

Juefan Huihong

Juefan Huihong (覺範惠洪; 1071–1128), although relatively unknown, was one of the most influential 12th-century Chinese Chan (禪) Buddhist masters. Over time, the Chan school established its own unique identity tied to a shibboleth first attributed to Bodhidharma (菩提達摩) in the *Zutang ji* (祖堂集, Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall, c. 952), which declares that the transmission of the mind-seal of the Buddha does not rely upon words and letters (*bu li wenzi* [不立文字], B. 144 [XXV] 335a13). Against this backdrop, Huihong's self-avowed literary – or “lettered” – Chan (*wenzi Chan* [文字禪]) did not appeal to those who followed a strict interpretation of Chan doctrine.

Little surprise, then, that there is no trace of Huihong in the *Zuting shiyuan* (祖庭事苑, Chrestomathy from the Patriarchs' Hall), compiled in 1108, but printed in 1154, where *bu li wenzi* is presented as part of this authoritative four-part slogan:

Chan is independent from the doctrinal teachings (*jiao wai bie chuan* [教外別傳]) and not reliant upon the written word; [Chan teachings] directly point to the human mind (*zhi zhi ren xin* [直指人心]), thus enabling people to see their nature and realize buddhahood (*jian xing cheng fo* [見性成佛] (X. 1261 [LXIV] 377b4–6; trans. Gimello, 1992, 412).

Huihong is also almost entirely absent from the two classic Song dynasty (960–1279) public case (*gong'an* [公案]) anthologies: the *Biyuan lu* (碧巖錄, Blue Cliff Record; T. 2003) and the *Wumen guan* (無門關, Gateless Gate; T. 2005). Where Huihong surfaces in both Chinese and Japanese Zen primary literature and secondary studies, he is lauded for his devotion to scholarship on secular and Buddhist topics, ranging from poetry to hagiography, and the literary arts. Students and researchers interested in investigating the thorny question of how Chan or Zen Buddhism developed intimate ties with Chinese and Japanese literary culture need look no further than Huihong.

Huihong is a unique figure in the histories of both Chan and broader East Asian Buddhism, first, because his collected works survive intact, in 30 rolls (the *Shimen wenzi Chan* [石門文字禪]; Stone

Gate Literary Chan); and second, because in 1710 Kakumon Kantetsu (廓門貫徹; d. 1730), the abbot of Daikōji (大雄寺, a Sōtō [曹洞宗] Zen temple in present-day Tochigi prefecture), completed a comprehensive commentary to every literary piece in that collection. Four prominent Edo period (1603–1868) Zen masters – Manzan Dōhaku (叢山道白; 1636–1715), →Mujaku Dōchū (無著道忠; 1653–1744), Gettan Dōchō (月潭道澄; 1636–1713), and Ranzan Dōchō (蘭山道昶; d. 1756) – also wrote prefaces for Kantetsu's commentary. Why did a Sōtō Zen monk write a commentary to Huihong's collected works, which contains nearly 1,700 poems and 600 prose compositions, the interpretation of which required him to read more than 300 works of classical Chinese literature, history, and poetry, not to mention Buddhist texts (Shi, *et al.*, 2012, 22–29)?

The answer is that Xinyue Xingchou (心越興儔, alt. Donggao Xinyue [東皐心越], Jpn. Tōkō Shin'etsu; 1639–1696), a lute-playing Chinese émigré poet-monk who had founded a Chinese-style Sōtō Zen temple in Mito (水戸), had introduced both Kantetsu and Ranzan Dōchō to Huihong's works, and presumably also told them that on the continent Huihong was held in high regard as a proponent of literary Chan. Although the *Shimen wenzi Chan* and seven other Buddhist- or Chan-themed works by Huihong had been widely disseminated in China and Japan before the 17th century, recent émigrés like Xinyue or the more famous →Yinyuan Longqi (隱元隆琦, Jpn. Ingen Ryūki; 1592–1673) reintroduced Huihong to Japanese Zen monks through the Jiaxing edition of the Buddhist Canon (*Jiaxing ban* [嘉興版]), published in 1666 (Ibuki, 2001, 151).

Further, three of the four great Chan masters of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), →Yunqi Zhuhong (雲棲朱宏; 1535–1615), →Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清; 1546–1623), and Dakuan Zhenke (大觀真可; 1543–1604), read Huihong's works and were encouraged to find in them discussions about harmony between the teachings in seminal Buddhist scriptures and Chan iconoclasm; Dakuan Zhenke wrote a complimentary preface to the Jiaxing edition of the *Shimen wenzi Chan* in 1597 (J. B135 [XXIII] 577a1–24), and another preface, written by Hanshan Deqing to Dakuan Zhenke's own collected works,

shows that they had both been inspired by Huihong's enlightened and unique diction, although Daguan Zhenke warns Hanshan Deqing to use his "Adamantine True Eye" (*jingang zhenyan* [金剛真眼]) to look beyond the words (*Zibo zunzhe quanji* [紫柏尊者全集], Collected Works of the Sage of the Purple Cypress Tree, X. 1452 [LXXIII] 135b18–21). It would appear that Daguan Zhenke did not in fact heed his friend's advice, because he singled out Huihong as an inspiration for his project to print the Jiaxing edition of the Buddhist canon (X. 1452 [LXXIII] 258a13), and praised Huihong in a lengthy biography (X. 1452 [LXXIII] 268c2–269c22).

Huihong is set apart from almost any other Chan Buddhist monastic by the fact that we have his self-introduction (*Jiyin zixu* [寂音自序], *Shimen wenzi Chan* 24, J. B135 [XXIII] 696a25–b29). There are also 27 primary sources from China that contain biographical information about Huihong. Huihong was a son of the Peng (彭, erroneously listed as Yu [喻] in some later sources) family in the city of Xinchang (新昌), in the Junzhou (筠州, alt. Duanzhou [端州]) region of northwestern Jiangxi province. After losing both his parents, he received the tonsure from Chan master Sanfeng Qing (三峰靚) in 1084. Huihong traveled to the capital (Bianjing [汴京]) in 1089 to take the monastic examinations at Tianwang si (天王寺), where he met Xuanmi (宣秘, alt. Huixian [惠賢]), a Vinaya master and Yogācāra exegete. Xuanmi was part of the translation committee of Indian and Chinese monks at the Song court who translated the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (*Dasheng ji pusaxue lun* [大乘集菩薩學論], T. 1636). Huihong studied Buddhist literature with Xuanmi for four years, including the **Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (*Cheng weishi lun* [成唯識論], T. 1585), the **Tattvasiddhi* (alt. **Satyasiddhi*, *Chengshi lun* [成實論], T. 1646), and the *Yogācārabhūmi* (*Yuqieshi di lun* [瑜伽師地論], T. 1570).

We do not know why Huihong returned home to Junzhou in 1092 to become a student of Chan master Zhenjing Kewen (真淨克文; 1025–1102), an early advocate for what would later become known as public case (*gong'an* [公案]) introspection, at Guizong si (歸宗寺) on Mount Lu (廬山). Zhenjing was a prominent teacher from the Huanglong Huinan (黃龍慧南; 1002–1069) sub-lineage of the Linji transmission family. It was while training under Zhenjing at Letan si (泐潭寺) in 1096 that Huihong first met Zhang Shangying (張商英; 1043–1121), who had been posted as prefect to Hongzhou (洪州), and often visited Zhenjing Kewen and

other disciples on Mount Shimen (石門山). After he received transmission from Zhenjing Kewen in 1099, Huihong spent the next several years moving between Dongwu (東吳, Suzhou [蘇州]), Mount Heng (衡山, in southern Hunan), and Changsha (長沙), where he met Chen Guan (陳瓘; 1057–1124) and discussed poetry at Donglin si (東林寺). The official Zhu Yan (朱彥, alt. Zhu Shiyong [朱世英], d.u.) had Huihong appointed abbot of the Jingde si (景德寺) in Linchuan (臨川, alt. Fuzhou [撫州]) in 1102. It appears that Huihong's reputation as a poet-monk and Chan-exegete had matured by 1105, when Zhang Shangying had him appointed abbot of Qingliang si (清涼寺) in Junzhou.

Likely because of his close friendships with conservative – as opposed to reformist – literati who were censured by Emperor Huizong (徽宗; r. 1101–1125), over the next 13 years, Huihong was defrocked, imprisoned on multiple occasions in the north and south, and even exiled to Hainan island. During this difficult period he wrote commentaries to several scriptures, including the *Mahāparinirvāṇamahāsūtra* (*Da banniepan jing* [大般涅槃經], T. 374), **Buddhāvataṃsaka* (*Huayan jing* [華嚴經], T. 278), *Vajracchedikā* (*Jingang jing* [金剛經], T. 235), *Mahāratnakūṭa* (*Da baoji jing* [大寶積經], T. 310), as well as the *Yuanjue jing* (圓覺經, T. 842) and the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (*Da zhidu lun* [大智度論], T. 1509) (Yanagida, 2001–2006, 96; Chen, 2005, 120–121). Only two of his commentaries survive: one that he probably completed with Zhang Shangying to the *Lotus Sūtra* (T. 262), the *Fahua jing helun* (法華經合論, X. 603 [XXX] 361b4–429b5) before his problems with authorities, and another on the **Śūraṅgama-sūtra* (T. 945), the *Zunding falun* (尊頂法論), today included within the *Lengyan jing helun* (楞嚴經合論, Combined Commentaries on the **Śūraṅgama-sūtra*, compiled in 1203 by Leian Zhengshou (雷庵正受; 1147–1209, X. 272–A [XII] 1a2–95c2). Huihong apparently found an old copy of the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* at the Kaiyuan si (開元寺) in Qiongzhou (瓊州).

After he was released from one last confinement in Nanchang (南昌) city prison in 1118, Huihong relocated to Hunan, where he worked to compile the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* (禪林僧寶傳, Chronicles of the Saṅgha Jewel in the Chan Groves, X. 1560 [LXXIX] 490a2–556a8) in 30 rolls. Along with *Linji zongzhi* (臨濟宗旨, The Essential Points of the Linji [lineage], X. 1234 [LXIII] 167c5–170a11), *Zhi zheng zhuan* (智證傳, Record of Knowledge and Realizations, X. 1235 [LXIII] 170b5–193b1), and

Yunyan baojing sanmei (雲巖寶鏡三昧, Yunyan version of the Jewel Mirror *Samādhi*, X. 1235 [LXIII] 193b3–195c12), the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* was added to the registry of Buddhist books in the capital in 1126, which suggests that Huihong's status as a prominent Chan Buddhist cleric had been revitalized after years of personal strife.

Huihong died during the fifth lunar month of 1128; Jiangxi poet, literatus, and Chan supporter Han Ju (韓駒; 1080–1135) wrote the inscription for his stūpa (*taming* [塔銘]). Guo Tianmin (郭天民) petitioned the throne for an honorary posthumous name for Huihong: Baojue Yuanming (寶覺圓明). The fact that Han Ju wrote the inscription indicates how much Huihong was respected by members of what would soon become known as the Jiangxi school of poets. Huihong had met Huang Tingjian (黃庭堅; 1045–1105) – whose work is lauded in Huihong's two treatises on the composition of poetry, the *Lengzhai yehua* (冷齋夜話, Evening Talks from a Cold Studio) and the *Tianchu jinluan* (天廚禁饈, Regal Morsels from the Imperial Kitchen) – as a young disciple of Zhenjing Kewen in 1094 (*Ba Shangu Yun'an zan* [跋山谷雲庵贊] in *Shimen wenzi Chan* 27, J. B135 [XXIII] 711c21–27). Both the *Lengzhai yehua* and the *Tianchu jinluan* are considered the earliest surviving reliable accounts of Huang Tingjian's poetry; other Jiangxi poets' work is included in both tomes (Zhou, 1998; 1999; 2003).

There were three aspects to Huihong's legacy by the time that Dagan Zhenke mentioned Huihong as an inspiration in the 16th century. First, the *Shimen wenzi Chan* and the *Linjian lu* contain first-hand information about the fascinating period in the history of China when Huihong lived and thrived as an eminent poet-monk: the reign of Emperor Huizong. Not only was this a formative time, when Chan Buddhist monastics responded to the emperor's policies to closely regulate the selection of abbots – and daily life – at state-sponsored public monasteries (*shifang conglin* [十方叢林]) in contradistinction to tonsure families at private monasteries; at the same time, Chan masters also learned to compose sophisticated poetry and refined prose in order to secure patronage from literati at all levels of administration (McRae, 2003, 115; Welter, 2005, chap. 7; Schlütter, 2008, 35–54, chap. 3). Concurrently, Huizong pursued policies to promote Daoist masters with novel rituals in what amounted to a state cult, while at the same time proscribing the literary works by conservative officials who opposed many of his new policies (which were modeled on those

proposed by Wang Anshi (王安石; 1021–1086), and endorsed by his father, Emperor Shenzong (神宗; r. 1067–1085). This meant that many of Huihong's powerful friends were, in fact, some of the most respected men of letters China would ever produce. The two most famous figures Huihong wrote about are Su Shi (蘇軾, alt. Su Dongpo [蘇東坡]; 1037–1101) and Huang Tingjian (Shi, *et al.*, 2012, 22–29). Celebrated in Yan Yu's (嚴羽; c. 1200–1270) *Canglang shihua* (滄浪詩話, Canglang's Remarks on Poetry), Huihong is the most authoritative source about three Jiangxi school poets: Huang Tingjian, Xie Yi (謝逸; 1063–1113), who wrote a preface to the *Linjian lu*, and Han Ju, who wrote Huihong's stūpa epitaph.

Perhaps because of his early exposure to exegetical scholarship while studying under Xuanmi in the capital, the second aspect of Huihong's legacy, as revealed through the many commentaries he wrote to seminal scriptures and commentaries, is his view of the close relationship between Chan teachings and the scriptures. For example, in a piece written in 1101 when he was copying out Huanglong Huinan's writings, Huihong relates a story about how Huanglong could not achieve *samādhi* during meditation practice without first reciting the *dhāraṇī* from roll seven of the **Śūraṅgama-sūtra* (*Ti Huanglong Nan heshang shouchao hou sanshou* [題黃龍南和尚手抄後三首], in the *Shimen wenzi Chan* 25, J. B135 [XXIII] 703b7–10). We also know that Huihong venerated a printed edition of the canon at Kaifu si (開福寺) in Tanzhou (*Tanzhou Kaifu zhuanlun zang lingyan ji* [潭州開福轉輪藏靈驗記], *Shimen wenzi Chan* 21, J. B135 [XXIII] 676b4–c25), and that he wrote a poem about reciting scriptures at Guiyang (*Song Yuan shangren huan Guiyang jian zhuanlun zang* [送元上人還桂陽建轉輪藏], *Shimen wenzi Chan* 1, J. B135 [XXIII] 580c20–581a1). Huihong's pronounced advocacy for reading, reciting, and admiring the scriptures encouraged Dagan Zhenke, who was instrumental in the project of printing the Jiaying edition of the Buddhist canon; Dagan specifically mentions Huihong as an inspiration for this project (*Ke dazangjing shu* [刻大藏經疏], *Zibo zunzhe quanji* 12, X. 1452 [LXXIII] 257c20–258b8).

The third aspect of Huihong's legacy is the record he provides about otherwise competing transmission families in the Jiangxi-Hunan region, known as Hongzhou during the Tang dynasty. In addition to promoting his own Linji transmission family, the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* and *Linjian lu* promote lineage masters and disciples from the Jiangxi-Hunan region who established common teaching points.

Unlike publically produced anthologies of biographies of Chan masters such as the *Jingde chuandeng lu* (景德傳燈錄, T. 2076), which highlight transmission families, the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* contains biographies of 84 Chan teachers from the Jiangxi-Hunan region. The first two biographies, for example, are devoted to Caoshan Benji (曹山本寂; 840–901) and Yunmen Wenyan (雲門文偃; 864–949); only with the third biography in the third roll does Huihong address the teachers of his own Linji transmission family. The *Jingde chuandeng lu* presents both the lineages of Caoshan Benji and Yunmen Wenyan, tracing them back to Shitou Xiqian (石頭希遷; 700–790) rather than to →Mazu Daoyi (馬祖道一; 709–788). Huihong devotes considerable attention to both Caoshan Benji and Yunmen Wenyan, and their students, because he sought to emphasize the popular lineages in the region at the turn of the 12th century, and wanted to connect a particular Linji teacher from the north, Fenyang Shanzhao (汾陽善昭; 947–1027), and his teachers, with these southern transmission families. Roll four covers Xuansha Shibei (玄沙師備; 835–908), an otherwise unknown Luohan Guichen (羅漢桂琛; 897–928), and Fayan Wenyi (法眼文益; 885–956), whose students promoted lineages that connect to Shitou, and a list of teachers who made the Jiangxi-Hunan region the center of Chan practice and teachings. Huihong was here following the lead of his teacher's teacher, Huanglong Huinan, who had collected four discourse records of Linji transmission family masters in the *Mazu sijia lu* (馬祖四家錄), almost certainly with the aim of contesting a slightly earlier compilation, the *Deshan sijia lu* (德山四家錄). Yet the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* emphasizes a regional network of Chan teachers that includes eminent masters from both collections, and draws particular attention to the four teachers from Shitou's lineage and their students in the Jiangxi-Hunan region: Deshan Xuanjian (德山宣鑑; d. 865), Yantou Quanhao (巖頭全竈; 828–887), Xuefeng Yicun (雪峰義存; 822–908), and Xuansha Shibei (Yanagida, 2001–2006, 21–22 & 89–92; Welter, 2008, 118–120).

The information provided by Huihong's extant works about Chan teachers in the Jiangxi-Hunan region, his own reverence for scriptural learning, and the first-hand snapshot he offers of how the literary arts, and poetry in particular, were an essential focus for Chan adepts at the turn of the 12th century, underscore how valuable Huihong has become to scholars of Chan and Zen Buddhism. There is now a rapidly developing sub-field of Chan/

Sōn/Zen studies of Huihong. Schlütter, for example, cites liberally and critically from Huihong's works to present a "reinvention" of the Caodong transmission family during the late 11th and early 12th centuries, which relies heavily upon Huihong's account in the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* about Furong Daokai's (芙蓉道楷; 1043–1118) teacher, Touzi Yiqing (投子義青; 1032–1083), who received Caodong lineage transmission by proxy from Linji lineage master Yuanjian Fayuan (圓鑒法遠; 991–1067) (Schlütter, 2008, 78–94). In Japan, Taiwan, and China, Huihong's works have provoked new research about Sōtō Zen lineage historiography, and in both East Asia and the West, research about how Chan teachers during the Ming and Qing periods such as Daguan Zhenke or Donggao Xinyue were inspired by Huihong has opened new avenues for promising new research.

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