cessation are temporarily brought to a halt with the ending of sensory discriminations, the conceptual scaffolding upon which that production and cessation is framed has still not been destroyed. Hence discriminations are still present internally. "An all-encompassing effulgence will be emitted from the crown of your head": the round or cylindrical ray of permanent

light emanating from the *dharmakāya* of the buddhas (see *Guan Wuliangshou fo jing*, T 365:12.343b21). “One drop of refined cinnabar, / Dipped into gold, becomes the elixir [of immortality]”: this is an allusion to the recipe for preparing the refined elixir, or reverted cinnabar (*hwandan/huandan* 還丹), one of the nine varieties of gold elixir (*kūmdan/jindan* 金丹) discussed by Ge Hong 葛洪 (284–363). See *Baopu zi* 4, fol. 7b3–6, translated in Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion*, p. 77; for the nine elixirs, taken from the *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhengao* 真誥), see Strickmann, “On the Alchemy of T’ao Hung-ching,” pp. 131, 132–138, and 143–150. Many of these alchemical potions apparently led to “liberation from the corpse” (*sihae/shijie* 屍解), that is, ritual suicide, for which see Strickmann, pp. 130 and 136–138, and Robinet, “Metamorphosis and Deliverance,” pp. 57–66. Yuil here interprets cinnabar as the one dharma of dhyāna, which is the essential factor required to change the ordinary person (liquid gold) into a saint (the elixir of immortality). “Though you may still speak of delusion and awakening”: although delusion and awakening may only be concepts, one can still speak in provisional terms of unenlightened ordinary people and enlightened saints.

[216.](#) HYJ 30, p. 162c1.

[217.](#) DSQXL, p. 579a12, 16; Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, pp. 64–65.

[218.](#) Kanakamuni Buddha was the fifth of the seven buddhas of antiquity (*saptatathāgata*); this stanza is taken from CDL 1, p. 205a20.

[219.](#) Chōnghye glosses “fundamental principle” here as the “mind school” or “mind-axiom” (*simchong* 心宗) of Sōn and suggests that by cultivating samādhi and prajñā, students will gain the knowledge and vision of the buddhas. Yuil interprets this passage as suggesting the complementarity between the authentic and the spurious and the two aspects of immutability and adaptability. “Although authentic awareness is quiescent”: awareness is immutable but is nevertheless identified with adaptability as displayed in the “the myriads of

conditions.” Hence the fact that truth is always immanent in all phenomenal objects does not imply that what is spurious cannot be present simultaneously. “Although deluded thoughts may be chimeric”: adaptability operates without negating the reality of immutability. Hence the spurious is never apart from the authentic. By validating the distinction between the authentic and the spurious, absolute and phenomenal, and so forth (“ignor[ing] this fundamental principle”), one falls into the same misconception as the questioner who viewed the mind of buddhahood as being entirely separate from the discriminative consciousness of sentient beings. By ignoring the fundamental identity of immutability and adaptability and buddhas and sentient beings, this person creates difficulties for himself. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.308a6–9; *CYH*, *HPC* 9.555a–b.

- [220.](#) “Mind school” or “mind-axiom” (*simjong/xinzong* 心宗) refers to the Sŏn school and its cardinal teaching of the buddha-mind (*pulsim chong/foxin zong* 佛心宗), which East Asian Sŏn claims was handed down exclusively within its tradition starting with Bodhidharma. See, as but just a couple of many possible examples, the *Platform Sūtra* (*LZTJ*, p. 357c4), and Yanshou’s *Zongjing lu* 3, *T* 2016:48.428b12.
- [221.](#) *Shoulengyan jing* (**Śūraṅgamasūtra*) 4, *T* 945:19.121b.
- [222.](#) Alluding to a statement by Changzi Kuang *chanshi* 長髭曠禪師 (d.u.), a disciple of Shitou Xiqian, in *CDL* 14, p. 313b1–2; the phrase is also used in *Biyan lu* 7, case 69, *T* 2003:48.198c8; Clearly and Cleary, *Blue Cliff Record*, p. 434.
- [223.](#) “Nine empyrea” (*kuso/jiuxiao* 九霄): either the nine divisions of the firmament, the highest point in those heavens, or the nine important planets and stars in Buddhist cosmology; the lists vary. See the explanation in Yi Chi-gwan, *Sajip sagi*, pp. 485.
- [224.](#) “In their confusion regarding their own minds”: the essence of the mind pervades past, present, and future. Consequently, those who say they cannot practice in this current degenerate age of the dharma show that they have not understood their own minds. By knowing the mind, all time periods become the period of the authentic dharma. “Modest backgrounds”

(*kwamun/guawen* 寡聞; lit., “little learning”) refers to students who have only heard provisional explanations (*neyārtha*) of Buddhist eschatological teachings suggesting that the dharma gradually degenerates and finally disappears. Such students have not read the definitive teaching (*nītārtha*) in scriptures like the *Avataṃsakasūtra* or the *Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*, both of which stress that because the mind is unchanging throughout the three time periods, there is no possibility of any such degeneration. Because such benighted students do not believe it is possible to attain buddhahood in the degenerate age, they slander the Buddha by implying that he spoke spuriously in sūtras where he stated clearly that enlightenment is possible (as in the quotation from the *Diamond Sūtra* that follows). They slander the dharma, because they do not believe that it transcends all notions of past and future. They slander the saṃgha, because they do not believe there are still monks who are able to practice samādhi and prajñā. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.208b9–16.

[225.](#) *Jin’gang jing*, *T* 235:8.750b1–2, 754b17–18, with minor differences.

[226.](#) This statement is also adapted from the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jin’gang jing*, *T* 235:8.750b27–28).

[227.](#) Guishan Lingyu 潯山纓佑 (771–853), disciple of Baizhang Huaihai and cofounder of the Guiyang/Weiyang 潯仰 school of Chan. For the quotation see *CDL* 9, p. 265a1–2.

[228.](#) I have been unable to trace this precise quotation in the extant works of Wŏnhyo. The closest I have come to a statement similar to the first sentence appears in his song “Arouse Your Mind and Practice” (“Palsim suhaeng chang”): “Those who practice what is difficult to practice will be revered like buddhas.” See “Palsim suhaeng chang,” *HPC* 1.841a14. The sentiments Chinul expresses in this section, however, have their parallels throughout this didactic work of Wŏnhyo’s. For an English translation of this work, see Buswell, “Arouse Your Mind and Practice!”

- [229.](#) The second sentence in this quotation has a close parallel in some recensions of the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* (*Sishi'er zhang jing*, T 784:17.722 n. 36). I have been unable to trace the first sentence.
- [230.](#) Chinul is quoting, with a minor variation, Li Tongxuan's *XHYJL* 11, p. 791c4–5. There are also many passages of similar import in the sections on the perfection of forbearance (*kṣāntipāramitā*) in the *Dazhidu lun* (**Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*); cf. *Dazhidu lun* 14–16, T 1509:25.164a, 172a.
- [231.](#) For the first section of the passage (“If they are authentic cultivators of the path, ... their own faults will instead be augmented”), see *LZTJ*, p. 351c (with 351b25 added); for the second section (“If they are persons of true virtue, in their hearts, ... constantly belittle everyone else”), see *LZTJ*, p. 352a; for the third section (“If they are truly unmoving, ... causes and conditions that obstruct the path”) see *LZTJ*, p. 353b. See also McRae, *Platform Sutra*, pp. 48–51, 59–60.
- [232.](#) Chenggu 承古 (?–1045), also known as Jianfu 薦福 or the “Keeper of the Ancient Stūpa” (Gutazhu 古塔主), was a disciple of Nanyue Liangya 南嶽良雅 (d.u.), a minor disciple of Dongshan Shouchu 洞山守初 (910?–990) in the Yunmen school. For his biography, see *CDL* 30, p. 466a; *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* 12, *XZJ* 1531:137.245b; *Wudeng huiyuan* 15, *XZJ* 1536:138.284b. For his *Discourse Record*, see *Jianfu Chenggu chanshi yulu*, *XZJ* 1223:126.435–490.
- [233.](#) *Zongjing lu* 38, T 2016:48.638a18–19.
- [234.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 638a19.
- [235.](#) By Baozhi 寶誌 (418–514), in the *Shisi ke song*, *CDL* 29, p. 451a–b.
- [236.](#) This metaphor of a rock crushing grass (*yǒ sǒk apch'o/ru shi yacao* 如石壓草) comes from Dahui; see *DHYL* 26, p. 921b27. Chinul also uses metaphor in his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (see Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 228).
- [237.](#) I have not been able to trace the source for the first sentence in this quotation. The second sentence comes from Yanshou

(see his *Zongjing lu* 45, T 2016:48.680b15). Chinul also quotes it in his *Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (see Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 238).

[238.](#) *Zhao lun*, T 185:45.152a.

[239.](#) The malady of being “ensnared by purity” that is described here refers to the attachment to ineffability, the essence of mind, without understanding how that essence functions in the external world. The basic functions of the sensory consciousnesses are seeing (eyes), hearing (ears), sensing (nose, tongue, body), and knowing (mentality). As Yuil explains, to be “ensnared by purity” means that students are attached to an ineffable understanding that cannot be expressed conceptually. To be “constrained by the sense-spheres” refers to the attachment to an understanding of consummate interfusion, which Chinul suggests means that they believe everything is simply empty and don’t recognize the difference between salutary and unsalutary functions. See *CYKM*, HPC 10.209a.

[240.](#) This line describes the malady of neophytes who are attached to their sensory experience. They must recognize amid their sensory experience (the functioning of the mind) is the ineffability of the essence of mind, a recognition that will counteract that attachment. See *CYKM*, HPC 10.209a17–19.

[241.](#) *Avatamsakasūtra*, HYJ 13, p. 69a25; cf. *Dafangguang fo huayan jing busiyi fo jingjie fen*, T 300:10.908b8.

[242.](#) HYJ 14, p. 89a; HYJb 8, p. 449c.

[243.](#) *DSQXL*, p. 577b.

[244.](#) *Lengqie jing* 4, T 670:16.510b, 512b.

[245.](#) *DX* 1–2, p. 405c6–22; cf. Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 140–141. The interlinear annotation explaining the simile is Zongmi’s own.

[246.](#) In the *Record*, Zongmi quotes approvingly Heze Shenhui’s comment that “this one word ‘awareness’ is the source of all wonders” (see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Heze School’s Basic Premise”). Later Sŏn masters have pointed out the dangers of attachment even to such a salutary concept as numinous awareness. Cf. the critique that Chinul cites toward the end of

Excerpts: “The one word ‘awareness’ is the gateway to all calamities” (*Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Dead Word of Numinous Awareness vs. the Live Word of the *Hwadu*”).

[247.](#) Ŭisang, in his *Chart of the Avataṃsaka’s One-Vehicle Dharmadhātu* (*Hwaŏm ilsŭng pŏpkye to*, T 1887A:46.711a).

[248.](#) The description of radical acceptance in Ŭisang’s *Gāthā* from the *Chart of the Avataṃsaka’s One-Vehicle Dharmadhātu* (“in one is everything, in many is one”) does not specify that realization-wisdom is involved in this understanding; realization-wisdom is instead said to yield knowledge of ineffability, which would involve radical rejection. Lest this statement be taken to imply that radical acceptance is understood through ordinary wisdom, Yuil explains that, because conditioned origination in this context actually means nature origination, it does involve realization.

“Conditioned origination” (*yŏn’gi/yuanqi* 緣起, *pratītyasamutpāda*) means that all dharmas originate from conditions. “Nature-origination” (*sŏnggi/xingqi* 性起) means that everything originates from the nature. Since there is not one dharma that is not the nature, conditioned [origination] is also nature [-origination]. Since their origination is unoriginated, it is inscrutable [conditioned] origination. (CYKM, HPC 10.209a20–23)

“Inscrutable conditioning” (*pulsaŭi inyŏn/busiyi yinyuan* 不思議因緣) is a term used by Tiantai Zhiyi 天臺智顗 (538–597) to refer to the fundamental tenet of the consummate teachings; see *Sijiao yi* 1, T 1929:46.722b11, and *zhuan* 10, p. 761c21; cf. *Huayan jing shu* 2, T 1735:35.509c29.

[249.](#) “Flowers in the sky” (*konghwa/konghua* 空華, *khapuṣpa*) is something akin to an ocular migraine and is a common metaphor used in Buddhist literature for delusion (viz., seeing things that are not there); for an example in a text that Chinul often cites, see, e.g., *Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.913b25–26. For background, see Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “*khapuṣpa*.”

[250.](#) *Wanshan tonggui ji* 3, T 2017:48.984b.

[251.](#) Here Chinul counters the misconception that Sŏn is identical to the sudden teaching—a common charge made by

adherents of the consummate teachings in the Kyo tradition. Students of the consummate teachings assume that, since Sŏn is concerned solely with “seeing the nature,” it stresses radical rejection exclusively and, unlike the consummate teachings, does not go on to the full perfection of all relative qualities by developing the unimpeded interpenetration between all phenomena. Chinul explains that the sudden teaching is concerned solely with eradicating all relative signs but does not prompt the student to recognize the true nature that is at their core. The Sŏn school, on the other hand, points directly to the true nature that is inherent in all relative phenomena; while employing the radical rejection of the sudden teaching, it remains centered in radical acceptance. Hence Sŏn’s sudden teaching is a more balanced and all-inclusive approach than is the sudden teaching as described in Kyo. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.209b20–209c1.

[252.](#) *DX* 1–1, p. 400a2–3; cf. Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, p. 106.

[253.](#) In this passage Chinul counters the misconception that Sŏn is identical to the consummate teachings because it in fact employs both rejection and acceptance. “Kyo” here refers to the consummate teachings. Chinul’s critique stresses the different aims of the consummate teachings and of Sŏn: Kyo to provide an outline of doctrine that will allow Buddhism to flourish over many generations, Sŏn to prod the student toward awakening. “The words of which eradicate all meaning, [and] the meaning of which eradicates all words”: Yuil explains that since the words (phenomena) do not exist inside meaning (principle), they “eradicate all meaning”; since meaning is free of all words, it “eradicates all words.” Hence these instructions do not allow students to grasp at the teachings (“students will no longer get stuck in their traces”) and thereby neglect awakening. Chŏnghye’s explanation is more to the point. The answers given by masters to their students’ questions are intended to prevent students from grasping at concepts. Hence “the words of which eradicate all meaning” means that the words of the master’s reply are intended to subvert the intent of the student’s question. “The

meaning of which eradicates all words” means that the meaning of the master’s reply is to refute the words of the student’s question. This is the Sōn approach of breaking all reliance on purely intellectual understanding and prompting the student toward direct realization. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10a209b–c; *CYH*, *HPC* 9.556b.

[254.](#) “The one thought that is present right now” is a phrase that first appears in the *Avataṃsakasūtra* (see *HYJb* 51, p. 723c16–17, though the two Sinographic compounds are not connected in that passage). The phrase is found frequently in East Asian commentarial literature. Chinul will discuss the implications of this line in some detail in the sections that follow. As Chōnghye explains,

“The one thought that is present right now” refers to the thought that occurs at the specific point of seeing, hearing, sensing, and knowing. This means that, at the point when one sees visual objects, it is this one thought of seeing; at the point when one hears auditory objects, it is this one thought of hearing, and so too for sensing and knowing. Seeing, hearing, sensing, and knowing do not come from outside but all arise from the nature. This arising is in fact nonarising, and this nonarising is in fact unproduced. If it is unproduced, then it is unextinguished, and in recognizing that locus where there is neither extinction or production, there then will perforce be some attainment. (*CYH*, *HPC* 9.556c9–14)

[255.](#) In Zongmi’s original quotation in his *Notes to the Great Commentary to the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra*, the subject of the sentence is not “people who are training on the path,” but “dullards,” which seems to better fit the context. See *Dafangguang Yuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyi jing lue shu zhu* 1–1, *T* 1795:39.535c11. If practitioners is the correct subject, then “cause” must refer to mundane, conditionally arisen events, while “effect” refers to the supramundane fruition of buddhahood, or perhaps something akin to the end (buddhahood) justifies the means (relative practices).

[256.](#) *DSQXL*, p. 575c21; cf. Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 28.

[257.](#) Chinul alludes here to two of the foundational ontological categories of the *Awakening of the Faith*. The *Awakening of*

Faith subdivides the “one mind” into two interrelated aspects: the absolute aspect of true suchness (*chinyō/zhenru* 眞如) and the conventional aspect that is subject to production and cessation (*saengmyōl/shengmie* 生滅). The “three greatnesses” (*samdae/sanda* 三大) refer to three attributes of this one mind. The first is essence (*ch’e/ti* 體, *svabhāva*), suchness, the fundamental substance of the mind. Essence implies the mind’s immutable quality—the mind in its passive aspect, unifying all its operations into one unit. Second is characteristics (*sang/xiang* 相, *lakṣaṇa*), the unlimited meritorious qualities inherent in the tathāgatagarbha. Third is function (*yong* 用, *kriyā*), the active aspect of the mind, which allows the passive essence to adapt itself to a wide variety of conditions, making possible the vast range of response of which beings are capable. See *DSQXL*, p. 575c25–29; Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 28.

[258.](#) *CDL* 29, p. 459b23–24.

[259.](#) *Chanzong Yongjia ji*, *T* 2013:48.390b. Yongjia Zhenjue 永嘉真覺, or Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄覺 (665–713), was a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng; for his biography, see *CDL* 5, pp. 241a27–242b19, and Chang, *Original Teachings*, pp. 10–16, 27–34. His sobriquet was One Night Enlightened (Yisujue 一宿覺), since a one-night stay with the Sixth Patriarch was enough for him to experience the “unborn” (or “unproduced”) and the “unmoving.” For this story, see *LZTJ*, p. 357c7–18; McRae, *Platform Sutra*, pp. 86–87; and quoted in Chinul’s *Treatise on Resolving Doubts about Observing the Hwadu*, exchange no. 4, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, p. 339.

[260.](#) *Shisi ke song*, in *CDL* 29, p. 450b.

[261.](#) Sōn is not the same as the “inferior [lesser] teaching” (*hagyo/xiaojiao* 下教), a pejorative term used by the consummate teachings to refer to the sudden teaching (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.210a10–11). Sōn’s conceptions of nature and this one thought are entirely different from the sudden teaching in its Kyo interpretation. In Kyo’s sudden teaching, one thought means the thought that cuts off conceptualization; in Sōn, this one thought is the thought of

right enlightenment itself. Although it was said that this one thought is the mind of the sentient being (as in the *Awakening of Faith* quotation above), Sōn does not limit its conception of this thought to the nature that is in contrast to characteristics. It means, rather, the nature of the liberated mind itself. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.210a5–10; see also Li Tongxuan’s description of attainment of buddhahood in a single thought in *XHYJL* 5, pp. 752a12–15, 761b13–17, et passim.

[262.](#) *Weixin jue*, *T* 2018:48.998a. This famous quote appears in slightly altered form in both major translations of the *Avatamsakasūtra*: *HYJ* 37, p. 194a14, and *HYJb* 25, p. 558c10. The quote as it appears here comes from Vasubandhu’s *Shidi jinglun* (*Daśabhūmividyākhyāna*) 8, *T* 1522:26.169a; see also *DSQXL*, p. 577b, quoted in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Radical Rejection and Radical Acceptance.”

[263.](#) “If we acknowledge our ignorance ... this will be the remedy for curing that ailment”: this sentence is rendered according to Yuil’s exegesis, which takes it as a description of the twelvefold chain of conditioned origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). If, for the period of a single thought, students see through their ignorance, they can no longer sustain their deluded attachment to sensory experience, and the path forward will be revealed. Hence, this “mind of one thought” is the origin of both saṃsāra and path-fruitition (*mārgaphala*). Craving, clinging, and becoming refer to the seventh, eighth, and ninth links of the twelvefold chain—the active links in which passive, sensory attachments in the mind are brought into play in the actual world, making karma anew and further immersing the patient in saṃsāra. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.210a18–19.

[264.](#) Cf. *Yuanjue jing*, *T* 842:17.917b, cf. Charles Muller, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, p. 163.

[265.](#) This statement is adapted from the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jin’gang jing*, *T* 235:8.750b27–28). Chinul quoted it earlier in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “Practice is Impossible in this Degenerate Age of the Dharma.”

[266.](#) *Zongjing lu* 18, *T* 2016:48.511c.

- [267.](#) The bodhisattva Pradhānaśūra (Yongsi *posal*/Yongshi *pusa* 勇施菩薩) was a bhikṣu in a past buddha's dispensation who transgressed the precepts concerning chastity and killing. (He desired a young woman and plotted to kill her husband in order to consummate his lust.) Later he felt great remorse and, after confessing his transgressions and hearing the dharma, became himself a buddha named Powöl/Baoyue 寶月. For his story, see *Foshuo jing yezhang jing*, T 1494:24.1098b–1099a; Yuil relates the full tale in *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.320b4–9. Xing bhikṣūnī 性比丘尼 was the religious name of Mātaṅgī, the courtesan in the *Śūraṅgamasūtra* who tried to seduce Ānanda (*Shoulengyan jing* 1, T 945:19.106c9–16). In this first exchange, Yuil explains, the question was asked from the standpoint of the characteristics schools (Sangjong/Xiangzong 相宗) (e.g., Yogācāra) but the answer was made from that of the nature schools (Sōngjong/Xingzong 性宗) (e.g., Tathāgatagarbha). See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.210b2.
- [268.](#) In this second exchange, Yuil comments, Yanshou describes the proper attitude toward afflictions, in which nature and characteristics are balanced. The explanation that all afflictions arise from the one mind deals directly with characteristics; from this standpoint, they can be excised. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.210b9–10. “This is the authentic eradication that is free from eradication”: according to Chōnghye, “eradication that is free from eradication” is the characteristic of the nature. “Eradicates while eradicating nothing” is the nature of characteristics. See *CYH*, *HPC* 9.558a4–6.
- [269.](#) The “six directions” (*yukhap/liuhe* 六合) are the four cardinal directions plus the zenith and nadir, thus referring to the world at large.
- [270.](#) *Da huayan jing luece*, T 1737:36.705a.
- [271.](#) These lines from the *Exposition of the Ten Bhūmis Sūtra* appear at *Shidi jinglun* 2, T 1522:26.133a10, 29, and p. 133b1. From the standpoint of the absolute truth, there are neither afflictions to be eradicated nor counteragents that may be employed to remove them. From a conventional

standpoint, however, eradication must be carried out by using these expedients throughout all three time periods. Yuil explains that “do not exist in past, present, or future” refers to the nature that is never eradicated. “Operative in past, present, and future” refers to the relative characteristics that can be eradicated. Yuil uses a metaphor to help explain that a candle is kept burning not simply by the initial application of the flame or by its present or future burning; rather, only when the flame is kept burning (remains “operative”) throughout all these time periods will it remain lit. Thus Yuil seems to be taking the phrase to mean that in eliminating afflictions one’s efforts must be consistent throughout the three time periods. This does not, however, seem to correspond with Chinul’s explanations given in the exposition that follows, and I have rendered the passage to follow Chinul’s description (CYKM, HPC 10. 210c1–7).

[272.](#) *Hwaŏm ilsŭng pŏpkye to*, T 887A:45.711a; the exegetical exchanges appear at p. 714a–b.

[273.](#) “An approach involving a progressive process” (*haengp’o mun/xingbu men* 行布門) in Hwaŏm/Huayan accounts of soteriology is the counterpart to consummate interfusion, which involves the progressive mastery of a series of steps in practice. As Chengguan explains, “There is, first, an approach involving a soteriological process, which sets out different stages [of the path], and, second, an approach grounded on consummate interfusion, in which any one stage subsumes all stages.” See his *Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu* 1, T 1735:35.504b18–20, and see n. 186 just below.

[274.](#) Since students’ realization has revealed that the access to the bodhisattva path and the final achievement of buddhahood are identical, they continue to practice while remembering that there is actually nothing remaining to practice. They always keep foremost in their minds the idea that buddhahood has already been achieved and do not conceive that they must pass through a certain period of time in order to perfect their practice. But they also do not allow this understanding to degenerate into a complacency that might

cause them to neglect their cultivation. For this reason, consummate interfusion does not obstruct soteriological development and vice versa. Hence, “one does not ... construct an understanding of differences in the time factor.” See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.210c8–14. Cf. here also Chengguan’s treatment of these two approaches:

These two do not obstruct each other. The approach involving soteriological development is the operation of the characteristics of the teachings. Consummate interfusion is the meritorious functioning of the ideal nature. Characteristics are the characteristics of the nature: hence soteriological development does not obstruct consummate interfusion. Nature is the nature of characteristics: hence consummate interfusion does not obstruct soteriological development. As consummate interfusion does not obstruct soteriological development, the one is unlimited. As soteriological development does not obstruct consummate interfusion, the limitless is the one. (*Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu* 1, *T* 1735:35.504b22–26)

- [275.](#) Yuil (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.210c14–15) says that this text, the *Huayan zongyao*, is an alternate title for the *Huayan gangyao* 華嚴綱要, which is apparently a short title for an eighty-roll work by Chengguan, the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing gangyao* (*XZJ* 240:8.486a. ff.).
- [276.](#) “Marionette” (*kigwan mogin/jiguan muren* 機關木人) is a simile for the physical body: a marionette looks like a human being on the outside but has no internal reality. See *Dazhidu lun* 9, *T* 1509:25.281a; *Zhengdao ge*, *T* 2014:48.395c18.
- [277.](#) *Dasheng zan*, in *CDL* 29, pp. 449b–450a; the stanzas have been transposed here.
- [278.](#) Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (?–776), a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng, not to be confused with the Oxhead master Huizhong 慧忠 (683–769). The quotation is from *CDL* 5, p. 244b.
- [279.](#) Although Chinul attributes this passage to a previous master, it appears (with slight differences) in the *Humane Kings Sūtra* (*Renwang bore boluomi jing* 1, *T* 245:8.829b5–6, and *Renwang huguo bore boluomiduo jing* 1, *T* 246:8.839b6–7).

- [280.](#) This question was put by an unidentified Huayan lecturer from the capital of Chang'an to Chan Master Zhiwei 智威 (646–722), the fifth patriarch of the Oxhead school. Zhiwei remained silent, so his attendant, the future Chan Master Xuanding of Anguosi 安國寺玄挺 (d.u.), answered for him (*CDL* 4, p. 229b23–26). As Yuil explains this understanding, “Since the afflictions are all products of the conditioned origination from the true nature, and the principle of that true nature is identical to the wisdom of bodhi, the afflictions are therefore bodhi” (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.211a2–3).
- [281.](#) *Yuanjue jing da shu*, ZZ 243b:9.388b. The sūtra passage Zongmi comments on appears at *Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.917b2–3; cf. Charles Muller, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, p. 162. “Whether salutary thoughts or unsalutary thoughts”: Zongmi explains in his *Notes on the Concise Commentary to the Consummate Enlightenment Sūtra* that “salutary thought” means the no-thought that brings about right thought (viz., right mindfulness), which is wisdom; “unsalutary thought” means to engage in thought, which is consciousness. See *Yuanjue jing lue shu zhu*, T 1795:39.556a1–2.
- [282.](#) Yuil says (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.211a6) that this is a quotation from Vasubandhu in the *Daśabhūmivyākhyāna*; I have been unable to locate the quotation there. The passage is well known to the tradition and is cited frequently in the literature, with some slight differences, including a different order of the three. See Fazang’s *Dasheng qixin lun yiji* 1, T 1846:44.248b2–5, which also makes the same attribution to the *Daśabhūmivyākhyāna*; Chengguan’s *Huayan jing shu* 34, T 1735:35.768a15–16; Yanshou’s *Zongjing lu* 46, T 2016:48.690a3–4, etc.
- [283.](#) As Yuil explains, the wisdom that is able to eradicate afflictions derives from the true mind. But as this true mind is innately free from afflictions (the objects of the eradication techniques), the afflictions are identical to the wisdom that performs this eradication. But since there is no wisdom apart from the afflictions and no afflictions apart from that wisdom,

how then can a person endeavor to remove the afflictions with that wisdom? See *CYKM, HPC* 10.211a7–10.

[284.](#) *Zhengdao ge*, *T* 2014:48.396c.

[285.](#) The “two bhikṣus” were named Baojing 寶鏡 and Baoqin 寶欽. One day after Baojing had gone into the village for provisions, a girl found Baoqin alone and deep asleep in his hermitage. Her lust aroused, she had sexual relations with him and spent the night. The next morning, as she was returning to the village, she met Baojing, who asked where she had stayed the night. Replying that she had passed it at their hermitage, he feared that his friend must have broken his precepts, so he killed her lest the story reach the village. Hence, one transgressed the precept concerning celibacy and the other the precept against killing. When they went to confess their transgressions to Upāli, the master of *vinaya* (discipline) among the main disciples of the Buddha, Upāli replied that their sins were as great as Mount Sumeru and could not be forgiven. Unsatisfied, the monks sought out the renowned layman Vimalakīrti, who said that if they could show him their transgressions, he would accept their repentance. Hearing this, both monks realized that their transgressions were essentially void, and they were enlightened. See *Weimojie suoshuo jing (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa)* 1, *T* 474:4.523a; *CYH, HPC* 9.558c1–9; *CYKM, HPC* 10.211a17–211b1.

“Firefly [wisdom]” (*hyōnggwang/yingguang* 螢光) refers to Upāli’s lack of insight: whereas wisdom is as bright as the sun, Upāli’s was no brighter than the light of a firefly. “The two-vehicle adherents are zealous but neglect the mind of the path”: although followers of the Hīnayāna are vigorous in their investigation of dharmas, they neglect the path—the self-nature itself—from which all dharmas arise. They grasp at nirvāṇa when, in fact, even nirvāṇa itself must be abandoned before the “mind of the path,” meaning consummate enlightenment is gained. “Non-Buddhists” are often proficient in worldly knowledge but neglect true wisdom and hence only add to their discriminations.

Chinul has included these passages from Yongjia's work to counter the accusations of the consummate school of Kyo that Sŏn is nothing more than the sudden teaching. In the paragraph that follows, Chinul carries this argument even further and points out that, from the standpoint of Kyo doctrine, the Hwaŏm school might articulate a consummate and sudden approach, but Sŏn is consummate and sudden in actual practice. Sŏn is consequently superior to mere doctrinal supposition: Hwaŏm may describe the unimpeded interpenetration between phenomena and phenomena, but Sŏn realizes it. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.211b1–7.

[286.](#) Some editions of *Excerpts* read the rare compound “sticky snare” (K. *kyoch'i* [alt. *rī*], Ch. *jiaochi* 膠糍) as “doctrinal tenets” (*kyori* 教理), an obvious gloss. Because *kyori* appears in the edition of *Excerpts* mostly commonly used in Korean seminaries (An Chin-ho's 1957 edition), it also shows up in vernacular Korean translations of the text. I translate following the text-critical dictum of *lectio difficilior potior* (the more difficult reading is the stronger). This *ch'i* is understood to be a snare used to catch birds, and it is replaced in other editions with the synonymous K. *ri*, Ch. *chi* 螭, which is how I interpret it here.

[287.](#) “The ocean-seal samādhi” (*haein sammæ/hai'in sanmei* 海印三昧, *sāgaramudrāsamādhi*) is the samādhi the Buddha entered immediately following his enlightenment, during which he is said to have taught the *Avataṃsakasūtra*. According to Fazang, “ocean-seal” refers to suchness, which is like a calm ocean that reflects everything in existence. See *Xiu Huayan aozhi wangjin huanyuan guan*, T 1876:45.637b. Because of this explanation, “ocean-seal” is sometimes translated as the “oceanic-reflection” samādhi.

[288.](#) These verses express an idea central to Sŏn: since awakening and understanding can be realized fully within the period of a single moment of thought, Sŏn is therefore a consummate and sudden approach. The first stanza explains that delusion and awakening derive from the same basic source. The second and third stanzas explain this same equivalency. The

fourth stanza gives a different explanation of the characteristics of delusion. The fifth stanza to the end explains the nature of enlightenment, meaning the results expected to be forthcoming from the awakening experience. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.211b8–11.

[289.](#) “Self-denigrating” means that people do not believe they have the capacity to achieve buddhahood through sudden awakening. “Haughty” means they think they can dispense with gradual cultivation after awakening. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.211c6–8.

[290.](#) *DX* 1–2, p. 405b3–19; Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 137–138. For Heze Shenhui’s quote “this one word ‘awareness’ is the gateway to all wonders,” see *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Heze School’s Basic Premise,” and the extensive discussion in my translator’s introduction under the section entitled “Numinous Awareness and Tracing Back the Radiance.”

[291.](#) Quoted from Chinul’s own personal note in *Excerpts*, chap. 2, “The Relationship between Immutability and Adaptability: The Simile of the Jewel.”

[292.](#) Chinul reiterates here a point he made in the very opening lines of his preface to *Excerpts*: everything in his text up to this section on “The Shortcut Approach of *Kanhwa* Investigation” has been intended to use correct intellectual understanding in order to generate the understanding-awakening. The material from Sŏn discourse records that follows is intended for practitioners who are advanced enough in their training to be able to transcend their intellectual understanding and have a direct, personal experience of Sŏn through the “shortcut expedient” of *kanhwa* Sŏn. See also discussion at *Excerpts*, n. 7. Note too that this concluding section of his text is written for the most part in a Song-dynasty style of vernacular Chinese rather than the prolix commentarial style of the preceding material.

[293.](#) *DHYL* 16, p. 879b8–12; the quotation from Yunmen does not appear there. Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) was the main disciple of Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–1135) in the Yangqi lineage of the Linji school. Yunmen Wenyan 雲門文偃

(864–949), putative founder of the eponymous Yunmen school, one of the five houses and seven schools of the mature Chan tradition; I have been unable to trace this quotation in Yunmen’s works. For this famous quotation of Heze, see the prior discussion in *Excerpts*, chap. 3, “The Role of Numinous Awareness in Sudden Awakening/Gradual Cultivation.” Huanglong Sixin Sou 黃龍死心叟 (1071–1115), also known as Wuxin 悟新, was a disciple of Huitang Zuxin 晦堂祖心 (d.u.), a second-generation master in the Huanglong lineage of the Linji school. Where numinous awareness is the “dead word” (*sagu/siju* 死句) of intellectual understanding, Yuil explains that Sixin’s statement is the “live word” (*hwalgu/huoju* 活句) of the *hwadu*: “The one word ‘awareness’ is the gateway to all calamities’ means that if you are attached to the word ‘awareness,’ you will not find ‘the road that leads to salvation.’ Therefore, it is ‘the gateway to calamities.’ This is setting up the live word” (CYKM, HPC 10.212a12–13).

[294.](#) LZTJ, p. 359b–c; cf. McRae, *Platform Sutra*, p. 98. Although the *Platform Sūtra* does refer to the “one thing” (e.g., LZTJ, p. 355b10), the complete opening statement (“There is one thing that supports the heavens above and the earth below; it exists during of all activity, but it is not confined to that activity”) does not appear in the text but is found frequently in Sōn literature (e.g., *Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu* 2, T 1992:47.610b15–16). Following Yuil’s exegesis of this passage, when Huineng referred to the mind as “one thing,” he was using the live word to prompt his audience to a direct realization of the mind-nature. Shenhui, however, grasped at that live word and tried to understand it intellectually, thereby stagnating in the dead word. For this he was criticized by the Sixth Patriarch. “Even though you cover your head with thatch”: Huineng predicts here that Shenhui would become a master who uses his intellectual understanding (dead words) to teach rather than pointing directly to the mind with the live word. Thus, Huineng continues, the school Shenhui establishes will be but an illegitimate heir (*pogŭm*

chason/fuyin zisun 覆蔭子孫), that is, a collateral lineage, of Huineng's dharma. CYKM, HPC 10.212a15–16. See also discussion in *Excerpts*, n. 5. Hyujōng also cites this passage in his *Sōn'ga kwigam* (HPC 7.634c–635a); see also Jorgensen, *Hyujeong: Selected Works*, pp. 51–52, Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, pp. 78–79.

[295.](#) Benjue Shouyi 本覺守一 (d.u.), also known as Fazhen 法眞, was a disciple of Huilin Zongben 慧林宗本 (1020–1099) in the Yunmen school; for his biography see *Xu Chuandeng lu* 14, T 2077:51.557c–558a. His records are not extant. For this passage, see LZTJ, p. 357b19–24, and McRae, *Platform Sutra*, pp. 84–85. Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744) was reputedly the main successor to the Sixth Patriarch Huineng and the teacher of Mazu. Songshan An is Songyue Hui'an 嵩嶽慧安 (582–709), one of the Fifth Patriarch Hongren's ten major disciples. In Yui's exegesis, this excerpt demonstrates how investigation of the live word can lead to awakening. The “thing” that the Sixth Patriarch asks about is the “one thing” mentioned in the previous selection, which illustrated how intellectual understanding would be gained through the dead word. Even though it would have been easy for Huairang to grasp at this question as Shenhui had before and answer that “this thing” was his buddha-nature, he did not allow himself to fall into shallow conceptual interpretations. After eight years of study, Huairang finally had a direct realization of this “one thing.” When he says that “you allude to it as ‘one thing’ you miss the mark” he demonstrates that he has overcome any purely conceptual understanding about the “one thing.” CYKM, HPC 10.212a15–212b1. This passage is also cited in Hyujōng's *Sōn'ga kwigam* (HPC 7.634c–635a); see also Jorgensen, *Hyujeong: Selected Works*, pp. 51–52, Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, pp. 78–79.

[296.](#) DHYL 22, p. 904a10–21. Yueshan Weiyan 藥山惟儼 (745–828) was a disciple of Mazu and Shitou Xiqian.

[297.](#) “Free from panting” (*much'ōn/wuchuan* 無喘) is a term that derives from the apocryphal **Vajrasamādhisūtra* (*Kūmgang sammae kyōng*, T 273:9.370a24); and see my translation and

explanation in Buswell, *Formation of Ch'an Ideology*, pp. 218–219 and 218n.71. Wŏnhyo's commentary to that scripture explains: “‘panting of the mind’: the mind that is startled is not at rest, and the increasing rapidity of one's inhalations and exhalations is termed ‘panting.’ It is used as a simile for the agitation of the six [sensory] consciousnesses, which are always active and never at rest” (*Kŭmgang sammaegyŏng non 2*, HPC 1.645b10–14, T 1730:34.987b15–17; as translated in Buswell, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment*, p. 194). “Panting” appears commonly in early Chinese translations of meditative texts, used to refer sometimes to distracted thoughts (see *Faguan jing*, T 611:15.241a24) or the death rattle that occurs during the dying process (*Mayi jing*, T 732:17.533b14).

[298.](#) DHYL 27, p. 925b28–c6. “It is clear and constantly aware; words cannot describe it”: although “clear and constantly aware” may seem to parallel Heze's statements about numinous awareness, Huike specifies that “words cannot describe” this state and thereby demonstrates that he has transcended conceptualization. Dahui says that this statement “was not the real dharma of the Second Patriarch” to emphasize that it was simply intended to show that he was free from any conceptualization that might have remained after awakening and was not meant to be a complete statement of his realization. Hence, Huike's awakening was an awakening onto the path via the live word, not like the dead-word understanding in which Heze languished. See CYKM, HPC 10.212b14–18.

[299.](#) For this simile of mistaking a thief for one's son, see *Shoulengyan jing* 1, T 945:19.108c21; *Yuanjue jing*, T 842:17.919c19; Charles Muller, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, p. 211.

[300.](#) DHYL 27, p. 891a22–27.

[301.](#) The precise identity of this animal (*ch'ich'ŏ/chiju* 獺狙) remains uncertain. Yuil (CYKM, HPC 10.212b21) tells us it is a hedgehog (*wi/wei* 蝟 = 猯), which, given a hedgehog's tendency to curl up and play dead to avoid danger, seems to

fit well the context. Discretion being the better part of valor, I follow Yuil's interpretation here. Yi Chi-gwan (*Sajip sagi*, p. 18, l. 19–2) glosses the term as “the name of an animal that is similar to a monkey, with reddish eyebrows, and eyes like a rat” but does not provide a source for his description. This sounds more like a sloth, an arboreal mammal that looks rather like a monkey. Sloths would have fit Dahui's account perfectly, were it not for the fact that they are native to Central and South America and would have been unknown to East Asians.

[302.](#) Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (d. 850) was a disciple of Baizhang Huaihai in the Hongzhou lineage. This quotation is from his *Chuanxin fa yao*, T 2012A:48.382c4–5.

[303.](#) *DHYL* 19, p. 918a21–b25. “Embracing the void-quietude of indifference”: this approach involves leaving behind words and cutting off the thought processes, but it ignores the conditioned phenomena that are right in front of our eyes. “Embracing the spontaneity of the essence”: this approach endorses the ordinary mind that is used every day as being the ultimate path and does not seek sublime awakening. See *CYH*, *HPC* 9.559c8–12; *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.212c4–7.

[304.](#) As some of these maladies carry subtle nuances, I will paraphrase them. Number 3 is the malady that occurs from trying to think about the *hwadu* conceptually. Number 4 may also be interpreted to mean that one should not try to express one's own understanding through gestures like raising the eyebrows or other illocutionary answers with which Sŏn novices try to express “nonconceptual understanding.” For someone who has had an authentic awakening, words are not a hindrance, and the person should be able to verbalize his or her understanding. In Korea, responses through gestures are summarily rejected by most Sŏn masters, and an immediate demand is made for a verbal explanation of the student's state of mind just before the gesture is made. Number 5: by the same token, one cannot use words alone or sophistic argument to express one's understanding. Number 6 is the malady that results from attempting to investigate *mu*

via the silent illumination approach that Dahui criticized previously. Number 7: according to Kusan Suryōn 九山秀蓮 (1909–1983), the Sōn master under whom I trained at Songgwangsa 松廣寺, this means one should not inquire into the *hwadu* at the place where the mind becomes aware of sensory objects; that is, the student should not transform the doubt that is developed through investigation of the *hwadu* into a doubt about the mind that is aware of sensory stimuli. This is a malady that may arise in the course of meditation practice. Number 8: one should not look for the meaning by parsing the wording of the *hwadu* or analyzing any other literary clues or allusions. Number 9: do not try to understand “no” in terms of such doctrinal concepts as “nonexistence” or “nonbeing.” Number 10 refers to people who cling to the notion that the buddha-nature is a quality inherent in themselves and therefore assume that no practice is necessary except to remain “natural” and allow this innate buddha-nature to manifest itself: viz., the Buddhist equivalent of antinomianism. Chinul’s successor, Chin’gak Hyesim, subsequently writes a short treatise specifically addressing these maladies; see his *Kuja mu pulsōng hwa kanbyōng non*, HPC 6.69b–70b. See also Hyujōng’s parallel discussion of these ten maladies (but in a different order) in his *Sōn’ga kwigam*, HPC 7.837a8–14, HPC 7.620a11–17, in Jorgensen, *Hyujeong: Selected Works*, p. 80; and Jorgensen, *Handbook of Korean Zen Practice*, pp. 96–97.

[305.](#) DHYL 26, p. 921c2–15. Chōnghye and Yuil interpret this quotation as offering an account of the live word in practice. CYH, HPC 9.560a; CYKM, HPC 10.212a17.

[306.](#) DHYL 19, p. 891b27–c2.

[307.](#) The phrase “to remove the nails and pull out the pegs,” *kōjōng palsōl/quding baxie* 去釘拔楔, is more commonly found in the synonymous phrase *ch’ujōng palsōl/chouding baxie* 抽釘拔楔; it appears frequently in the writings of Dahui’s teacher Yuanwu Keqin (see, e.g., *Yuanwu Foguo chanshi yulu*, T 1997:47.735b2). “To escape from the cage and be released from the yoke” (*t’allongdu sagakt’a/tuolongtou xiejuetuo* 脫籠

頭 卸 角 馱) also appears in Yuanwu's *Biyan lu* (e.g., *T* 2003:48.1056a6). Yuil glosses nails and pegs as grasping at self or dharmas, bridle and yoke as intellectual understanding (*CYKM*, *HPC* 10.213a7–8).

[308.](#) “Word” here refers to the live word of the *hwadu*. For the phrase “splits nails and cuts through iron” (*ch’amjǒng chōlch’ōl/chanding jietie* 斬釘截鐵), see *Biyan lu*, case 17, *T* 2003:48.157a16; translated in Cleary and Cleary, *Blue Cliff Record*, p. 110.

[309.](#) A slightly free rendering of the phrase *sanŭng chōji hŭnna pudong/sileng zhuodi xianla budong* 四稜著地掀掣不動. Cf. *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu* 5, *T* 2001:48.58b25.

[310.](#) There are various versions of these “three propositions,” or “three statements,” in Chan and Sōn literature, referring to three different expressions of Chan teachings. The Korean commentator Yuil presumes that Chinul is referring here to one of the most common versions, as described in the Yunmen house of the mature Chan tradition. Yunmen Wenyan, the eponymous founder of the school, first explained three propositions: (1) cover heaven and earth, (2) the visual sense-faculty is trifling, (3) do not become immersed in the myriad conditions. These approaches were systematized into the following three propositions of the normative Yunmen teaching by his disciple Deshan Yuanmi 德山圓密 (908–987), also known as Yuanming *dashi* 圓明大師: (1) cut off all streams (the proposition referring to the essence); (2) follow the waves and swells (the proposition referring to function); (3) cover heaven and earth (the proposition that brings together essence and function). (Deshan’s is the version cited by Yuil.) Deshan’s disciple Pu’an Dao 普安道 (d.u.) wrote verses to accompany each of these propositions and established separately another proposition as an extension: “in the sky,” meaning that the essence of both heaven and earth is in the sky; this additional proposition was intended to wipe away all traces of the three primary propositions. For the three propositions and “the additional proposition that was established separately,” see Yuil’s *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.213a;

Chŏnghye's *CYH*, *HPC* 9.560a–b; *Rentian yanmu* 2, *T* 2006:48.312a; *Pojo pŏbŏ*, fol. 128b. Chinul's earlier commentator Chŏnghye notes (*CYH*, *HPC* 9.560a–b) that the three propositions and three mysteries can also refer to an alternate listing offered by Linji Yixuan, the eponymous founder of the Linji school. For Linji's three propositions and three mysteries, see Seong-Uk Kim, "The Zen Theory of Language." Chinul explains in his *Resolving Doubts about Observing the Hwadu* (*Kanhwa kyŏrŭiron*) that these three propositions were each a consummate expression of Sŏn; they were not expedient descriptions intended to remove conceptual defects. See *Resolving Doubts about Investigating the Hwadu*, in Buswell, *Chinul: Selected Works*, pp. 332–333.

[311.](#) Yuil explains that "mistakes" here should be taken to mean the "baggage (*haengni/xingli* 行李) of the buddhas and patriarchs": i.e., traces of their unconditioned realizations that remain behind in the conditioned sphere. The word is not referring to any "faults" they might be presumed to have. See *CYKM*, *HPC* 10.213b.

[312.](#) Korea was known as Haedong 海東, "East of the Sea," because it was located east of the kingdom of Parhae/Bohai 渤海, the successor to the Koguryŏ kingdom, which ruled in the Manchurian region from 699 to 926; see Lee, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* (p. 26n.62), for references.

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