REVIEW ARTICLE

Formation and Fabrication in the History and Historiography of Chan Buddhism

JAMES ROBSON
Harvard University

Fathering Your Father: The Zen of Fabrication in Tang Buddhism BY ALAN COLE. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. Pp. xix + 340. $65.00 cloth, $29.95 paper.

How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China BY MORTEN SCHLÜTTER. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. Pp. x + 290. $48.00 cloth, $27.00 paper.

The study of Chan/Zen Buddhism has undergone a number of epochal shifts over the course of the last century.[1] It is now no secret that the Chan/Zen tradition was initially imagined as the pinnacle of Eastern transcendental spiritualism and marketed as an antidote to Western rationalism and materialism by a slew of Chan/Zen apologists fired by Orientalist fantasies and ideological agendas. Their idealized images of an iconoclastic, anti-institutional "pure" Chan/Zen Buddhism began to receive critical scrutiny at the turn of the twentieth century with the important discovery of thousands of documents in the Dunhuang

[1] Although both books discussed here use the Japanese term Zen in their titles, they are primarily discussing the Chan tradition as it developed in China. In this essay I use the construction Chan/Zen to refer to the larger Sino-Japanese tradition, but when discussing the Chinese tradition I use the term Chan.

caves. Without reviewing in detail the entire history of Chan/Zen studies here, we can identify a few important general nodes in its evolution. Following the seminal scholarship of Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), Hu Shi (Hu Shih) 胡適 (1891–1962), Paul Demiéville (1894–1979), Jacques Gernet, Iriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高 (1910–1999), and Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 (1921–2006), a new generation of historians of Chan Buddhism emerged with fresh questions and historical approaches.[2] The next generation of Western Chan scholars, including Urs App, Jeffrey Broughton, Robert Buswell, Bernard Faure, T. Griffith Foulk, Peter Gregory, John R. McRae, Robert H. Sharf, Dale Wright, and Philip Yampolsky (1920–1996), were influenced by Yanagida's scholarship and the newly available Dunhuang manuscripts; they strove to provide a historical critique of Chan origins and to rehabilitate and reposition certain significant Chan figures in a revised historical narrative.[3] Gaining inspiration from groundbreaking studies, scholars of Chan shifted from critiquing the "origins" of the tradition to focusing on the developments of later periods. They demonstrated the important role Song-dynasty (960–1279) texts played in fashioning our image of the Tang dynasty (618–907) as the golden age of the Chan tradition.[4] Now, scholars have at their disposal volumes of detailed (and

[2] See, for example, Hu Shih, "The Development of Zen Buddhism in China," *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 15.4 (1932): 475–505; Hu Shih, "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China: Its History and Method," *Philosophy East and West* 3.1 (1953): 3–24; Hu Shi, *Shenhui heshang yiji—fu Hu xiansheng zuihou de yanjiu* 神會和尚遺集——付胡先生最後的研究 (Taipei: Hu Shi jinian guan, 1968); Paul Pelliot, "Notes sur quelques artistes des Six Dynasties et des T'ang," *TP* 22 (1923): 215–91; Paul Demiéville, "Le miroir spirituel," *Sinologica* 1.2 (1947): 112–37; Paul Demiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa: Une controverse sur le quiétisme entres les bouddhistes de l'Inde et de la Chine au VIIIe siècle de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952); Jacques Gernet, *Entretiens du Maître de Dhyāna Chen-houei du Ho-tsö* (Paris: Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1949); Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禅宗史書の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967). For a more complete bibliography on Western scholarship see Bernard Faure, "Chan and Zen Studies: The State of the Field(s)," in *Chan Buddhism in Ritual Context*, ed. Bernard Faure (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 1–35.

[3] For succinct accounts of these developments see the state-of-the-field reports: John R. McRae, "Buddhism," *JAS* 54.2 (1995): 354–71; and Faure, "Chan and Zen Studies." See also essays by this cohort of scholars in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 7 (1993–1994), a special issue dedicated to the work of Yanagida Seizan.

[4] See, among others, T. Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp. 147–208; Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū* 宋代禅周宗の研究 (Daitō, 1987); and Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen.*

critical) historical and textual studies evincing a wide range of new theoretical and methodological approaches, translations of primary texts, and general treatments of various important texts and facets of the tradition.[5]

Together Alan Cole's *Fathering Your Father* and Morten Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen* invite us to reflect on a number issues in the contemporary study of Chan Buddhism and represent recent attempts to move the field of Chan scholarship forward in new directions. Cole's *Fathering Your Father* engages the earliest phase of Chan developments, up through the Tang dynasty, whereas Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen* addresses the later developments of the Chan tradition up through the Song dynasty, when Chan became the dominant form of Buddhism in China. Although there have been no major new textual discoveries forcing us once again to radically revise our understanding of Chan history and doctrine, these studies profess to bring new research and reading strategies to the subject.

In gestures now commonplace in the academic scholarship on Chan/Zen Buddhism, both authors introduce their studies as antidotes to the overly idealized popular images of Chan/Zen. Their prefatory disclaimers, though unnecessary for specialists in the field, are most likely still required to caution general readers that these works differ from the bulk of books on Chan/Zen, which glorify their subject.

Despite this caution, however, Cole seems to be trying to reach out to a popular readership. General readers of *Fathering Your Father* will no doubt appreciate its lively writing style, but those not well versed in Chan scholarship will run out of patience with the protracted academic arguments. If general readers find it difficult to follow Cole's methodological approach to Chan texts, they should not feel dispirited, since even seasoned scholars will find themselves scratching their heads as they try coping with Cole's labyrinthian reading strategy.

[5] See, for example, Wendi L. Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On Early Chan History and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); T. Griffith Foulk and Robert H. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 7 (1993–1994): 149–219; John A. Jorgensen, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch'an's Search for Legitimation in the Mid-T'ang Dynasty," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 35 (1987): 89–133; John A. Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch: Hagiography and Biography in Early Ch'an* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

Cole asserts that his method is based on "close readings" of foundational Chan genealogical texts. Yet, his description of the new reading strategy that he employs in his reassessment of early Chan texts is abstruse and nearly impossible to test or corroborate. He asserts, for example, that "though text D might appear to have been written partly as a response to text C, it likely knew text A and B, and thus text A's influence on D isn't simply through the chain A>B>C>D but also directly A>D and indirectly from A>B>D." Then, after trying to reassure us that "this isn't so troubling to think through," he notes: "But things get worse when text E is written knowing A and D, seeing what D took from A, and then deforming content from A again but in a manner mediated by seeing what D did to A," and so on (Cole, p. 14). Cole needs just such a model in order to impress upon the reader the fact that the Chan texts he discusses copied, borrowed from, and appropriated ideas from preceding texts. The edifice of Chan Buddhism is, he claims, merely a facade erected on a foundation of sand. Yet, even if Cole had clearly laid out the types of textual relationships he envisions, his discussion of specific texts would be difficult to understand. Moreover, since we know so little about the editions of the texts used or their circulation—to say nothing of their authorship—and since many of Cole's conclusions hang on runout chains of causation, the interpretive difficulties are compounded.

How *Fathering Your Father* is received by scholars in the field will largely depend on their temperament, as well as their tolerance for Cole's outlandish analogies, his imaginative reconstructions of historical scenarios, and his way of explaining those scenarios by imputing motives back to the people of the seventh and eighth centuries. The reader will also need to become accustomed to Cole's penchant for using such neologisms as "men-with-truth" and "truth-fathers" without defining them clearly.

Schlütter, conversely, does not propose a new reading strategy. Instead he argues for the necessity of expanding the textual base used in the study of Chan. His study of Chan texts is an example of the kind of new work that can be done by utilizing digitized texts to conduct large-scale textual searches. Drawing insights from new historical works on the Song dynasty, he shows how Chan history is deeply imbricated within the social, cultural, and economic history of that period. For his ambitious project, he effectively utilizes many types of texts that

previous scholars of Chan history ignored: "government manuals, official histories, commemorative inscriptions for monasteries, funerary inscriptions for Chan masters, essay collections, travel descriptions, and private letters, as well as many different kinds of Buddhist sources" (Schlütter, pp. 4–5).

Schlütter is cognizant of the historical and doctrinal developments that took place during the epochs covered in Cole's book; he therefore provides a justification for why a book on Song-dynasty Chan Buddhism should have the title *How Zen Became Zen*. His book, he explains, "is about a set of crucial developments that took place within Chinese Buddhism in the Song dynasty (960–1279) that had a defining impact on the evolution of Zen Buddhism in all of East Asia" (Schlütter, p. 1). In the space of 182 pages, Schlütter provides a solidly argued and well-documented study that introduces a wealth of new material and successfully revises the narrative of the main developments of Song-period Chan.

Although they appear to have certain similarities and common goals, these two books are very different in style, method, and tone. Moreover, they situate themselves in relationship to the accrued tradition of Chan/Zen scholars in rather different ways. *How Zen Became Zen* is placed squarely within a long tradition of the academic study of Chan Buddhism; it is a restrained work that contains few explicit critiques or pronouncements about radical innovation. Schlütter seeks to build upon and refine the accrued scholarship on the Song-dynasty history of Chan, and in particular on the newer generation of Western and Japanese scholars (including Ishii Shudō 石井修道, Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, T. Griffith Foulk, and Albert Welter).

The structure and content of *Fathering Your Father* suggests that it is directed primarily at an academic audience and is intended to be a serious contribution—if not an outright provocation—to the ongoing critical analysis of Chan/Zen Buddhist history and the history of scholarship about that tradition. This aspect of Cole's work invites critical reflection.

Cole wastes no time in setting the polemical tone of his book. Immediately upon opening *Fathering Your Father*, readers will be stopped in their tracks on the dedication page, which reads: "This book is dedicated to Friedrich Nietzsche." That dedication is followed by two epigraphs drawn from Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*.

Although some scholarship has noted Nietzsche's simultaneous admiration and condemnation of Buddhism, it is not everyday that one encounters a scholarly work dedicated to him.[6] The homage paid here to Nietzsche carries much more weight than the dedication found in Cole's earlier *Text as Father*, which went out to the British musician Elvis Costello.[7] Some readers will turn past these pages without giving them much thought; still, we might want to pause to ask, What are book dedications and epigraphs such as these are intended to signal to the reader? Dedications, Gérard Genette has noted, allow "the author to produce an intellectual lineage without consulting the precursor whose patronage he is bestowing on himself in this way. . . . The dedication always is a matter of demonstration, ostentation, exhibition: it proclaims a relationship, whether intellectual or personal, actual or symbolic, and this proclamation is always at the service of the work."[8] The epigraph, according to Genette, gives the author the "consecration and unction of a(nother) prestigious filiation. The epigraph in itself is a signal (intended as a *sign*) of culture, a password to intellectuality."[9]

If Genette is on to something, then what message is Cole sending by dedicating his book to Nietzsche? *Human, All Too Human*, the source of the epigraphs, may provide a clue. Nietzsche dedicated that book to Voltaire in a targeted intellectual jab at Richard Wagner.[10] Is Cole attempting to adopt a similarly aggressive critical posture? Is *Fathering Your Father*, in other words, an attempt to kill the father(s) of Chan studies? Although the author never tells the reader precisely how Nietzsche fits into the overall argument of the book, Cole seems to be intimating that Nietzsche has something important to offer scholars of Chan, and religion generally, by showing us how "the 'all-too-human' origins of religions could also be grounds for a kind of liberating flex-

[6] Benjamin A. Elman, "Nietzsche and Buddhism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44.4 (1983): 671–86.

[7] Alan Cole, *Text as Father: Paternal Seductions in Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[8] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 132.

[9] Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 160.

[10] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book For Free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, with an introduction by Richard Schacht (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. ix.

ibility vis-à-vis symbolic orders, a flexibility born of recognizing how these orders were created and consumed" (Cole, p. 314). Cole urges scholars and casual readers who are still so benighted as to think that anything of value can be retrieved from reading Chan/Zen texts—only to end in disappointment—to "think more placidly about the gradual and mediated creation of truth, enlightenment, and perfection" (Cole, p. 314). From the moment they pick up the book readers will sense that Cole intended *Fathering Your Father* to be a troubling work.

Another indication of the radical direction that Cole's critique will take is a wager he lays down:

> Few readers will be able to put this book down without asking a series of troubling questions about what the Chan tradition was originally all about and what this tells us about the way humans, medieval and modern, relate to truth, authority, and perfection. And, as the uncomfortable reflexivity in the title *Fathering Your Father* suggests, figuring out the mechanics involved in the "birth of Chan" will involve addressing several forms of ingenuity and bad faith in the conception of the perfect "truth-fathers." (Cole, p. xii)

This passage contains a double message that implicates premodern genealogists and present-day scholars who study that material, as I explain below.

Cole aims to demonstrate how in the earliest Chan genealogical records dating from the Tang dynasty "Chan enlightenment, and the lineages that supposedly delivered it, rest on a large zero—a deep hole of never-happened, over which sits the entire house of cards that promised to maintain the pure essence-of-tradition" (Cole, p. 307). After revealing the deceptions and fabrications of the early genealogies, Cole wants to reframe the historical narrative in accordance with his reconstruction of the evidence provided by close readings of texts that he believes were pivotal in generating Chan-styled discourse from 600–750 C.E. (Cole, p. xv).

Cole approaches these Chan genealogical texts from the perspective of a historian of religions, which for him involves "trying to figure out how and why certain forms of religiosity took shape the way they did instead of assuming that it was just religious experience that made religion" (Cole, p. xi). In a self-avowed departure from other scholars—who in his opinion continue to "read early Chan texts . . . as basically the effect of new forms of religious experience in China"—

Cole claims that his reading of the early genealogical texts exposes how it was early Chan textual fabrications that created our images of the Chan master. Cole, therefore, aims to show the misguided ways of scholars who have been seduced by these texts into thinking they can actually "recover something authentic and inspiring" (Cole, pp. xi, 314).

Early on in *Fathering Your Father* Cole invokes the "founding fathers" of Chan scholarship—Yampolsky, Yanagida Seizan, Faure, McRae, Foulk, and a host of others. He claims to share an intellectual lineage with them, but he is equally intent on highlighting his own radical departures. By thus situating his work, he asks us to imagine a scene of a yearly wedding photo contest held at a country fair: witnessing the success of previous winners, the participating photographers make adjustments to their work, and as they try to appeal to the judges' taste, they become less concerned with representing the real aspects of a wedding. Therefore, even as the photographers try to make their photos appear lifelike and to hide the artifice behind their creations, their photos come to show "shared thematic assumptions" (Cole, pp. xii–xiii). Through this analogy, Cole imputes that Chan scholars have been reading the genealogical texts just as innocent bystanders might view the wedding photos, erroneously assuming that they had captured some real history. Cole argues that contemporary scholars—like premodern Chan genealogists—have their own "country fair competitions and seductively fashion their 'photos' in accord with a sense for what might win the day" (Cole, p. 13). Cole's analogy between the wedding photos and the history of Chan studies suggests that he is likening his own task in this book to that of the "daring photographer" who steps outside accepted clichés to try out a new approach.

Cole does not mince words in setting up his work in opposition to previous Chan scholarship, yet the impact that his critique will have on readers will largely depend on whether or not they agree with his assessment of the history and present state of Chan studies. Is Cole accurate in his claim that some scholars in our midst maintain that "Chan is completely Buddhist and yet unfettered by tradition, basking, so it seems, in the sunshine of being the religion beyond religion, with a truth that uniquely transcends right and wrong and a philosophy that, conveniently, has only ineffable tenets . . . think of religion and politics as separate activities, and imagine that truth, and the literature

that purveys it, comes from truth and not a host of other less inspiring sources" (Cole, p. 1)? Do modern scholars of Chan really hold to the views Cole here ascribes to them?

If contemporary scholars are really troubled by the connections between Chan and the unseemly domains of politics, society, and economics, then how do we explain the proliferation of scholarship analyzing connections between Chan monks, political figures, and the educated lay elite? Scholars have already begun to take seriously the social and political aspects of Chan history, as several recent books clearly display. For example, a central feature of Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen* is the way that it seamlessly combines a concern for doctrinal and soteriological issues with explicit discussion of the "political, social and economic forces" that "gave rise to the Chan school as we now know it" (Schlütter, p. 1; see also p. 175).[11]

Cole argues that scholars fail to pay attention to social and political concerns because they have been reading their sources innocently; and even when they do read critically, he argues, they still harbor a latent desire to retrieve from those fallacious accounts a kind of transcendental truth. These are significant accusations; yet on the basis of the historical trends in Chan scholarship over the past forty or so years, they are difficult to countenance. In fact, *Fathering Your Father* has had some noteworthy predecessors that Cole neither references nor discusses. One might even argue that many of his self-professed radical claims have already become naturalized within mainstream Chan scholarship.

Given that Cole's work bears the subtitle *The Zen of Fabrication in Tang Buddhism*, it is rather surprising to find no mention of Takayuki Nagashima's *Truths and Fabrications in Religion*, a much maligned earlier work on Chan history that, like Cole's book, has a radical agenda, exposing the fabricated nature of Chan history and texts.[12] To be sure, Nagashima's book, which tried to prove that the Sixth Patriarch Huineng 慧能 (638–713) was a fabrication by showing how later texts concocted legends about him, has significant historical and methodological problems.[13] It is nonetheless an example from one extreme

[11] See also Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati* and Jorgensen, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism."

[12] Takayuki Nagashima, *Truths and Fabrications in Religion* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1978).

[13] Nagashima, *Truths and Fabrications*, p. 105. Compare the treatments, for example, of

pole of the field that adopts the kind of self-consciously critical point of view that Cole tells us has been absent in Chan studies. In his preface to Nagashima's book Michael Pye captures the critical nature of the work: "To some people Zen Buddhism is a timeless matter of personal discipline and ineffable insight. At the same time the transmission from patriarch to patriarch has formed corridors of tradition which have authoritative status for followers of Zen." Nagashima's work, Pye further notes, "will prove challenging for all those who take the pious legends about early patriarchs such as Hui-neng and Shen-hui at their face value. *He has shown in detail how the legends were built up by devoted followers on the basis of various models which lay to hand. Hence there is much which is fictitious in the early story of Zen Buddhism*."[14]

A survey of Chan studies over the past sixty years suggests that Cole has overstated his claim to be providing a radical rethinking of early Chan history and that his statements about the tradition have already been sounded in recent Chan scholarship. It is impossible to itemize that scholarship here. Suffice it to say that given that Cole deals with historical truths and fabrications, and their relationship to Chan religious claims, one would have expected some articulation of his position relative to the foundational debate that took place in 1953 between D. T. Suzuki and Hu Shi. That debate pitted claims to Chan's "truth" and metaphysical status (Suzuki) against a view that Chan should be studied historically (Hu Shi).[15]

Cole may have considered the Hu Shi–versus–Suzuki tussle to be a tired old debate unworthy of discussion, but one is hard-pressed to find an explanation for his failure even to mention John Maraldo's seminal essay, published twenty-five years ago, entitled "Is There Historical Consciousness Within Ch'an?" In that essay, Maraldo prefigures many of the key historiographical and interpretive points that are raised in *Fathering Your Father*: the politico-ideological nature of Chan texts, the modes of fabrication used in their creation, a shift to reading those sources as literature rather than as journalistic histories, and the effect

Wang Wei's 王維 (700–761) stele for Huineng in Cole, pp. 215–21—where Cole argues that Chan texts are fictions that appropriate the fictions of previous texts—and Nagashima's claim that the stele "constructs a biography by drawing from other historical facts and fictions contained in the older books and Sutras."

[14] Nagashima, *Truths and Fabrications*, p. viii (italics mine).

[15] Hu Shih, "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China"; Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, "Zen: A Reply to Hu Shih," *Philosophy East and West* 3.1 (1953): 25–46.

of these new insights on Chan practitioners. Maraldo begins his essay by summing up the state of the field in 1985: "In the wake of increasing historical awareness boosted by new discoveries, the history of Ch'an is being rewritten in our century."[16] He then points out what this might mean to those invested in the historical *truth* of the Chan tradition: "To those who would heed the results of modern scholarship, a challenge is posed, too. Particularly in the light of doubts cast on the historicity of early Dharma transmission (傳法 denpō), Zen practitioners are called upon to reevaluate the meaning of historical transmission for their practice and to reconsider the significance of a historical development which seems to include *fabrication* and animosity."[17]

Maraldo's article goes a long way in revealing the explicit concerns of Chan genealogical texts. As the following passage demonstrates, historians of Chan recognized long ago the need to adopt a critical stance toward the reading of early Chan texts:

> Were we therefore to ignore spiritual content and to abide by the ideals of modern empirical historiography, the "history" cited in the Tun-huang documents and the Sung period "transmission of the lamp" texts would seem to serve the interests not of factual truth but of the political legitimation of a master, a school, or a doctrine. This legitimation proceeded by such tactics as showing direct descent from the Buddha, claiming possession of Bodhidharma's robe, and citing supporting passages from (often fabricated) sutras. Where discrepancies were noticed, an author might relegate a differing opinion to a heretical position (as did Shen-hui with the "Northern School"), or forge a lineage between his own mentor and a politically established master (as Wu-chu was linked to Chin ho-shang 金和尚 in the *Li tai fa pao chi*). These texts muster their historical evidence as if to give their masters ground for saying "I am an authentic teacher; my teaching, as opposed to so and so's, is the right one." . . . But when such texts are read as factual history . . . then modern critical methods ascertain that the facts are frequently misrepresented, as much from devious motives as from lack of information or from genuine religious intent.[18]

[16] John C. Maraldo, "Is There Historical Consciousness Within Ch'an?" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 12.2/3 (1985): 141.

[17] Maraldo, "Is There Historical Consciousness Within Ch'an?" pp. 141–42 (italics mine).

[18] Maraldo, "Is There Historical Consciousness Within Ch'an?" pp. 154–55.

Where is the nostalgia for an earlier "pure" Chan, or the desire to retrieve a transcendental truth, in this passage?

Cole does engage the work of the Japanese scholar Yanagida Seizan, but attempts to distinguish its method from his own. He acknowledges that Yanagida's "editing, publishing, and translating" work had an important impact on the work of Yampolsky and other early scholars who in turn have influenced Cole himself. At the same time, Cole uses an isolated statement garnered from a talk given to the San Francisco Zen Center to downplay Yanagida's critical historical and interpretive scholarship and consequently leaves the reader with a strong sense that Yanagida's scholarship smacks of "nostalgia" (Cole, p. 8). A more balanced picture is provided by Faure's assessment of Yanagida's method: "For Yanagida, although traditional historiography cannot claim the status of a truthful narrative, neither can it be dismissed as an empty fabrication. Yanagida criticized both the mythifying narrative of the 'Histories of the Lamp' and the demythifying history of hyper historicism, and attempted to emphasize the religious creativity of those 'inventions.'"[19] Yanagida, therefore, walked a careful line between the approaches of Hu Shi and D. T. Suzuki.[20] That Yanagida retained a suspicious (and humorous) perspective on Zen history is reflected in an anecdote recounted by Carl Bielefeldt: when Yanagida "had just published a crazy article about Dōgen, in which he claimed that the monk had left his monastery to visit Kamakura for an illicit rendezvous with the Shōgun's wife. I asked him how he came up with that idea. He said it was a lie (*uso*). Then, after a pause, he added 'Anyway, Zen is a history of lies.'"[21] Yanagida's vast oeuvre had a complexity that should not be reduced to a casual pronouncement at a Zen center or off-hand comments.

If Cole thought that Yanagida—and other scholars of early Chan—harbored too much nostalgia for a "Zen essence," why, one wonders, did he not introduce the reader to Sekiguchi Shindai's 関口真大 radical historical revisionism?[22] Sekiguchi's argument that all the early Chan histories were fraudulent was so radical that Yanagida harshly criticized

[19] Faure, "Chan and Zen Studies: The State of the Field(s)," p. 3.

[20] Timothy H. Barrett, "Arthur Waley, D. T. Suzuki and Hu Shih: New Light on the 'Zen History' Controversy," *Buddhist Studies Review* 6.2 (1989): 116–21.

[21] Carl Bielefeldt, "Remembering Yanagida Sensei," in *Yanagida Seizan sensei tsuitō bunshū* 柳田聖山先生追悼文集 (Kyoto: Hanazono University, 2008), p. 9.

[22] See Sekiguchi Shindai 関口真大, *Daruma no kenkyū* 達磨の研究 (Iwanami shoten, 1967), and *Zenshū shisōshi* 禅宗思想史 (Sankibō busshorin, 1964).

it for being based on a dubious methodology.[23] In Sekiguchi's wake, one scholar has averred: "Only forgeries and pious (and not so pious) lies remain."[24] One might excuse Cole's neglect of Sekiguchi's work on the grounds that he is primarily concerned with trends in Chan scholarship in the Occident, but Sekiguchi's critique is so well known, and it has such affinities with Cole's own remarks about Chan texts being a "large zero—a deep hole of never-happened," that one would expect Cole at the least to inform Chan specialists where he stands in relation to Sekiguchi's conclusions.

By the mid-1980s English-language scholarship on Chan had already developed a number of critical methodologies. In 1986 Faure published his groundbreaking "Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm," which applied a structural approach to the legends about Bodhidharma. Faure understood the problems associated with an overly historicist approach that tries to arrive at a coherent biography of Bodhidharma. He noted how "the historiographical process that leads to the elaboration of this biography bears important resemblances to the hagiographical process on which it relies."[25] Accordingly Faure treated Bodhidharma's life-story as literature and did not even mention Chan doctrine in that essay. It is therefore unconscionable that Cole accused Faure of imagining "that these texts can be read for their real honest-to-goodness doctrines" (Cole, p. 9).

By the early 1990s Chan/Zen scholars also had at their disposal Foulk's "The Ch'an *Tsung* in Medieval China: School, Lineage or What?"[26] which summarizes the state of scholarship on the Bodhidharma lineage, its connection to the Faru 法如 (638–689) epitaph, and its genealogy. Although the Faru epitaph is significant in Cole's analysis, Cole surprisingly does not reference Foulk's article, where Foulk states: "It is likely that Faru's followers simply invented this lineage, selecting the figures of the Indian monk Bodhidharma and his

[23] Yanagida's comments on this work can be found in his *Yaburu mono* 破るもの (Shunjūsha, 1970), pp. 226–39. See John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), p. 276 n. 5.

[24] Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 107.

[25] Bernard Faure, "Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm," *History of Religions* 25.3 (1986): 189.

[26] T. Griffith Foulk, "The Ch'an *Tsung* in Medieval China: School, Lineage, or What?" *The Pacific World* 8 (1992): 18–31.

disciple Huike out of the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* . . . and using them as a convenient link to India."[27] Foulk also admits that "we know almost nothing about Faru and his followers at the Shaolin Monastery, apart from the fact that they invented a lineage of secret oral teachings going back to India."[28]

A year after the publication of Foulk's article, Faure came out with his *Chan Insights and Oversights*, in which he further championed the need to study the narrative structures of early Chan histories and stated that "'classical' Chan and Zen can be said to have superseded 'early' Chan as much as to have inherited from it. To take a Chan 'tradition' or 'essence' for granted is to forget that, as Paul Veyne points out, 'in this world we do not play chess with eternal figures like the king and the fool: the figures are what the successive configurations on the playing board make of them.'"[29] How different are Foulk's and Faure's orientations to the early Chan genealogies from Cole's thesis about sons/disciples fathering their fathers/masters?

To highlight just how normative a critical approach to Chan had become during the 1990s and into the new millennium, we can turn to a passage from Welter's, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati.* Three years prior to the publication of *Fathering Your Father*, Welter stated: "Traditional accounts can no longer be taken at face value, but must be read in conjunction with the motives of those sponsoring them. The notion of Zen transcendence, a 'pure' Zen immune from the strictures of time and place, has been challenged as but another ideological construct formed to serve the interests of institutions and their patrons."[30] These comments represent sentiments that were widely held by scholars of Chan studies around 2006.

For further proof that scholars had developed a variety of critical postures toward the Chan tradition one needs merely to read the opening pages of McRae's *Seeing Through Zen* or consider Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen*.[31] There Schlütter succinctly states: "The entire lineage prior to the Song is best understood as a mythical construct,

[27] Foulk, "The Ch'an *Tsung*," p. 21. I have converted the romanization of the Chinese terms to pinyin.

[28] Foulk, "The Ch'an *Tsung*," p. 21.

[29] Faure, *Insights and Oversights*, p. 120.

[30] Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, p. 4.

[31] John R. McRae, *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

a sacred history that served to legitimize the Song Chan school and its claim to possess a special transmission. Even in the Song, the Chan lineage was subject to constant manipulation and reinterpretation in order to legitimize the lineages of certain masters and their descendants or to bolster polemical and religious claims" (Schlütter, p. 15). A critical scholarly position, which Cole claims did not exist in the field of Chan studies, is for Schlütter a well-established starting point for his work.

In the central chapters of *How Zen Became Zen* Schlütter has much to say about Chan's connections with political elites, one of the topics that Cole claims scholars have shied away from as unsavory. Schlütter's institutional history of Chan provides the background necessary for understanding the relationship between Buddhism and the Song imperial government, which patronized Buddhist monasteries with monetary and land grants, honored eminent monks, and subsidized the translation and printing of Buddhist texts.

The support of the Song government came at a cost to Buddhist institutions, however, since the state required them to perform opulent rituals for its own benefit. According to Schlütter, although the imperial government "understood the presence of Buddhist clergy and monasteries to provide an important contribution to dynastic peace and prosperity, it also saw Buddhism as a potential threat, and so the state felt a strong need to regulate the saṃgha and to ensure that only 'pure' monks and nuns were part of it" (Schlütter, p. 32). The Song state therefore cracked down on unregulated groups, monitored monastic activity, sanctioned particular monastic institutions by having them registered, and supported and protected certain illustrious monasteries through the conferral of an "imperial name plaque" (*e* 額). Monasteries that received an "imperial name plaque" enjoyed a modicum of rights and protections but in return had obligations to the state and forfeited their autonomy. Schlütter's discussion of the regulation of Buddhist institutions is significant for pointing out that state policies had a strong impact on the development of Chan history, especially by classifying Buddhist monasteries into two main categories: "'hereditary monasteries' (*jiayi*, or 'succession monasteries,' also known as *tudi*, 'disciple,' or *dudi*, 'ordained disciple,' monasteries) and 'public monasteries' (*shifang*, or 'ten directions' monasteries)" (Schlütter, p. 36).

Drawing on the work of Takao Giken 高雄義堅, Huang Minzhi 黃敏枝, and Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, and on his own detailed reading of the *Qingyuan tiaofa shilei* 慶元條法事類 (a text about the legislation of Buddhism and Daoism), Schlütter provides the clearest and most extensive discussion of the differences between "hereditary" and "public" monasteries currently available in English (Schlütter, pp. 36–49). The category "hereditary monasteries" refers to those institutions, usually small to medium in scale and local in orientation, in which the monastery was the legal property of the monks and nuns. The monastic residents constituted a "tonsure family," and the abbacy and monastic offices were passed down internally within what Schlütter refers to as Buddhist family lineages (Schlütter, pp. 55–58). Schlütter suggests that prior to the Song dynasty most monasteries had been hereditary, but in the Song they attained legal standing and certain rights—perhaps even the protection of their landholdings. Those rights, too, came with obligations to the state as well as state oversight; the state even went so far as to institute laws governing the succession of abbots (Schlütter, pp. 36–38).

A discussion of the distinctions between "hereditary" and "public" monasteries is essential for Schlütter because it was the court's promotion of the "public" institutions that fostered Chan's rise to prominence as the leading form of elite monastic Buddhism during the Song dynasty (Schlütter, pp. 38–39). "Public monasteries" were large institutions having no connection to tonsure families; all monastics in good standing could live in them, and the abbots were chosen from the best candidates available but usually came from outside the monastery. (A rule that no disciples of the present abbot could succeed him presumably prevented public monasteries from turning into hereditary ones.) Schlütter calls this type of elite Buddhist kinship group a "transmission family" (Schlütter, p. 56).

Over the course of the Song dynasty the number of public monasteries grew, with some hereditary monasteries being converted into public ones. Questioning why any hereditary monastery would want to lose its autonomous rights, Schlütter argues that these conversions were based largely on pressures from the state and local elites, who perceived that they could influence public monasteries; these public monasteries, explains Schlütter, "were seen as a kind of state institution, and their abbots were treated very much like government offi-

cials" (Schlütter, p. 39). Ultimately the long-term interests of the Chan school were well served by its close association with public monasteries and the state (Schlütter, p. 50).

Schlütter is right to point out that local elites played an important role in converting hereditary monasteries into public monasteries, auctioning off abbacies to the highest bidder, having a say in the succession of abbots, and providing support and patronage (Schlütter, Chapter 3). Nonetheless, the privileged position that Chan held up through the eleventh century began to deteriorate around the twelfth century as Chan began to lose ground in the face of challenges from the Tiantai 天台 and Huayan 華嚴 traditions. During the Northern Song and into the Southern Song, declining literati support for Chan and Huizong's overall shift in state support from Buddhism to Daoism affected Chan's place on the religious landscape. Schlütter consistently pays heed to the social and political forces shaping Chan history.

Rather than bemoaning the connections he finds between Chan and elite secular society, Schlütter continues to dig deeper to assay the developments inside of Chan institutions. He examines in particular the distinctions between two familial arrangements within Chan institutions: tonsure families, which were constituted by succession within the "immediate nuclear family" and therefore had no need "to prove their rights by reference to an ancient lineage" or through lineage genealogies (Schlütter, p. 57); and "transmission families," where dharma-transmission lineages became significant. Although the topic of dharma-transmission lineages and genealogies has received much scholarly attention, Schlütter presents some fresh evidence suggesting that transmission lineages grew out of tonsure lineages. Particularly striking is his discussion of the earliest transmission lineage within the Tiantai tradition and how his interpretation differs from Cole's. Cole states that transmission was merely Guanding's 灌頂 (561–632) attempt to create a Chinese buddha in Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597). Schlütter, in contrast, reads that material as Guanding's creation of a transmission lineage, since he had been passed over when Zhiyi's monasteries were taken over by three monks who had been his tonsure disciples (Schlütter, p. 58). The transmission family, and the claim to possess an uninterrupted lineage all the way back to the Buddha, came to constitute one of the Chan tradition's most distinctive claims to authority.

The status that leading Chan figures had attained among the educated elite was, Schlütter further claims, largely responsible for the success of the eleventh-century revival of the Caodong 曹洞 (J. Sōtō) Chan tradition—which also entailed the remaking of its lineages, the crafting of suitable hagiographies for its ancestors, and the creation of a distinctive form of teaching—silent illumination (*mozhao* 默照). Following the Caodong tradition's retreat from the brink of extinction—behind figures such as Furong Daokai 芙蓉道楷 (1043–1118) and Dahong Bao'en 大洪報恩 (1058–1111)—the foundations for a new phase in its history were laid. At this point Schlütter's detailed analysis of the reconstruction and solidification of Caodong lineage history becomes rather dense, and additional background information on the key figures would have been useful. Nonetheless, Schlütter does reveal how the Caodong tradition shored up its transmission line, sometimes by drawing on those outside of the lineage or even establishing connections to those with whom they had no actual ties. We learn, for example, of a master-disciple relationship that was fabricated between two men who had never met, one having predeceased the birth of the other—Touzi Yiqing 投子義青 (1032–1083) and a certain Dayang Jingxuan 大陽警玄 (942–1027). Moreover, Yiqing's transmission from Jingxuan came through another figure who was not in Jingxuan's Caodong lineage, but had received transmission in the Linji 臨濟 (J. Rinzai) lineage. Yiqing's transmission through the Linji master Fayuan 法遠 (991–1067) was tantamount to a posthumous transmission from Jingxuan to Yiqing, with Fayuan merely serving as a placeholder who held the transmission "in trust" until a suitable heir for Jingxuan's Caodong lineage surfaced (Schlütter, pp. 88–90).

Given Schlütter's critical attitudes to the Chan tradition's representation of its history, one again wonders, who are the targets of Cole's critiques? Who are the scholars beset by the "wave of disappointment that is clearly the effect of the Dunhuang" discoveries? (Cole, p. 314). Unfortunately, Cole never cites or identifies the targets of his more general barbs. Indeed, critical approaches to Chan history have been around for such a long time in academic scholarship that it seems pointless for Cole to refute positions no longer held by scholars of Chan.

Many of Cole's historical claims will, I suspect, ring true to specialists. This is not because Cole presents compelling new material and

new arguments, but because much of what he discusses has already been well established and is in line with accepted positions in the field of Chan studies. His framing of that material nonetheless deserves sustained critical reflection. *Fathering Your Father* may indeed be troubling for scholars of Chan—as Cole intended—but not necessarily for the reasons he envisioned.

Cole begins his inquiries not with explicitly Chan works of the Tang, but with what he refers to as their Sui-dynasty (589–618) predecessors. Those texts include genealogies that attempted to construct two figures—the Tiantai master Zhiyi and the leader of the Three Stages Sect (Sanjiejiao 三階教), Xinxing 信行 (540–594)—as Chinese quasi-buddhas. Their geneaologies resemble later Chan materials that fashion Chan masters as buddhas in the same way. Cole's thesis is that through those two sixth-century masters we can "see a variety of strategies for convincingly locating the totality of tradition in a single Chinese man—that is, early efforts to create something like a Chinese buddha" (Cole, p. 72). This chapter, as Cole acknowledges, leans heavily on the work of Linda Penkower, Koichi Shinohara, Chen Jinhua, and Jamie Hubbard, fine scholars who have made important contributions to the field. But just as there are some significant silences in Cole's treatment of previous Chan scholarship, there are also some important absences in this discussion of Tiantai history and its possible connections with Chan.[32]

Cole states that Zhiyi is not normally counted as a precursor to early Chan (Cole, p. 13), but his statement is belied by Hu Shi's claim about the connections between Tiantai and Chan lineage construction: "In its desire to become the orthodox sect of Buddhism in China, the Tien-tai masters claimed their direct lineal descent from the great Mahayana teacher Nagarjuna (馬鳴). To authenticate this spiritual genealogy, Chih-kai [sic, read Zhiyi] made much use of a pseudo-historical work, the *Fu-fa-tsang-chuan* (付法藏傳). . . . But, it also initiated a bad example of genealogical controversy which was responsible

[32] Cole fails to mention the rich material presented in Leon Hurvitz's work on Zhiyi and Stanley Weinstein's foundational work on the connections between Zhiyi and the Sui-dynasty state. See Leon Hurvitz, *Chi-i* (539–597): *An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk* (Brussels: Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques, 1962); and Stanley Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of T'ang Buddhism," in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 265–306.

for the invention of numerous lists of Patriarchs, in the 8th century, to establish the orthodoxy of Chinese Zennism."[33] Several Japanese scholars have also worked extensively on the Tiantai antecedents to Chan.[34]

One might further ask whether Cole's argument about making Zhiyi and Xinxing into Chinese buddhas in genealogical works can be adequately made without referring to fifth-century doctrinal developments. It was during the fifth century, for instance, that translations of various versions of the *Niepan jing* 涅槃經 (Nirvana sūtra) appeared in Chinese. This sūtra created the conditions for the existence of Chinese buddhas by positing buddha nature within all sentient beings (including animals and *icchantikas*). Is it any surprise, then, that Guanding—who figures prominently in Cole's discussions of Zhiyi and his creation as a Chinese buddha—produced a commentary on the *Nirvana sūtra* and that Shenhui 神會 (d. 758) later used a passage from that sūtra as justification for his claim to be a buddha?[35]

When Cole arrives at the Chan texts that are the main object of his analysis, he proclaims that he will be engaged in a "close reading" of those texts, yet he does not provide a clear list of the primary sources or the editions he used (and does not list them in the bibliography either). This omission will frustrate those scholars who would like to consult his sources and check his readings. As far as I have been able to determine, the sources that Cole refers to by the general term "early Chan genealogical works" include:

1. *Tang Zhongyue shamen Shi Faru chanshi xingzhuang* 唐中嶽沙門釋法如禪師行狀, the seventh-century biographical stele of

[33] Hu Shih, "The Development of Zen Buddhism in China," p. 492.

[34] On the connections between the Tiantai and Chan traditions see, among others, Sekiguchi Shindai, "Zenshū to Tendaishū to no kōshō" 禅宗と天台宗との交渉, *Taishō daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 大正大学研究紀要 44 (1959): 39–75; Sekiguchi Shindai, *Tendai shōshikan no kenkyū* 天台小止観の研究 (Sankibō busshorin, 1961); Yamauchi Shun'yu 山内舜雄, *Zen to Tendai shikan: Zazengi to "Tendai shōshikan" to no hikaku kenkyū* 禅と天台止観: 坐禅儀と「天台小止観」との比較研究 (Daizō shuppansha, 1986). The connection between Chan and Tiantai is also mentioned in Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 18.

[35] Guanding, *Da niepan jing xuanyi* 大般涅槃經玄義, in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. 100 vols. (Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932) [hereafter *T*], #1765. Hereafter, unless I am providing only the *Taishō Canon* text number, all texts are cited as follows: *T* volume number.page number and register (a, b, or c).line number(s). For example: *T* 51.1070a.10–15. Cole discusses Shenhui's citation of the *Nirvana sūtra* on p. 253.

Faru. Cole primarily uses (but rarely cites) Yanagida Seizan's edited version.[36]

2. Du Fei 杜朏 (dates unknown), *Chuan fabao ji* 傳法寶記. Cole seems to have again used Yanagida's edition, but his citations of the translated portions of the text are for the most part to McRae's translations.[37]

3. Jingjue 淨覺 (683–750?), *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記. The translations of this text are primarily keyed to J. C. Cleary's *Zen Dawn*, which Cole usually pairs with citations of the *Taishō* edition of the text (*T* 85.1283a–90c). He also mentions Yanagida's version, which he cites together with the *Taishō* edition.[38]

4. Four fragmentary texts connected with Shenhui. Cole does not list these in his bibliography but merely refers the reader to Philip Yampolsky's list of titles, extant editions, and modern publications.[39] Cole's discussion only includes the first three Shenhui texts on Yampolsky's list, and he primarily cites them through Hu Shi's transcription and the French translation by Jacques Gernet.[40]

Cole's analysis of the first source, the Faru stele, is important in the context of his larger argument since it lays the foundation for the interpretations of the other Chan texts and their narrative strategies that he discusses later in the book. All modern scholars of Chan history have accepted the importance of this epitaph and have regularly cited it

[36] See Yanagida's *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禅宗史書の研究, pp. 487–96—incorrectly cited by Cole as *Shoki zenshū shiso no kenkyū*, which was itself based on the version of the text in the *Jinshi xubian* 金石續編, vol. 6.

[37] Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 559–93, which is based on Pelliot #3559, Dunhuang manuscript held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 255–69.

[38] J. C. Cleary, trans., *Zen Dawn: Early Texts from Tun Huang* (Boston: Shambhala, 1991); Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no zenshi*, vol. 1, *Ryōga shijiki, Den hōbōki* 初期の禅史: 楞伽師資記: 伝法寶記 (Chikuma shobō, 1976); Bernard Faure, *Le Bouddhisme Ch'an en mal d'histoire: Genèse d'une tradition religieuse dans le Chine des T'ang* (Paris: Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1989).

[39] Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 24–25.

[40] Hu Shi, *Shenhui heshang yiji*. Cole cites the 1930 Shanghai Yadong tushuguan edition.

as the first instantiation of a claim to a lineage, which is traced from Bodhidharma through Huike 慧可 (ca. 485–ca. 555), to Sengcan 僧璨 (dates unknown), Daoxin 道信 (580–651), Hongren 弘忍 (601–674), and ultimately to Faru himself.

I agree with much of Cole's analysis of the rhetoric of Faru's biography and suspect that most specialists in the field today would find his claims about how the text worked for the Chan tradition unobjectionable. Indeed, the kinds of textual "secrecies" and "absences" that Cole identifies are familiar features of Chan texts. Scholars have taken note, for example, of the Chan tradition's claims that its soteriology is based on a tradition traceable to the Buddha's esoteric transmission of the dharma to Mahākāśyapa after the latter smiled when the Buddha held up a flower to the assembled community on Vulture Peak.[41] Much has been written about the resounding "silence" of that "special transmission" that was passed down through twenty-eight Indian patriarchs and then on to China via Bodhidharma. In Cole's discussion we are again witness to an example of how the Chan/Zen tradition is reluctant to reveal anything specific about its "family secrets" (Ch. *jiachou* 家醜) by claiming that the Chan "special transmission" is silent and formless. As William Bodiford has noted, "the spiritual creation of a new Buddha is the great mystery. It cannot be explained in words. It cannot be explained by science or causality."[42]

Just as scholars have pointed out the fabricated nature of the Mahākāśyapa "flower story" and how it reflected an effort by Chan monks to create an independent identity, Cole interprets the Faru stele as a "highly inventive," and even "illicit," work that tries to hide its narrative inventions (Cole, p. 84). Given the present, mature status of Chan scholarship, it is surprising to find Cole indicting scholars for having read the stele with what he calls an "expectation of innocence." Cole asserts that "most of us come to this topic with a sense that Chan and Zen were always part of the Chinese or Japanese symbolic landscape and thus, in a certain sense, were never invented," and then he

[41] This well-known story is found in *Wumen guan* (J. *Mumonkan*), *T* 48.293c. See also Albert Welter, "Mahākāśyapa's Smile: Silent Transmission and the Kung-an (Kōan) Tradition," in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, ed. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 75–100.

[42] William M. Bodiford, "Dharma Transmission in Theory and Practice," in *Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice*, ed. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 264.

adds: "Naturally, in assuming this 'always already' nature of Chan and Zen, we miss the audacity of claiming ownership of the Buddhist tradition" (Cole, p. 74). Here again he fails to specify just who might be implicated as part of the "old paradigm of innocence" (Cole, p. 85).

Fathering Your Father contains far too many historical arguments for me to assess them one by one, and the arguments are framed and presented in ways that make it difficult to corroborate or disprove them. Nonetheless, certain passages are so problematic as to invite comment. One of the main messages of the Faru stele that Cole professes to have revealed through his "close reading" but to have been missed by scholars due to their presumed "expectation of innocence" is its political message.

Cole asserts that Faru's biography is part of a "monastic-throne conversation" on the grounds that "the stele includes the claim that the throne had recognized Faru and his ancestral truth-fathers" (Cole, p. 81). He goes on to refer to Faru and his predecessors as an "imperially ratified lineage" that had received "imperial recognition," and to state that they were "imperially sanctioned" (Cole, pp. 88–89). His strong political reading, which posits that Faru and his predecessors have an "imperially recognized identity," hinges on a single passage in Faru's epitaph that (in Cole's translation) says: "Everyone said, 'Beginning from the Wei [dynasty] up until the Tang [dynasty] there have been five generations of imperial representatives (*didai*), who covered nearly two hundred years—[during these years] someone has always come forth to define the virtue of the age. All of them bestowed upon us, the descendants, the legacy of the peerless great jewel (*wushang dabao*)'" (Cole, p. 87).

Cole does not cite the precise location of this passage; he merely states in a general note that all translations of Faru's biography are based on Yanagida's *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*. The key passage in Chinese reads as follows: 僉曰，始自後魏，爰降于唐，帝代有五，年將二百，而命世之德，時時間出。咸以無上大寶，貽諸後昆.[43] Cole provides no references or comments to support his translation of *didai* 帝代 as "imperial representatives." This compound does not appear in any major dictionaries (such as the *Hanyu dacidian* 漢

[43] Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 487–89 provides the full biography, and this passage appears on p. 488.

語大詞典 or *Dai kanwa jiten* 大漢和辭典), and thus calls for some form of textual support to establish a viable translation.[44] In the context of this passage, and in a variety of other Buddhist texts, the phrase *didai you wu* 帝代有五 simply refers to the five "dynasties" between the Northern Wei to the Tang (with *didai* meaning something like *chaodai* 朝代).[45] Thus I would render the passage in question as: "From the Northern Wei [dynasty] down to the Tang [dynasty] there have been five dynasties (*didai you wu*) covering nearly two hundred years." In short, this passage cannot by itself be used to support Cole's argument about the Faru lineage and its members.

Also problematic is Cole's discussion of Jingjue's *Lengqie shizi ji*, especially his choice of the source text and his overreliance on the questionable translation of it by Cleary, whose text does not match the *Taishō* edition that Cole cites (p. 181 n. 14).[46] The problem of Cleary's textual citation in *Zen Dawn* has already been discussed by McRae, who personally had to ask Cleary to supply information about the source text.[47] Cleary's translation, he learned, was based not on the *Taishō* edition, but on a version included in the *Jiangyuan congshu* 薑園叢書, compiled by Kim Kugyŏng 金九經, which helps us to understand the discrepancies we find in the *Taishō* and Cleary versions that Cole cites together.[48]

Cole's dependence on an unreliable translation and use of an excerpt taken out of its context have an impact on the larger argument forwarded about Jingjue's "jivey" language. Cole claims that by using

[44] *Hanyu da cidian*, ed. Hanyu da cidian bianji weiyuanhui 漢語大詞典編輯委員會, 13 vols. (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 1986–90); Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次, ed., *Dai kanwa jiten*, 13 vols. (Taishūkan shoten, 1955–60).

[45] See, for example, the usage in the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶紀 (*T* 49.94b.6), which reads: 齊梁及周帝代錄者; and *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*T* 52.409c.21), which reads: 未知古老所傳周文是何帝代.

[46] J. C. Cleary, *Zen Dawn*. The *Taishō* passage is also incorrectly cited; it begins on 1284c.14 and ends on 1284c.18.

[47] John R. McRae, "Thinking about Peace and War," *Eastern Buddhist* 19.2 (1986): 138–46.

[48] Here I have corrected John McRae's typo, which had *Jiangyuan yeshu* 薑園鄴書 (p. 140 of his review), and the misprint in Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no zenshi*, 1:40, which had *Jiangyuan shuangshu* 薑園双書, where the simplified character "shuang" 双 should have been "cong" 叢/丛. Kim Kugyŏng's version of the *Lengqie shizi ji* published in the *Jiangyuan congshu* 薑園叢書 had in fact been preceded by the publication of the *Xiaokan Tang xieben Lengqie shizi ji* 校刊唐寫本楞伽師資記 in Beijing in 1931 (Daishutang chuban 待曙堂出版). On the history of Kim's version of the text see Yanagida, *Shoki no zenshi*, 1:40; Faure, *Le Bouddhisme Ch'an en mal d'histoire*, p. 38.

that type of language, Jingjue was attempting to "manufacture the new 'orality of tradition' to prove the extraliterary nature of these figures" (Cole, p. 180). Yet, the alleged "jiveyness" may instead be the result of a poor, garbled source and its equally garbled translation.

It is unclear why Cole relied on Cleary's work.[49] It is equally unclear why he did not cite or refer to McRae's translation of the more complete passage, since throughout *Fathering Your Father* Cole bases many of his translations on McRae (often with only minor changes).[50] McRae is on the mark when he follows Yanagida's critique of Sekiguchi Shindai's theory that the passages in the *Lengqie shizi ji* resembled "public cases" (Ch. *gong'an* 公案; J. *kōan*) and says those passages should instead "be compared to the idiosyncratically Ch'an style of encounter dialogue that developed before the end of the eighth century. These 'questions about things' represent the earliest recorded phase in the development of this type of religious dialogue."[51] In this reading, the passages Cole cites appear to be systematic statements about "insentient objects preaching the dharma" and not merely, as he avers, examples of "bizarre, jivey language." Important debates took place in early Chan circles over claims about the presence of buddha-nature in the insentient—as Robert Sharf has noted. Thus it should not be surprising that the *Lengqie shizi ji* itself championed the Buddha-nature of the insentient perspective.[52]

Cole also alleges that the textual fabrication of the *Lengqie shizi ji* and its representation of Chan masters are particularly deceptive since Jingjue "never once cites a source for those long-dead masters' orality" (Cole, p. 181). This critique of Jingjue follows Cole's earlier critique of Du Fei's textual "inventions." He accuses Jingjue of committing a "*sin of omission* when he chose not to admit his reliance on the Faru stele" (Cole, p. 170, italics added). In these two cases, and in others cited in

[49] Bernard Faure's French translation of the passage in *Le Bouddhisme Ch'an*, pp. 112–14, is also cited by Cole but apparently did not inform his reading of this passage.

[50] McRae, *Northern School*, p. 92. See also John R. McRae, "The Antecedents of Encounter Dialogue in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," in *The Kōan*, pp. 56–57.

[51] McRae, *Northern School*, p. 93.

[52] Robert H. Sharf, "How to Think with Chan Gong'an," in *Thinking with Cases: Specialist Knowledge in Chinese Cultural History*, ed. Charlotte Furth, Judith T. Zeitlin, and Ping-chen Hsiung (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 205–43, esp. pp. 216ff; Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), pp. 247–48.

Fathering Your Father, Cole accuses the authors of Chan genealogical works of not citing the sources they used when compiling their own works. He also accuses contemporary scholars of having overlooked how those texts have an ironic relationship to the past, and to past histories. All early Chan texts, Cole avers, have little concern for historical reality and no compunction about appropriating material or fabricating masters to fill out a lineage. Those texts also evince a reluctance to discuss the content of their teachings in any specificity, or precisely what it is that is passed down from master to disciple in the creation and recreation of the Chan/Zen tradition.[53] Whereas the practice of building upon previous texts without attribution was standard in Chinese writing, Cole presents the authors as plagiarists and forgers. Modern conceptions of plagiarism and standards of citation did not, however, apply to early historical writing. As Marc Bloch noted, plagiarism "was at this time universally regarded as the most innocent act in the world. Annalists and hagiographers shamelessly appropriated entire passages from the writings of earlier authors."[54]

The propensity of Chinese genealogists to appropriate earlier texts was not grounded in the kind of thinking that motivated Pablo Picasso's dictum that "good artists copy; great artists steal." Rather, textual appropriation brought forward past precedents at the same time that it constructed a new legitimacy.[55] Copying, in the sense of using content from a previous work as one's own, has been discussed by John Kieschnick in reference to the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of eminent monks), whose compilers took material "directly, word-for-word, or with additions and deletions, from sources available to them . . . usually without attribution."[56] As Kieschnick rightly points out, such appropriation for "the writing of history was not limited to Buddhist biography, but was true of secular history as well."[57]

[53] See Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 123.

[54] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), p. 95. See also the more recent work by Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 29.

[55] William Alford, *To Steal a Book is an Elegant Offense: Intellectual Property Law in Chinese Civilization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 2; see also pp. 12, 18.

[56] John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), p. 10.

[57] Kieschnick, *Eminent Monk*, p. 152 n. 36. Robert Ford Campany has also pointed out how in *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Traditions of divine transcendents) Ge Hong 葛洪 uses

The issue of copying has been widely discussed by scholars of Chan texts. In his study of the influential genealogical text *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (1004), Dale Wright comments that "through substantial editing, rewriting, and repositioning, [the editors] have organized a new text and through it a revised understanding of the tradition . . . while drawing heavily on forbearing texts, the editors have made no effort at attribution. Innumerable bits and pieces of other texts are woven together into a new one without citation, quotation or other devices that might credit the appropriate sources."[58] Had Cole situated his material within a historiographical context he might have found that the practice of appropriation was the rule in the premodern world.

Cole's overall argument about the nefarious strategies of Chan textual fabrication largely depends on his claim that these texts had an audience. Cole seems to have been influenced by an essay by Pierre Bourdieu, which he invokes. In that essay, Bourdieu argues that the business of the art world is dependent upon a consuming public that has been duped by the artists' and art traders' systematic disavowal of commercial interests.[59] Perhaps it is his allegiance to Bourdieu's work that prompts Cole to liken Chan's success to a "public relations coup" (Cole, p. 310). Cole does not clearly identify who comprised the putative audience, yet he seems to be claiming that lay readers became the consumers of the Chan texts and their messages.

In laying out this picture, Cole criticizes previous scholars of Chan, this time for having missed the important role that the alleged reader "is expected to play in the ideological exchange that these texts demand" (Cole, p. 25). Cole variously refers to these implied readers

---

previous hagiographies, but "does not credit [them] as source material for his own collection"; *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 103. And Stephen R. Bokenkamp has also noted similar forms of borrowing in Daoist Lingbao 靈寶 texts; "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut belge des hautes etudes chinoises, 1983), pp. 437–38. See also Denis Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography," in *Confucian Personalities*, ed. Arthur Wright and Denis Twitchett (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 24–42.

[58] Dale Wright, "Historical Understanding: The Ch'an Buddhist Transmission Narratives and Modern Historiography," *History and Theory* 31.1 (1992): 42.

[59] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production of Belief: Contributions to an Economy of Symbolic Goods," in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 74–111.

as the "reading public," "ordinary reader," or the "Other," and describes them as being an "adoring audience" that needs to be convinced by the fabricated texts. He claims that everyone in the reading public wanted what the masters who were depicted within the lineage texts possessed, and that "modern critical studies" have failed to notice how "masters were presented to the reader to be desired" (Cole, p. 29). The genealogical texts, Cole further asserts, were "not only public texts designed for the Other's consumption, but were conceived and circulated within the understanding that claims to own tradition work only when the Other is convinced. Naturally, then, these texts need to be read . . . as works formatted by the authors' sense for what the Other wanted to hear about truth" (Cole, p. 3). In Cole's opinion, a "mimetic desire" for what the Chan master possessed was widespread and this shaped the development of Chan religious conceptions.[60] Can these claims be supported by social or historical examples?

The suppositions forwarded in *Fathering Your Father* invite my suspicion on several levels. Did these types of texts ever circulate outside of a small circle of elite clerics or writers? Do we know anything about their reception and whether they in fact were widely read? Can we really speak of a singular "Other" or of an implied "ordinary reader" when speaking of these texts? Did the types of Chan literature discussed by Cole ever move from being the product of a Chan insider's game out into the public realm? Even if some texts did circulate beyond the closed confines of Chan monasteries, where is the evidence that "everybody" (or, more to the point, "anybody") among the laity aspired to attain what these alleged patriarchs had? Cole's repeated claims about a complicit public "readership" or "adoring audience" are merely unproven suppositions.

We know little about the circulation of early Chan texts (even less about genealogical texts), and I have thus far seen no evidence to confirm that they were circulated or widely read. Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen* informs us that the majority of "early Chan texts that we now have available to us were not known in the Song and later, but only rediscovered in the twentieth century" (Schlütter, p. 16). Even the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*—a text that was certainly much bet-

[60] On "mimetic desire" see René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), especially chapter 6.

ter known than the genealogical texts—which Cole mentions as a text that might have circulated among a public readership (Cole, p. 296), became unmoored from its limited domain of Chan monastic circulation only rather late: according to Carl Bielefeldt and Lewis Lancaster, it seems to have been during the Ming dynasty that it was transformed from being "an esoteric document to be handed down from master to disciple . . . to [being] . . . a popular religious treatise."[61]

The suggestion that a Chan text became a publicly circulating document only later is supported by Schlütter's account of the impact of printing on the circulation of Chan texts in the Song dynasty. As Schlütter has demonstrated, it was print versions of Chan dharma-transmission histories—texts such as the well-known *Jingde chuandeng lu*—that began to circulate and entertain a wide readership. Yet, Schlütter notes, it was only among the educated elite that readership expanded, and "to most people in the Song, questions of correct lineages, teachings of meditation and enlightenment, and interpretations of Buddhist doctrine were of little interest" (Schlütter, p. 5). Unless further scholarship tells us otherwise, we must conclude that these fabricated genealogical texts did not have a wide circulation or readership. If we grant that Cole is in fact correct in his assertion that each subsequent author of a genealogical work knowingly falsified their work as they knew their forefathers had done, then we must ask: Who exactly, if anyone, is being duped in all of this?

What have we learned anew from *Fathering Your Father* and Cole's retelling—through an array of analogies and metaphors—of Chan historical fabrications? At the very least we are presented with Cole's own picture of the historical period under discussion, but the features of that picture differ little from those in earlier depictions. We have long known that competing parties claimed to be the main branch of the lineage traced through Bodhidharma; it is just that Cole's claims are made with a new vigor and volume, and are accompanied by an attempt to add in a quotient of "bad faith" intentions and motives. Although much of what Cole covers is well-tilled terrain to most Chan specialists, if it serves as a reminder of the Nietzschian warning that we are always faced with the potential danger of excessive historicism and may become complacent hostages to the pasts we create, then it could

[61] "T'an Ching (Platform Scripture)," *Philosophy East and West* 25.2 (1975): 198.

serve a purpose in a graduate seminar—and will surely stir plenty of debate.

Fathering Your Father is intent on exposing the various forms of deception at work in Chan genealogical texts and the unseemly connections between Chan and politics, which led the author to take earlier Chan scholars to task for missing them. Historical revision and critique of the field of Chan studies is also present in Schlütter's work, but it is approached with a different methodology and expressed in a very different tone. In revealing what he sees to be the key characteristics that influenced the development of Chan, Schlütter addresses the problematic earlier descriptions of Song Chan Buddhism, which were depicted as the product of a degenerate age following the so-called Tang "golden age." This topic has been written about so much by now that it needs no further comment here. Nonetheless, the new scholarly orientation is significant for Schlütter since it was during the Song that new forces served to shape what he refers to as the "mature" Chan school.[62] Some of these forces, such as the role played by the state and educated elites, were external to the Chan tradition. Other forces were internal to the tradition, such as the sectarian doctrinal dispute between the Linji and Caodong factions during the twelfth century. Those debates pitted the Caodong emphasis on "silent illumination" (*mozhao*) against the Linji emphasis on "observing the critical phrase," or in Schlütter's rendition "observing the word" (*kanhua* 看話).

Schlütter, therefore, had to begin by addressing two misconceptions: the first is that the Northern Song dynasty was a time of sectarian rivalry within Chan Buddhism; the second is that the Song educated elites were in strong opposition to Buddhism. Schlütter initiates his corrective by discussing the role of the Chan tradition's claim to a "special transmission" and the nature of the early genealogical texts; he then adds that all of those debates began to subside when the tradition accepted that only one person could receive transmission in a given generation. At this time, he argues, Chan groups "seem more or less to have accepted each other as legitimate" as long as the transmission was tracked back through Huineng (Schlütter, p. 20). A significant development, this led to the formation of five traditions descending

[62] See Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

from Huineng. Some scholars have tried to use this rubric to claim that radically different approaches to Chan thought and practice existed during the Northern Song.

Schlütter demonstrates that sectarian rivalry was not, however, relevant to Song-dynasty Chan. Although the *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 depicts a branching Chan transmission family, and the *Jingde chuandeng lu* offers a nascent expression of five Chan houses (or families), the first evidence of the Five Houses scheme being accepted by a Chan institution is found in the *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄, which was compiled in 1039 (Schlütter, p. 22). The Five Houses scheme was not an expression of antagonistic relationships, since all the houses had the same goal, the students were shared among the houses, and the literati maintained acquaintances across the "familial" lines (Schlütter, pp. 24–25). Thus, there was no evidence of sectarianism during the Northern Song. One reason Schlütter spends so much space debunking this perception of sectarianism might be this: once we correct the historical record of Northern Song Chan, the later dispute between "silent illumination" and "*kanhua*," and its significance in creating a factional division within Chan, will come into sharper relief.

In order to overturn the misconception regarding the educated elite's stance toward Buddhism Schlütter demonstrates that they were not "staunch anti-Buddhist Neo-Confucians" during the Song (Schlütter, p. 27). Schlütter's discussion of this point—when read in conjunction with the recent work of Mark Halperin on Song literati perspectives on Buddhism—goes a long way toward building up a more accurate picture of the place of Buddhism in the lives of Song-dynasty educated elites.[63] To be sure, a few key figures—such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200)—did issue high-profile denunciations of Buddhism, but, as Schlütter argues, they are not "emblematic of Song literati culture" (Schlütter, p. 28).

However, with the rise of the next generation of masters—including Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 (1091–1157) and Zhenxie Qingliao 真歇清了 (1088–1151)—the Caodong tradition reached a new level of maturity and began to present a threat to the entrenched Yunmen 雲門 and Linji Chan lineages. The changing social and historical con-

[63] Mark Halperin, *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960–1279* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), esp. chapter 2.

text of the twelfth century served as the catalyst for the protracted doctrinal controversy that ensued between the new Caodong tradition and the better-established Linji lineage. This controversy centered on Dahui Zonggao's 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) famous attack on the practice of silent illumination, whose practitioners he denounced as heretics, which ran counter to his own new practice of *kanhua* Chan. Silent illumination Chan, as is now generally well known, was a kind of moniker attached to the Caodong master Hongzhi, though it was also connected with Qingliao. Much ink has been spilled on this topic, but Schlütter concludes—convincingly in my opinion—that the Caodong tradition taught something that could be called silent illumination and became the object of the Linji master Dahui's invectives.

Schlütter provides a succinct account of the main tenets of silent illumination, referring primarily to Hongzhi's famous doctrinal poem the "Mozhao ming" 默照銘 (Inscription on silent illumination), which he characterizes as a meditation practice that was based on the teaching that enlightenment is inherent in all people—a practice that did not strive "for enlightenment as a breakthrough experience" (Schlütter, p. 147). The later critique leveled by Dahui might lead one to assume that the Caodong tradition, which deviated from orthodoxy, invited censure. Correcting this misperception, Schlütter points out that the Caodong tradition was based on traditional forms of meditation practice—fully in line with Changlu Zongze's 長蘆宗賾 (dates unknown) *Zuochan yi* 坐禪儀 (Manual for seated meditation)—and on the orthodox teaching of inherent Buddha nature (inherent enlightenment). Dahui's teachings, he suggests, were truly innovative.

Dahui's creation of *kanhua* practice, Schlütter explains, "involves focusing intensely on the crucial phrase, or 'punch line' (the *huatou*), of a gongan" either in seated meditation or in the midst of every day activity (Schlütter, pp. 107, 115). For Dahui, who wanted to emphasize that enlightenment was a real event, to be experienced by the practitioner, this was the best method for achieving that breakthrough.

According to Schlütter, Dahui attacked the silent illumination practice of the Caodong tradition on the grounds that it was a "quietistic practice devoid of wisdom" (Schlütter, p. 116). Particularly interesting here is Schlütter's explanation of Dahui's concerns: he may have feared the deleterious effects of the spread of silent illumination to monastics, but he "was even more concerned about the appeal that

silent illumination held for laypeople" (Schlütter, p. 125). Thus, Dahui reserved his harshest critiques of silent illumination for letters or sermons he wrote to scholar-officials or literati. Moreover, his critiques of silent illumination and his advocacy of *kanhua* practice were primarily directed to the literati; it is not at all clear if the same critiques were ever directed at monastics (Schlütter, p. 181).

Schlütter's fine research—particularly that which situates the material within a wider sociopolitical context of the increasing success of Caodong teachers—helps to mitigate the potential for misunderstanding this twelfth-century controversy as being merely between Dahui and Hongzhi; in fact, Dahui praised Hongzhi (Schlütter, pp. 134–36). What we do know, however, is that the Caodong-Linji polemics that incubated during that period became an important feature of Japanese Zen history.

The strengths of *How Zen Became Zen* notwithstanding, some readers will find Schlütter's presentation of the argument, and perhaps the structure of the book more generally, as out of order. Schlütter presents certain critiques before the earlier material that it attacks is fully laid out. We learn about Hongzhi's silent illumination teachings first through the lens of Dahui's critique. The danger here is that some will see that the author first foregrounds the critique and then goes looking for the specific object of that critique, giving some readers the impression that the argument is being loaded. Although Schlütter notes that Hongzhi's writings are voluminous, he constrains most of his discussion to the "Mozhao ming," leaving some readers to wonder if Hongzhi's wider oeuvre might offer perspectives that are less in line with Dahui's critique.

Given the balanced nature of Schlütter's revisionist discussion of Song history, this reviewer was surprised the author truncated his treatment of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907–960). We have heard much about how Chan historians imagined the Tang through the lens of Song-dynasty sources. It may now also be time to recognize some of the problematic assumptions that have accrued to images of the place of Buddhism in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period is usually scamped by historians of China, who, if they discuss it at all, treat it as an anomalous interregnum falling between the glorious Tang and the Song dynasties. Perhaps it was this type of perspective that led

Schlütter to write off the Five Dynasties as merely a "jumble of competing states that rapidly succeeded each other" (Schlütter, p. 26).

It is gradually becoming evident that the perduring desire to emphasize the unity of the Chinese empire has created blind spots in our treatments of the Chinese past and resulted in a paucity of studies on periods of disunion.[64] Contemporary scholars seem to be still operating under the cloud of the largely ideological picture inherited from Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 (1007–1072) negative assessment of Buddhism and the tendency to ignore the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms when mapping out the historical development of Chinese Buddhism.[65] Yet, once we move beyond Ouyang Xiu's pejorative view, we can see more clearly how significant the different regional developments of that period were to Chan fruition in the Song.

A focus on specific regional Buddhist—particularly Chan—histories by a new generation of scholars has started to call into question the present scholarly narratives about the status of religion during that period.[66] As Albert Welter has put it, "The end of the Tang and Five Dynasties period may be viewed as China's second 'warring states' period, with many of the same implications for the magnitude of impact its innovations would have on China's future."[67]

Schlütter's book is primarily concerned with demonstrating how a number of key Song-dynasty developments within the Chan tradition conditioned later Chan history and our perceptions of that tradition.

[64] Wang Gungwu's *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963) was updated and reissued as *Divided China: Preparing for Reunification, 883–947* (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2007). See also Richard Davis, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[65] The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms are not mentioned in standard earlier works on Chinese Buddhism, such as Kenneth Chen, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959); Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993).

[66] Pioneering works done by Japanese and Chinese scholars on the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms include Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄, *Tō Godai no zenshūshi* 唐五代の禅宗史 (Sankibō busshorin, 1985), Yanagida Seizan, "Tō-matsu Godai no Kahoku chihō ni okeru Zenshū kōki no rekishiteki shakaiteki jijō ni tsuite" 唐末五代河北地方に於ける禅宗興起の歴史的社会的事情について, *Nihon bukkyō gakkai nenpo* 25 (1960): 171–86, and Yang Cengwen 楊曾文, *Tang Wudai chanzong shi* 唐五代禪宗史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1999).

[67] Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, p. 9.

He does not entertain questions about what the historical material he has uncovered might mean for contemporary practitioners. This is precisely the type of question, however, that Cole raises in his concluding chapter.

In that chapter, audaciously entitled "Assessing the Hole at the Beginning of It All," Cole poses a question he thinks all scholars and religious practitioners will have to answer in the face of what he feels he has exposed in this book: "How should we assess someone's claim to having experienced Chan enlightenment, in any era, in the wake of seeing that Chan enlightenment, and the lineages that supposedly delivered it, rest on a large zero—a deep hole of never-happened, over which sits the entire house of cards that promised to maintain the pure essence-of-tradition? . . . In short, once we recognize the early Chan dynamic of fathering one's father, the attempt to retrieve content—about Truth, humanity, and history—from these texts ought to be seen as both impossible and absurd" (Cole, pp. 307–9).

The critical reader might well want to ask, Who, if anyone, was looking to Chan genealogical texts for a discussion of "Truth, humanity, and history"? If the early Chan genealogical works are, as Cole states, "philosophically shabby, repetitive, uneven, self-contradictory, and weighed down with realpolitik agendas" (Cole, p. 308), then who would have ever expected them to be the carrier of the pure essence of enlightenment or to contain discussions of the perennial problems of human existence? Just because a handful of early Chan genealogical works were cobbled together from earlier sources and they have nothing to say about Chan "experience" or the tradition's truth claims, does that discredit the entire Chan tradition and the practitioner's basis for practice? Cole seems to think so. He claims that his unpacking of the bad-faith motives behind the fabrications of the genealogical texts offers "further insult to the living tradition, which was, in some measure, already scandalized by the Dunhuang Chan texts that revealed the complicated and corrupt genesis of Chinese enlightenment" (Cole, p. 183).

Even if we recognize Chan genealogical texts as fabrications of dubious historical veracity, the question remains: How are we to understand their role in the development of Chan/Zen down to the present day? Insiders to the Chan/Zen tradition have confronted the problems that attend to historical claims that undercut the history of a

text. In his discussion of the famous "Śākyamuni Holds Up A Flower" kōan, which modern Chan/Zen scholarship has demonstrated is a late fabrication, the contemporary teacher Shibayama Zenkei 柴山全慶 (1894–1974) responded by saying that "it may be that the story cannot be supported by history, yet this does not mean that the fact of Dharma transmission in Zen from a Master to his disciple is to be denied.... Whether the story of 'Sakyamuni Holds Up A Flower' can be supported by history or not is a matter of historical and bibliographical interest and has nothing to do with the fact of teacher-disciple transmission of Zen. That is to say, the fact of transmission in Zen transcends historical concern, and in this sense the koan has a profound Zen significance for us even today."[68]

That perspective, which is no stranger to historians of religion, forces us to reconsider the relationship between history and religious beliefs. This oppositional relationship between history and religion touches on the perennial problem of insider (emic) vs. outsider (etic) accounts of a religious tradition. The outsider's view tends to be irrelevant to insiders, since it often does not account for the religious teachings and experiences that animate their tradition. Ludwig Wittgenstein addressed similar issues in his discussion of the place of historical truth in relation to the status of religious belief in Christianity. "Queer as it sounds: The historical accounts in the Gospels might, historically speaking, be demonstrably false and yet belief would lose nothing by this: not, however, because it concerns 'universal truths of reason'! Rather, because historical proof (the historical proof-game) is irrelevant to belief."[69] Wittgenstein goes further in explaining the difference between historical truths and religious belief. "Christianity is not based on a historical truth; rather, it offers us a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not, believe this narrative with the belief appropriate to a historical narrative, rather: believe, through thick and thin, which you can do only as the result of life. *Here you have a narrative, don't take the same attitude to it as you take to other historical narratives!* Make a *quite different* place in your life for it."[70] If we con-

[68] Zenkei Shibayama, *The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2000), pp. 58–60.

[69] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 32e.

[70] Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 32e.

strain our discourse to the Truth of Experience (insider claims) or the Truth of History (outsider claims), then we have little chance of moving beyond the impasse that resulted from the dichotomizing dispute between D. T. Suzuki and Hu Shi some sixty years ago.

Because the topic of the transmission of "tradition" figures importantly in both *Fathering Your Father* and *How Zen Became Zen*, it is rather surprising that neither author engages with some of the most significant theoretical and methodological works on that topic. This absence is less surprising in Schlütter's work, which does not explictly engage methodological or theoretical issues. But, given Cole's approach, it is hard to imagine that he would have considered the Chan invention and manipulation of its tradition of transmission to be exceptional had he situated his work in reference to Edward Shils's book on "tradition" and to Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's volume on "the invention of tradition."[71] For readers familiar with these works, Chan looks like another example of how traditions work, or are made to work, by the proponents of the traditions. As Hobsbawm has pointed out, there is no historical period "which has not seen the 'invention' of tradition."[72]

Responding to the earlier work on tradition, Anthony Giddens has asked how, once we disentangle ourselves from the prejudices of the Enlightenment, we should understand "tradition." Building on Hobsbawm and Ranger, he explains that "invented traditions and customs . . . are contrived . . . are used as a means of power; and they haven't existed since time immemorial. Whatever continuity they imply with the long-term past is largely false. . . . What is distinctive about tradition is that it defines a kind of truth. For someone following a traditional practice, questions don't have to be asked about alternatives."[73] For readers familiar with these lines of thought, the historical material in Schlütter's book will ring all the more significant, but Cole's critique of Chan "tradition" will hardly sound new. They may find surprising, however, the sentiment expressed by Cole (shall

[71] Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[72] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Hobsbawm and Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 4.

[73] Anthony Giddens, "Tradition" (BBC, Reith Lectures, 1999), www.bbc.co.uk.

we call it romantic or nostalgic?) that tradition could, or should, be anything other than invented.

Cole subjects "tradition" to a trenchant critique but then suggests that his book will reveal "something somewhat more universal about being human" (Cole, p. 207). But, what precisely is he trying to tell us that can be retrieved about Truth and human nature from his study of Chan genealogical sources? He appears to be saying that the history of the machinations of the producers of those works (rather than the content of the works) allows him to make universal statements revealing a darker side of humanity—in contrast to the sunny view of Chan/Zen that was promoted by apologists like D. T. Suzuki and his epigones. Then, having dragged the reader down into the "hole at the beginning of it all" (or shall we call it a cave?), Cole (like Plato) seems intent on leading people out and away from the shadows to explain to them how they were duped.

Rather than focusing on what is claimed as "true," it is more prudent to focus on the "real." Even as far back as the Song dynasty the fabricated Chan lineages were taken *as* real. As Schlütter points out in his work, "The content of the transmission was, of course, entirely in the religious realm, but the transmission line itself was understood, and meant to be understood, as a fact of history" (Schlütter, p. 14)—much as it is today in China, Korea, and Japan. Rather than despairing and following Cole down into the hole in the first place, scholars of Chan might do well to ponder how the virtual origins of Chan can cast shadows so real as to invite historical analysis, even if they do not lead us to universal truths about humanity.

Cole seems to have envisioned a scenario involving contemporary Chan scholars and religious practitioners not unlike the scenario discussed by Anthony Grafton, in which Renaissance scholars aimed to purge the classical canon of fakes. Grafton conjures up the image "of a train in which Greeks and Latins, spurious and genuine authorities sit side by side until they reach a stop marked 'Renaissance.' Then grim-faced humanists climb aboard, check tickets, and expel fakes in hordes through doors and windows alike. Their revised destination, of course, is Oblivion—the wrecking-yard to which History and Humanism consign all fakes."[74] Does Cole think that after witnessing the defenes-

[74] Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, pp. 102–3.

tration of all the plagiarists and fabricators of the genealogical texts, Chan practitioners on the train will jump up from their *zafu*s and disembark on their own accord? Have the ideas generated by contemporary critical scholarship on Chan served—like Max Weber's railroad switchman—to shift the tradition over onto the track destined for "Oblivion"?[75] No, not yet at least, and it appears unlikely that the train will jump tracks and head in that direction any time soon.

[75] On ideas being like "switchmen" see Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 280.