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Texts within Texts:

The *Avatamsaka* in Yongming Yanshou's *Records of the Source-Mirror*

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Asian Studies

by

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September 2018

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September 2018

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ABSTRACT

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In this project, I use the case study of the monk Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–976) of the state of Wuyue 吳越 to discuss the relationship between hagiographies and factional categorization, and I examine the ways he understood, related to, and used textual sources from other Buddhist doctrines in his writing. I extrapolate a definition of Chan Buddhism for Yanshou's case specifically, and I argue that the perceived and portrayed boundaries of Chinese Buddhism during this time, doctrinal, textual, factional, or otherwise, were much more fluid and dynamic than they were recently understood to be. I argue that our understanding of Chan Buddhism should be reframed as a polythetic class to reflect the plurality of Chan and Buddhism in general.

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I. Introduction

“What is Chan Buddhism?” is a question that has held considerable attention in Buddhist studies in recent years. As a religious phenomenon, Chan thought is described to have come into being in the religious landscape of early 8th century Tang China, and later rose to institutional and textual prominence. The study of Chan is an important window into the development of Chinese Buddhism and Chinese religion. Moreover, due to the constructed nature of many Chan narratives and hagiographies, critical examination of Chan texts is particularly illuminating with regards to the goals and motivations of their writers, how these images compare to actual history, and the lives and intents of the subjects found in these narratives.

This project follows in the footsteps of earlier works on the formation and origins of the Chan tradition, such as Bernard Faure’s *The Will of Orthodoxy*, Wendy Adamek’s *The Mystique of Transmission*, and John McRae’s *Seeing through Zen*. These works problematize an uncritical reading of Chan narrative, and revise our historical understanding of Chan texts, their writers, and their subjects. For instance, Faure’s volume discusses the formation of the so-called “Northern” school of Chan Buddhism during the 8th century CE and problematizes the traditional narrative of the Northern school as the proponent of incorrect teachings and the malicious enemy of the supposedly orthodox Southern school. Blindly following this oversimplification, which was a result of polemic discourse intended to create a narrative containing an orthodox element and the embodiment of qualities that were to be avoided, prevents us from seeing the doctrinal continuity that actually existed between the two entities of “North” and “South”, and glosses over the diversity of Chan thought during that time.¹

¹ Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, pg. 5.

Instead, Faure argues that the better approach would be to do away with sharply drawn lines between factions and frame the discussion in terms of several Northern and Southern schools to allow for the portrayal of diverse trends and possibilities that existed during that time.

Examining early hagiographies, Faure argues that the very creation of a patriarchal genealogy was the product of a marginal population's desperate desire to become orthodox and to be viewed as such, creating a way to define themselves to others.² Thus, Faure points out the inaccuracy of a fundamental narrative of Chan thought, and attempts to remedy it by offering both an alternative view of history and a new framework of thinking about diversity underneath a larger label. Studies such as these have highlighted the importance of reevaluating past understandings of Buddhist institutions and examining the external factors that influenced the compositions of their narratives. Building upon their analysis and problematization of Chan popular narrative, in this project I begin with a similar suspicious attitude towards hagiographic portrayals of Yongming Yanshou and apply a similar examination to Yanshou and the narratives regarding him.

Early scholarship in Chan studies used popular hagiographical literature to describe Chan historical narratives as linear and possessing discrete lineages. In these hagiographical sources, Chan monks were organized according to the lineages they were said to have belonged and were also portrayed as sharing historically consistent frameworks of practice and thought.³ However, recent literature has shown this understanding to be partially misleading. In reality, during this time, monks that would be considered within the category

² Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, pg. 9.

³ As Bernard Faure eloquently describes, the prevalence of Chan hagiographies served to establish a foundational "tradition," which implies the presence of something that is transmitted continuously over time; however, the retroactive creation of a narrative that involves a tradition is often a sign of un-continuity and an attempt to deny this lack of continuity, an endeavor to close an insurmountable gap between a present whose significance is undercut and a past whose value is idealized. (Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, pg. 9, 119)

of Chan, both from the perspective of both modern scholars and the primary sources which portrayed them as such, were not always confined to discrete lineages. Nor did they necessarily even identify with the lineages that were ascribed to them in later times—more often than not, they were not limited to specific doctrinal or practical traditions, for plurality in thought and orientation was a widespread norm.

This study takes as its subject the monk Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–976) of the state of Wuyue (907–978). He is popularly known as a Chan master and was active in the southern regions when the notion of Chan that later developed in the Song dynasty had yet to fully take shape. Being from a time when the Buddhist religious landscape was marked by change and plurality, Yanshou is a window into the diversity and dynamism of Buddhism during this time. This project is an investigation into the nature of intellectual boundaries in Chinese Buddhism during Yanshou’s time, and also an attempt to rethink the question “What is Chan Buddhism?” To accomplish the latter, I will examine the idea of Chan as it meant to Yanshou; to accomplish the former, I will discuss his work the *Records of the Source-mirror* (*Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄)⁴ and how he utilizes ideas and texts from other Buddhist doctrines. I argue that Yanshou and his usage of a variety of different sources in his writings was a manifestation of the fluid nature of Buddhist intellectual thought and writing of this time, for the format and writing style of the *Records* reflects the fluidity and plurality characteristic of contemporaneous Buddhism, before the composition of Song historiographies written with a fervent intention of streamlining and consolidating historical figures under discrete lineages

⁴ The *Records* is a long text and consists of a hundred fascicles in total. A complete close reading of the entire text would be impractical for the lengths of this project, and so I am using the first fifteen fascicles only. The amount of external quotations that Yanshou uses in the entire text is proportional throughout, so this section is used as a sample size for this study. A reading of the entire text will be left for future projects.

and distinct doctrinal boundaries. In terms of what Chan Buddhism is, to acknowledge its fluid and changing nature over time, I propose that the idea is made specific to each person or text that it applies to – describing Yanshou as a Chan master requires us to contemplate what the notion of Chan meant for him in particular.

In Chapter 1, I discuss the image of Yanshou as portrayed in hagiographies, how these depictions compare with his own imagination of himself, and how they were influenced by the possible motivations of the writers of these hagiographies. Chapter 2 builds on the notion of making the label “Chan master” specific to Yanshou in its definition, and I discuss various characteristics of Yanshou’s Chan Buddhism as can be observed from the *Records*. Chapter 3 is a close reading of portions of the *Records* in terms of Yanshou’s quotations of other texts; by looking at the contexts in which he used these quotations, whether he brought them out of their original context or not, I argue that his example illustrates the fluidity in which Buddhist writers during this time understood and related to various doctrines that were later depicted as individual traditions of thought in Chinese Buddhism.

II. Chapter 1: Yongming Yanshou

A. Introduction

In light of the subject of this project and its author, this chapter sets out to answer the most basic question: who is Yongming Yanshou, the writer of the *Records of the Source-mirror*? The most general answer derivable for this question is that Yanshou was a Buddhist monk who lived in the tenth-century kingdom of Wuyue, who interacted with and studied with, albeit briefly, figures who were later considered significant components in the narratives of certain Chan lineages. This led to the portrayal of his own significance in these narratives: he is associated with the lineage of Qingliang Wenyi 清涼文益 (885–958) of the Fayen 法眼 school of the Five Houses of Chan, and in addition, is regarded as a significant figure in both the traditions of Chan and Pure Land Buddhism. The Fayen lineage was said to have been founded by Fayen Wenyi and was later regarded as part of the Five or Seven Houses of Chan that were active from the later Tang to the Northern Song dynasty. However, it has been argued that this formulation of the Five and Seven Houses classification system is in fact a retroactive labeling that assigned historical importance to certain lineages while deliberately omitting others.⁵ The presence of retroactive labeling and classification in the Chan historical narrative is also reflected in the example of Yanshou when one compares the way he writes about himself to the way that others have portrayed him—while it is apparent that he aligns himself with a teaching and practice that is firmly based in seated meditation and subitism, he does not claim a specific membership to any particular lineage himself, and

⁵ Foulk, *Histories of Zen*, pg. 106–107; McRae, *Seeing through Zen*, pg. 79–80; Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, pg. 119.

only subscribes to Bodhidharma's teaching of the mind that prioritizes the realization of the nature of the mind, which is equated to enlightenment.⁶

B. Hagiographies

In order to supply a more detailed answer to the question of who Yanshou was, the natural starting point would be the various hagiographies that mention him. There are quite a few, beginning with Zanning's (贊寧, 919–1001) *Records of Eminent Monks of the Song* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳) written in the late 10th century, and culminating with the various court-sponsored works compiled during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912).⁷ An overview of these sources is necessary for the purposes of our discussion; however, in the interests of brevity, I will concentrate my discussion on sources that were composed during the Song dynasty. The narrative(s) that were composed in the early Song hagiographies were a significant influence on later works, many of which often paraphrased or directly copied from their predecessors. I provide a translation of one selection below, and another in the appendix.

The first of these hagiographies, chronologically speaking, is Zanning's *Records of High Sanghans of the Song*, written circa 982, after the kingdom of Wuyue had been

⁶ Yi-hsun Huang, *Integrating Chinese Buddhism: A study of Yongming Yanshou's Guanxin Xuanshu*, pg. 57. Additionally, John McRae's discussion on proto-Chan discusses the foundational text attributed to Bodhidharma, the *Treatise on the Two Entrances and the Four Practices* (*Putidamo dashi luebian daseng rudaosixing guan* 菩提達磨大師略辯大乘入道四行觀 Xuzang vol. 63, no. 1217). He acknowledges the fact that the authorship of this text is questionable, as is the historicity of Bodhidharma himself, but it was widely accepted by Bodhidharma's supposed successors, genuine or claimed, as the embodiment of his teachings. (McRae, *Seeing through Zen*, pg. 28) He summarizes the essence of the *Treatise*—and arguably the foundation of Chan theory that was to develop afterward—as the equation of the mind to the Buddha-nature, the latent potential for enlightenment that is present in all beings. Despite its perfect and absolute nature, beings do not perceive it due to erroneous conceptualization and understanding; therefore, enlightenment is attained by eradicating the obstacles that stand in the way of perceiving it. (McRae, *Seeing through Zen*, pg. 29)

⁷ A chronological list of these hagiographies can be found in the appendix.

subsumed into the newly established Song dynasty. Since this section is not long, a translation of the text as follows.

Biography of Yanshou of Yongming Monastery in Qiantang of the Song dynasty

Shi Yanshou's lay surname was Wang, and he was originally from the region of Qiantang. There was a state established in the regions of Zhedong and Zhexi; at the time, he served as the chief official responsible for the appointment of the military. His personality was simple and straightforward, and he never spoke falsely. He recited the *Lotus Sutra* in its entirety, his voice never wavering. Yanshou followed the flourishing teachings of Master Can of Cuiyan and left his wife, shaved his beard, and ascended the precept platform. Once, he practiced meditation on Tianzhu Mountain in the Tiantai mountains for ninety days, and quails made nests in his robes. Then, Chan Master (De)Shao confirmed his attainment. He then moved to Xuedou Mountain, and other than teaching the people, he sat before the waterfall and mocked the silence of Chan. He did not wear fancy clothes and cloth robes lasted throughout his years; he did not eat food that was flavored heavily and broke fasts at midday with wild vegetables. The ruler of the state of Hannan [Wuyue] of the Qian clan respected him immensely and requested Yanshou to hold Mahāyāna repentance ceremonies, set free animals which had been rescued. His care [for living creatures] was vast and he was kind and compassionate; if approached with inappropriate matters, his countenance remained unmoved. He recited the *Lotus Sutra* more than thirteen thousand times. He encouraged the faithful to build stupas and sacred images; he had no savings of his own and lived simply. He wrote various texts such as the *Anthology on the Common End of Myriad Good Deeds* and the *Records of the Source-mirror*, numbering in the tens of thousands of words. The king of Koryeo read his works and sent envoys bearing gifts of precept sashes woven with gold thread, purple crystals and other kinds of jewels, and basins made of gold. He passed away in the monastery during the eighth year of the Kaibao era (975), having lived for seventy-two years and been ordained for thirty-seven. He was buried at Daci Mountain, where a wooded pavilion was built in his honor.⁸

At first glance, it is significant that Zanning refers to Yanshou as hailing from the Song, not his native kingdom of Wuyue: “Biography of Yanshou of Yongming Monastery in Qiantang of the Song dynasty.”⁹ As Albert Welter points out in his study of Yanshou and the

⁸ 宋錢塘永明寺延壽傳

釋延壽。姓王。本錢塘人也。兩浙有國。時為吏督納軍須。其性純直，口無二言。誦徹法華經聲不輟響。屬翠巖參公盛化。壽捨妻孥削染登戒。嘗於台嶺天柱峯九旬習定。有鳥類尺鷃巢棲于衣襦中。乃得韶禪師決擇所見。遷遁于雪竇山。除誨人外，瀑布前坐諷禪默；衣無繒纈，布襦卒歲。食無重味，野蔬斷中。漢南國王錢氏最所欽尚。請壽行方等懺贖物類放生汎愛慈柔。或非理相干顏貌不動。誦法華計一萬三千許部。多勵信人營造塔像。自無貯畜雅好詩道。著萬善同歸宗鏡等錄數千萬言。高麗國王覽其錄。遣使遺金線織成袈裟紫水精數珠金澡罐等。以開寶八年乙亥終于住寺。春秋七十二。法臘三十七。葬于大慈山。樹亭誌焉。（Taisho vol. 50, no. 2061, pg. 887, lines a29–b16.）

⁹ 宋錢塘永明延壽傳, Taishō vol. 50, no. 2061, pg. 887, line a29.

conception of Chan identity, the fact that Zanning took care to make this distinction, inaccurate as it may have been, indicates some degree of political motivation to annex Wuyue and everything that had to do with it under the new Song dynasty.¹⁰ This is also reflected in the fact that Zanning lists Tiantai Deshao 天台德韶 (891–972)¹¹ as being from the Song as well, despite the fact that he was from Wuyue and was reputed to have certified Yanshou’s attainment – “Biography of Deshao of Tiantai Mountain of the Song dynasty.”¹² As Welter also notes, it is significant that Zanning does not consider Yanshou to be a Chan master, and places him in the category of “those who generate blessings.”¹³ In his description of Yanshou, Zanning puts a significant emphasis on practices that are more general in nature and cannot be easily associated with sectarian views, such as conducting repentance ceremonies, exhorting people to construct stupas and images of the Buddha, and composing the *Anthology on the Common End of Myriad Good Deeds* (*Wanshan Tonggui Ji* 萬善同歸集).¹⁴ In addition, while Zanning acknowledges the existence of an important interaction between Yanshou and Deshao which resulted in the certification of Yanshou’s spiritual attainment, he does not connect the two monks with the transmission of any teaching. This stands in contrast to Zanning’s account of Deshao, as well as later accounts of Yanshou: in his biography of Deshao, not only does Zanning classify Deshao as one of “those who practiced Chan,” Deshao’s receiving the teaching from Fayen is also an important component of the narrative: “Later, he saw Chan Master Fayen of Linchuan, and

¹⁰ Albert Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 16.

¹¹ Deshao most likely had “Tiantai” appended to his name because he dwelt at Tiantai Mountain during his life, just as Yanshou had “Yongming” appended to his because he had served as the abbot of Yongming Monastery in the later years of his life.

¹² 宋天台山德韶傳, Taishō vol. 50, no. 2061, pg. 786, line a20.

¹³ *Xingfu pian* 興福篇

¹⁴ Taishō vol. 50, no. 2061, pg. 887, lines b8–12.

deeply understood the essence of the mind. He then inherited the teaching from him.”¹⁵ Later hagiographies of Yanshou specifically mention him receiving the transmission of the teaching from Deshao, which is the basis for tracing Yanshou to the Fayan lineage. As for Zanning, on the other hand, not only does he exclude this sequence of events completely, it can even be argued that he tries to portray Yanshou as having tendencies that ran counter to Chan: “Other than teaching the people, before the waterfall he would sit, ridiculing the silence of Chan[...].”¹⁶ From this portrayal of Yanshou, Zanning’s depiction of Yanshou as a “generator of blessings” shows his intent to exclude him from any Chan lineage narratives and keep him as neutral as possible in terms of sectarian affiliation. This image of Yanshou, though the earliest, was later resolutely overtaken by the image of Yanshou as Chan master, as can be observed in the following biographies.

The next major hagiography that makes mention of Yanshou is Daoyuan’s 道原 (dates of birth and death unknown) *Transmission of the Lamp* (*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄) written in 1004. Unlike the *Records of High Sanghans of the Song*, the *Transmission of the Lamp* was written with the explicit purpose of delineating the independent identity of different Chan lineages in Song Buddhism.¹⁷ This entry can be contrasted with Zanning’s hagiography of Yanshou in multiple aspects. For one, Daoyuan has clear intentions of identifying Yanshou as a Chan monk, unambiguously referring to him as “Chan Master Yanshou.” He also includes the transmission of the Chan lineage in his hagiographic narrative. The entry begins with the description: “[Yanshou was] the 10th generation to receive the teaching of Chan Master Xingsi; he received transmission of the Dharma from

¹⁵ 後見臨川法眼禪師。重了心要。遂承嗣焉。Taishō vol. 50, no. 2061, pg. 789, lines a23–24.

¹⁶ 除誨人外瀑布前坐諷禪默。Taishō vol. 50, no. 2061, pg. 887, lines b6–7.

¹⁷ Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 19.

former National Master Deshao of Tiantai Mountain.”¹⁸ Unlike Zanning, who only provides a brief mention of Deshao’s meeting with Yanshou and then carries on with his narrative, Daoyuan explicitly states that Deshao transmitted a teaching to Yanshou: “Having gone to inquire after National Master Deshao, as soon as Deshao saw him, Deshao deeply respected his abilities, secretly transmitting to him the mysterious teaching.”¹⁹ Daoyuan, like Zanning, also acknowledges the significance of general Buddhist practice in Yanshou’s religious career, listing such deeds as transmitting the bodhisattva precepts, offering food to ghosts and spirits at night and liberating animals during the day, and reciting the *Lotus Sutra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮花經) regularly.²⁰ However, at the same time, unlike Zanning’s brief third-person narrative devoid of direct quotations, Daoyuan’s account of Yanshou includes extensive dialogues between Yanshou and various anonymous disciples. This new hagiographical format reflects the formulation of a new kind of literature within the developing Chan tradition. The purpose of literature like the *Transmission of the Lamp* was to create an account of Chan history that was based on lineage narratives. These narratives used the description of concrete experiences of Chan monks to promote the independent identity of specific lineages and their primacy in the history of Chan Buddhism.²¹

The next hagiography, from the *Biographies of the Monks of the Chan Tradition* (*Chanlin sengbao zhuan* 禪林僧寶傳), was written in the first years of the Song dynasty, can be dated to 1119–1120, and is attributed to the monk Huihong 惠洪 (1071–1128). Like Daoyuan’s *Transmission of the Lamp*, Huihong also includes dialogues between Yanshou

¹⁸ 行思禪師第十世 前天台德韶國師法嗣, Taishō vol. 51, no. 2076, pg. 421, lines c6–7.

¹⁹ 暨謁韶師一見而深器之密授玄旨。 Taishō vol. 51, no. 2076, pg. 421, line c17.

²⁰ T51n2076_p422a10–14.

²¹ Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 19.

and his disciples; in contrast to Daoyuan's hagiography, the dialogues contained in this particular account are very detailed and not found in contemporaneous sources. They are found in later sources; therefore, Huihong's work doubtless served as a source for later hagiographies written in the Yuan (1279–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing dynasties. Keeping with the nature of Huihong's work as a compilation of biographies of figures from the Chan tradition, he also portrays Yanshou as a Chan master, departing from Zanning's portrayal of Yanshou. However, unlike Daoyuan, Huihong does not make any mention of a lineage that connects Yanshou to Fayan at all. This is a curious departure, considering the fact that Daoyuan's *Transmission of the Lamp*, which predates Huihong's work, already includes a lineage narrative that traces a connection between Yanshou and the Fayan lineage. Thus we may surmise that when this work was written, a coherent lineage narrative of the Five Houses of Chan like the one presented in Daoyuan's work had yet to be definitively established, or was still in the process of being devised.

Much like Huihong and Daoyuan's works, the other hagiographic collections I have listed are all products of institutional Chan. They are homologous in numerous aspects and were all written between 1127–1256. In light of numerous similarities with some of the sources we have already considered, I will not go through each of them in detail. For our purposes, it suffices to make two observations: it is evident from the format and content of these hagiographies that by the late twelfth- to early thirteenth centuries, the development and popularity of encounter dialogues²² (*huowen* 或問) was well-established and an important component of Chan literature. For another, three centuries after Yanshou's passing

²² This genre of texts usually concerned major Chan masters and contained biographical information or records of anecdotal incidents.

in 976, the narrative that incorporated him into the Fayan lineage via his formative interaction with Tiantai Deshao was also cemented as a defining event in Yanshou's hagiography.

The last Yanshou hagiography that was written during the Song departs from the previous works discussed above in that it places the figure into a completely different category altogether—instead of being situated in the Chan tradition, he is classified as a Pure Land patriarch. In this account dated to 1268—1269 from Zhipan's 志磐 (dates unknown) *Records of the lineage of the Buddha and the Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀), written in 1268–1269, the defining features of previous hagiographies of Yanshou are retained. Yanshou's meeting with Deshao, his practice of meditation, and his general Buddhist practices of sutra recitation, repentance, and upholding precepts are all preserved. However, they are minimized to highlight the portrayal of these features in favor of elevating the importance of the Pure Land in Yanshou's life and emphasizing the superiority of its practice. For instance, while Yanshou's meeting with Deshao is still a significant event, there is no lineage narrative in this portrayal of their interaction:

He [Yanshou] further sought after National Master Shao, who enlightened him and clarified for him the essence of the mind. The Master said to him: “You have affinities with the commander [of Wuyue]. In the future, he will carry out the Buddha's work; it is a shame that I will be unable to see it.”²³

Yanshou is also described to have adhered to meditation practice and other general Buddhist practices. Simultaneously, his practice was portrayed as being motivated by the goal of attaining rebirth in the Pure Land, thus elevating the importance of Pure Land in Yanshou's worldview.

²³ 復往參韶國師發明心要。嘗謂曰汝與元師有緣。他日當大作佛事。惜吾不及見耳。Taishō vol. 42, no. 2035, pg. 264, lines c4–6.

He then ascended to Master Zhizhe's rock and made two divination lots. One read: "*Dhyana* for the rest of this life." The second read: "Recite sutras, and [practice] the myriad kinds of goodness for the sake of adorning the Pure Land." Having cleared his mind and prayed sincerely, he drew the lot for reciting sutras and practicing the myriad kinds of goodness seven times. Thus, he singlemindedly concentrated his practice on karma for the sake of the Pure Land [...] When visited by students, [he would tell them that] the mind is to be taken as the principle and enlightenment to be taken as the rule.²⁴

It should be noted that this event, which cemented the importance of Pure Land practice in Yanshou's life, is unique to this hagiography. Its inclusion in this narrative is keeping with the purpose of this account to establish Yanshou as an important Pure Land figure.

He often transmitted the bodhisattva precepts to the assembly, and taught people to give ghosts and spirits food in the night, and liberate animals during the day. All [the merit from this] was transferred to the adornment of the Pure Land.²⁵

This particular hagiography illustrates a drastic departure from the image of Yanshou as a Chan master. As Welter argues, such a divergence can be explained by the emergence of the Pure Land movement during the Song dynasty, which capitalized on Yanshou's broad range of practices to depict him in such a way that made him a model of Pure Land beliefs. This new trend created a significant contrast from Chan-influenced narratives of Yanshou's life and erased altogether his supposed receiving of the teaching from Deshao.²⁶ Instead of focusing on detailed accounts of master-student dialogue, as Chan hagiographies did, the Pure Land depiction of Yanshou concentrated on his sacred presence rather than the historical events of his life.²⁷

²⁴ 遂上智者岩作二闍一曰一生禪定。二曰誦經萬善莊嚴淨土。乃冥心精禱得誦經萬善闍。乃至七度。於是一意專修淨業 [...] 學者參問。指心為宗。以悟為則。Taishō vol. 49, no. 2035, pg. 264, lines c10–18.

²⁵ 常與眾授菩薩戒。教施鬼神食晝放生命。皆悉回向莊嚴淨土。Taishō vol. 49, no. 2035, pg. 264, lines c21–23.

²⁶ Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 27–29.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 29.

C. Interpreting Hagiographical Evidence

From the hagiographical sources considered above, we may reconstitute three prevailing images of Yanshou: Chan master, Pure Land patriarch, and generator of blessings. How can these three different representations be reconciled with each other? Historically, Yanshou has been described as belonging to the Chan tradition.²⁸ This is not an unreasonable conclusion, as it is also the most popular conception of Yanshou in hagiographical works. A complete literature review of all existent discussions on Yanshou's sectarian identity would be too broad for the purposes of this chapter. However, drawing my own conclusions, I will discuss the authoritative arguments of two recent scholars: Albert Welter and Keenan Cox, both of whom have added their own revisions to the original classification of Yanshou as Chan master. A discussion of Welter's and Cox's views, however, must be preceded by an understanding of the problematic nature behind the wholesale classification of Yanshou as Chan master. In turn, to understand why this is problematic, it is necessary to examine the fluctuating meaning of the word "Chan" and its usage throughout medieval Chinese Buddhist history. Therefore, I will first examine the sociohistorical backdrop of Yanshou's time before moving on to modern conceptions of his religious identity.

In his study of the development of Chan, Griffith Foulk takes issue with the use of the word "tradition" in the prevalent practice of referring to the Chan tradition as such, as it implies a continuity to the patterns of cultural norms, when in reality, they are both performative and transient in nature.²⁹ He argues that it would be more productive instead to regard tradition not as the unbroken and unchanging transmission of ideas, practices, and concepts, but as the reproduction of cultural norms, which acknowledges their changing and

²⁸ For instance, Huang, *Integrating Buddhism*, pg. 47.

²⁹ Foulk, *Histories of Zen*, pg. 202—203.

repetitive nature and does not assume an uninterrupted history of transmission.³⁰ Applying this discussion of tradition to the development of Chan in Buddhist history, tradition and its continuation is central to the narrative of Chan history. This is made possible by the active production of the discourse of lineage, which is based on the idea of an unbroken master-student lineage originating from the historical Buddha. The legitimization of this tradition found its basis in the repetition of particular norms and tropes that were valuable due to their connection to the past. Foulk's most applicable and general definition of the concept of Chan is "any historical phenomenon-ideas, practices, or social arrangements—that have been informed by the discourse on the special transmission of the Buddha-mind through the lineage of Bodhidharma."³¹ This idea of a lineage from Bodhidharma can be traced to the Tang monk Zongmi 宗密 (780–841), who pioneered the conception of a transmission of a multi-faceted Chan teaching that, despite its various iterations, served to bring together different people who laid claim to the lineage of Bodhidharma and to unite different interpretations of Chan under the umbrella of the single profound truth of Bodhidharma's teaching on the mind.³²

Before the Song dynasty, the denomination of "Chan" referred to the general class of meditation specialists who existed in the milieu of Tang dynasty scholastic Buddhism. After the Song dynasty, however, "Chan" became exclusively synonymous with the Bodhidharma lineage and its teaching of the ineffable Buddha-mind. Due to the new significance of lineage as the defining feature of post-Tang Chan identity, much of the Chan literature that was written during the Song dynasty repeated polemical tropes that served to solidify and

³⁰ Foulk, *Histories of Zen*, pg. 203.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 8.

³² *Ibid.*, pg. 75, 92.

conceptualize this new understanding.³³ In particular, genealogical histories and hagiographies were used as a vehicle to disseminate a new ideological discourse about Chan. This genre of literature, which was also known as lamp (transmission) records (*denglu* 燈錄), served to delineate the genealogical structure of the Chan lineage. It also created a model of practice and behavior for contemporary readers, and made use of discrete examples complete with detailed events and dialogues to illustrate the practice of transmitting the Dharma and exemplify relationships between master and student.³⁴ In light of the desire to create an overarching lineage structure, the authors of these works routinely subsumed as many figures as they possibly could, sometimes even to the point of writing in lineage connections where originally none had existed (as was the case with Yanshou). From Foulk's discussion, two conclusions can be made: first, the various works of Song dynasty Chan literature which serve as major primary sources for current understandings of Yanshou's religious background cannot be divorced from a strong sectarian intent; second, the concept of "Chan" must be used with care, as it represented different things at different times, and cannot be applied universally and uncritically in all situations at all times.

D. Contemporary Views

In terms of tying the institutional history of Chan to Yanshou's retroactively constructed sectarian identity, scholars have approached this issue in different ways. Welter's solution to the discrepancy among primary sources is to first bring to light the sectarian intent behind them, and then reveals a dimension to Yanshou that removes any hint of sectarian intent altogether. Referring to Yanshou's emphasis on the bodhisattva precepts, which is

³³ Foulk, *Histories of Zen*, pg. 236–237.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 240.

referenced in multiple hagiographies, Welter argues that instead of “generator of blessings,” “Chan master,” or “Pure Land master,” Yanshou ought to be considered “advocate of bodhisattva practice,” a label that is as far removed from sectarian intent as possible that also incorporates Yanshou into the larger framework of scholastic Tang Buddhism, in which his writing and practice were firmly entrenched.³⁵ Conceding that Yanshou presented his own meditative practice as being based in Bodhidharma’s conception of the relationship between the mind, delusion, and enlightenment, Welter concludes that Yanshou considered himself a Chan master but specifically held an understanding of Chan in terms of a commitment to the altruistic bodhisattva ideal of spiritual practice as oriented towards causing both one’s own enlightenment and the enlightenment of others.³⁶ Thus, Welter elevates the general over particular criteria in his classification, perhaps due to the fact that it is indeed difficult to categorize Yanshou according to tradition-specific criteria due to a lack of sources, conflicting portrayals in said sources, and the overt intentions of the authors or compilers. With Welter’s proposal of additional classifications, we are left with the different options of Yanshou as generator of blessings, as Chan master, as Pure Land master, and as advocate of bodhisattva practice. Welter’s description of Yanshou, while most certainly accurate, can be overly broad for our purposes. In his effort to avoid the sectarian baggage that is present in each of the pre-existing classifications, Welter opts for a new category broad enough that it cannot be claimed within Chinese Buddhism due to the various manifestations of sects and lineages within Mahāyāna Buddhism. In so doing, however, the specificity of Yanshou’s identity, as well as the significant lack of his own portrayal of a specific sectarian

³⁵ Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 34.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 35.

affiliation,³⁷ are no longer prioritized. Given the overarching dominance and spread of Mahāyāna concepts of the bodhisattva ideal, I suggest that this depiction of Yanshou as an advocate of bodhisattva practice ultimately does not reflect Yanshou's conceptions and views on meditative practice with enough accuracy.

Keenan Cox also recognizes the sectarian nature of Yanshou's hagiographical classification as Chan master. However, Cox's solution to the disconnect between hagiographical narrative and Yanshou's portrayal of himself is not to create a new rubric into which Yanshou could fit, but to question the definition of Chan and redefine the term, so that Yanshou can still be accurately be described as a Chan master. He argues that for Yanshou specifically, Chan was completely integrated into Chinese Buddhist scriptural traditions such as Tiantai and Huayan, as opposed to the image of the Chan monk popularized in flame history literature who prioritized the value of experiential enlightenment and the practice that leads to it over the usage of scripture.³⁸ Therefore, Yanshou did not see himself as belonging to a "tradition" with a separate institutional identity based on a lineage-based teaching that emphasized insight over scripture. His conception of Chan was based directly upon the unilateral teaching of the relationship between enlightenment and the mind and had a firm foundation in scriptural tradition.³⁹ By this definition, uncritical identification of Yanshou as

³⁷ In the *Records*, Yanshou mentions neither the Fayen lineage, which he was supposedly a part of, nor Qingliang Wenyi, the purported founder of that lineage, even in his concluding section where he provides a long list of historical and contemporary lineages. (Cox, *The Axiom of the One-mind*, pg. 30) Throughout the records, Yanshou's references to himself are minimal and when he does refer to himself, it is usually in the context of his role in transmitting the teaching of the mind for the benefit of future generations, and he does not make any mention of himself belonging to any lineage, Fayen or otherwise. Cox takes this to conclude that Yanshou himself did not identify as a member of the Fayen lineage or any other lineage at all. (Cox, *The Axiom of the One-mind*, pg. 31).

³⁸ Cox, *The Axiom of the One-mind*, pg. iii.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 12.

a Chan master erroneously attributes to his worldview a nonexistent divide between scriptural study and meditational practice.⁴⁰

Welter's views on the classification of Yanshou as Chan master and his reluctance to completely conflate the concept of Chan with Tang scholastic Buddhism are a result of his reliance upon Chan hagiography's idealized representation of their tradition. In other words, he still ascribes to the notion of "Chan" certain qualities that make it notably different from Tang scholastic Buddhism, while in practice, they were not necessarily very distinct. However, if like Cox argues, the definition of Chan for Yanshou himself during his time is considered to have been fluid, and Chan is also considered to be a part of Tang Buddhist scholasticism, then the identification of Yanshou as a Chan master ceases to be problematic. However, this portrayal requires a definition of Chan that is different from the idealized image painted in Chan literature and anthologies. In sum, if one intends to describe Yanshou as a Chan master, this portrayal must be made in the terms which he understood Chan. It is also necessary to acknowledge the sectarian intention of later literature and the frequently inaccurate nature of their discourse. These two ideas are not mutually exclusive but recognizing them simultaneously requires the understanding that the idea of Chan meant different things to Yanshou and to the Song authors of Chan hagiographies.

E. Conclusion

To conclude, it is difficult to pin down Yanshou's classification in Buddhism to a singular aspect due to the retroactive nature of the act of labeling. The definitions of contemporary characterizations were formed after the fact, frequently with political

⁴⁰ Cox, *The Axiom of the One-mind*, pg. 11.

ambitions, and are not always a completely accurate depiction of history. Even an ostensibly loose identification of Yanshou as Chan master requires a nuanced understanding and awareness of the changing definitions of the concept of Chan throughout Chinese Buddhist history.⁴¹ In light of the fluid nature of Chan before the Song dynasty as demonstrated by the example of Yanshou, I propose that the concept of Chan should be adapted to individual figures and objects of study. At the very least, it is necessary to dismantle a static, homogenous understanding of Chan because it meant different things at different times, and to a certain extent, meant different things for different people, even if those people may have lived in contemporaneous time periods. In other words, whenever the term “Chan” is used in the process of reconstructing the identity of a Buddhist figure, it is necessary to ask and define what Chan meant for them personally, and what Chan meant for their time period in particular. In the next chapter, I will address in detail the question of what exactly did “Chan” mean for Yanshou.

⁴¹ For instance, in his work on Chan and Zen historiography, John McRae argues that instead of a linear monolithic description of Chan where periodization occurs on the basis of lineages, a history of Chan should be written that emphasizes phases of religious activity defined by its particular human representatives, their geographical location and the times that they were active, and the texts that describe their activities and express their teachings. (McRae, *Seeing through Zen*, pg. 12)

In Bernard Faure’s volume on the same topic, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, Faure argues that it is necessary to question the use of tradition in the understanding of Chan. Instead of the master-student narrative that is so prevalent in Chan historical narrative, which controls the proliferation of discourse reinforces a false impression of linearity, Chan was always a plural, composite structure of diverse and conflicting attitudes that arose from contact of various worldviews, practices, and institutions. (Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, pg. 119) He acknowledges that periodization is still required for clear historical understanding and that the narrative structure and all its images cannot and need not be eliminated. However, it is important to problematize the narrative and the metaphorical devices that are used in its presentation, and to recognize its lack of continuity and homogenizing attempts to structure its own multiplicity. (Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, pg. 10, 122)

III. Chapter 2: Yongming Yanshou's Chan Buddhism

A. Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, I argue that the conception of Chan should be adapted to individual figures and its definition applied specifically to their perspectives. Here, I will propose a definition of “Chan” for Yanshou and how it was reflected in the *Records of the Source-Mirror* (*Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄). I propose that Yanshou's Chan Buddhism includes such characteristics as emphasis on meditative practice, a lineage associated with Bodhidharma⁴² (*puti damo* 菩提達摩), scholastic writing, and antinomianism. Before elaborating on these points in detail, I will first briefly discuss the background, content, and reception of the *Records*, Yanshou's most significant composition and the primary source I will be using for much of this endeavor.

B. The Records

The *Records* is a text of enormous proportions, a hundred fascicles in length. Its compilation began in 961. The text is based on the teaching of the mind as presented by the Buddha and the legendary Bodhidharma, where the mind itself is said to be the foundation for both transcendental and mundane phenomena, *samsāra* and enlightenment. Drawing from different strands of Buddhist thought based on various scriptures such as the *Avatamsaka*⁴³ (*Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經), the *Lotus*⁴⁴ (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經), and the *Nirvāṇa*⁴⁵ (*Foshuo da buo niepan jing* 佛說大般泥洹經), Yanshou writes

⁴² A legendary Indian figure (c. 5th–6th centuries CE) said to be 28th in a direct line of transmission of an esoteric teaching from the Buddha, who purportedly traveled to China and continued to pass down this teaching there.

⁴³ Taishō vol. 10 no. 279.

⁴⁴ Taishō vol. 9 no. 262.

⁴⁵ Taishō vol. 12 no. 376.

extensively about his interpretations and ideas about the teaching of the nature of the mind. He equates the mind to an ultimate value⁴⁶, the essence of enlightenment, and then compares it to a mirror that reflects all phenomena. For instance, after listing quotations from various scriptures and commentaries, including the *Awakening of Faith*⁴⁷ (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論), the *Buddhabhumi Sūtra*⁴⁸ (*Foshuo fodi jing* 佛說佛地經), and the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, all of which provide precedent for the comparison of the mind being compared to a mirror, Yanshou summarizes his own view:

Presently, taking the mind as the mirror, it may be used to reflect the *dharmadhātu*. Furthermore, a bright mirror only reflects the form [of phenomena] and not their essence; it only reflects arising and ceasing, and not that which does not arise; it only reflects the worldly, and not that which transcends the world. It reflects only that which has form, and does not reflect that which is formless. It is like the mirror of the mind which completely knows and embraces the ground of the self-nature, and entirely enters and penetrates the source of the mind. It pervades thoroughly that which does not arise, and extensively understands the true and the worldly. It examines both existence and non-existence, and penetrates both the hidden and the manifest. The differences in superior and inferior qualities are briefly compiled in a few analogies.⁴⁹

Another quote that sums up the logic of the mind and mirror comparison is as follows:

Question: This principle, which is like a mirror, reflects extensively, and the myriad teachings all return to it. Is this the meaning of the mirror?

Answer: Whether they are worldly or transcendent, whether they are the same or different in meaning, all of them are merely reflections within the mirror. There is

⁴⁶ As discussed in the *Awakening of Faith*, a text attributed to the Indian figure Aśvagoṣa that addresses the relationship between the unenlightened sentient being and enlightenment, the mind is associated with the state of Buddhahood and the Buddha's enlightenment. Since it is equated with enlightenment, the mind in its purest state is viewed as both transcendental and immanent. Given the Mahāyāna axiom that all beings are capable of becoming Buddhas, *tathāgatagarbha* thought endeavors to explain this ultimate reality and its relationship to the phenomenal world, as well as its relation to and how it is present within the unenlightened sentient being.

⁴⁷ Taishō vol. 32 no. 1666.

⁴⁸ Taishō vol. 16 no. 680.

⁴⁹ 今以心為鏡，可以照法界。又明鏡只照其形，不照其心；只照生滅，不照無生。但照世間，不照出世；有形方照，無形不照。且如心鏡，洞該性地，鑒徹心原；遍了無生，廣明真俗；有無俱察，隱顯咸通；優劣懸殊，略齊少喻。 Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 473 lines a25–29.

only a singular mirror which reaches throughout the ten directions in its perfection. Outside the mirror, there are no phenomena; both concepts of the other and the self disappear. The virtuous ones of old said: “If it is said that the nature of the mind of living beings is the same as the nature of the mind of all Buddhas, this belongs to the distinct teaching.” The nature of the mind of the perfect teaching is a single tranquil ray of light and is without concepts of that and this. It exhausts the bounds of the Buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time, and the plane of existence of living beings. It forms a single great perfect mirror, but it is merely a single mirror, and has not the concepts of sameness or difference. The Buddha and living beings are merely reflections within this single mirror.⁵⁰

In the text, Yanshou first provides justification for singling out the teaching of the mind and elevating it as the most important teaching in the entire canon. He then uses the massive question and answer segment which follows and lasts for the entirety of the text to address different interpretations of enlightenment, Buddhahood, the nature of phenomena, and any possibly conflicting aspects thereof:

As for the teaching, which illuminates all myriad phenomena, its ultimate principle is illusory and mysterious—it rejects language of existence and nonexistence, and eradicates the inherent existence of the self and of others. If there is not a single phenomenon that possesses an inherent existence, then how can a principle be established?⁵¹

The essence of enlightenment does not change; it is only that provisional methods of referring to it are different. Since the common and the sagely are equal, why is it that living beings are not aware of it? If it is said that there is no confusion, then why does the teaching speak of the existence of confusion and enlightenment?⁵²

As for the idea that all phenomena are of the nature that they are created by the mind alone, how is it that there are the concepts of falseness and reality; the ideas of existence and non-existence/emptiness; the gates of the mundane and ultimate truths;

⁵⁰ 問：宗鏡廣照，萬法同歸。是此鏡義不？答：若凡若聖，說異說同，皆是鏡中之影像。此唯一鏡，圓極十方；鏡外無法，被我俱絕。古德云：「若言眾生心性，同諸佛心性者，別教也。」圓教心性，是一寂光，無被無此；極十方三世佛，及眾生邊際。成一大圓鏡，但是一鏡，無有同異也。佛及眾生，一鏡上像耳。 Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 473 lines c14–20.

⁵¹ 夫教明一切萬法，至理虛玄，非有無之詮絕自他之性。若無一法自體。云何立宗。 Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 428 lines a19–21.

⁵² 問：覺體不遷，假名有異。凡聖既等，眾生何不覺知？若言不迷，教中云何說有迷悟？ Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 445 lines a8–10.

and the paths of the nature of phenomena and the characteristics of phenomena, which both lead to the same destination?⁵³

These examples show the different ways that the interlocutor expresses doubt at the possibility of reconciling the nature of enlightenment with the nature of phenomena, if the two are ontologically identical to each other. In the answers, Yanshou uses the teaching of the One-mind as an overarching framework to tie together different elements in the vast spectrum of Buddhist doctrine. Most of the format of the *Records* follows a question and answer dialogue with questions similar to those listed above, where a hypothetical interlocutor poses questions or rebuttals, to which Yanshou provides answers or defenses of his argument. It is assumed that the insertion of an interlocutor is a rhetorical device because of the lack of contextual setting and narrative. The answers form the bulk of the text, but the questions raised in the text are equally significant in that they reflect possible questions or issues that might have been important enough at the time that Yanshou found it necessary to address them or provide the necessary justification.

Yanshou establishes the doctrine of the mind as the *zong* 宗, or the principle, of the Buddhist teaching. In various works of scholarship on Yanshou and the *Records*, there have been various renderings of this term, including “implicit principle,” “underlying principle,” and axiom.⁵⁴ Essentially, Yanshou’s usage of the notion to refer to the teaching of the mind serves to emphasize its importance; as can be seen from different renderings of *zong* mentioned above, he views this teaching as the underlying foundation to Buddhist doctrine in its entirety. As Welter eloquently frames it, Yanshou’s interpretation of *zong* is best

⁵³ 問：一切萬法皆唯識性者，云何有虛有實，立色立空，真俗二諦之門，性相雙通之道？ Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 477 lines b20–22.

⁵⁴ Welter *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*; Huang, *Integrating Buddhism*; and Cox, *The Axiom of the One-mind*.

understood as “...the underlying theme, message, or teaching of a text...the underlying doctrine or principle of all Buddhist teaching and the primary indicator of the penultimate Buddhist teaching or school.”⁵⁵ This can be seen in the following passages from the first fascicle:

Now, I shall illuminate the universal teachings and the separate teachings in detail, and extensively discuss that which is different and the same; investigate the source of the single teaching, and look for the beginning and the end of all conditions. Thus it can be called the source-mirror, which can be used to reflect the mysterious and the subtle. Not a single phenomenon escapes its appearance, and the thousand differences meet expansively. Thus, I have woven together the extensive meanings and summarized the essential texts; having laid them out in a hundred fascicles, it is encompassed within the One-mind. With it, the incomprehensible ocean of the teachings can be placed in the palm, perfect and illuminated in thought after thought; the inexhaustible true principle can be perceived with one's own eyes, and tallies in thought after thought. It is as if one has a divine pearl in hand, and so can forever cease one's seeking; it is just as the bodhi tree extends its shade, and traces of all other shadows disappear.⁵⁶

There is not a single gate that does not lead to this Way, and there is surely not a single teaching that does not tally with this principle. Enlightened sovereigns [Buddhas] of the past attained Buddhahood because of it; great knights of the future shall attain the true by relying on it. Thus, what gate of Dharma can't it open, what principle can't it manifest?⁵⁷

Here, Yanshou describes the superiority of the *zong* in the context of other Buddhist doctrines, as well as how it subsumes and encompasses all other teachings and transcends sectarian boundaries.

⁵⁵ Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 50.

⁵⁶ 今則細明總別，廣辯異同；研一法之根元，搜諸緣之本末，則可稱宗鏡，以鑒幽微；無一法以逃形，則千差而普會。遂則編羅廣義，撮略要文；鋪舒於百卷之中，卷攝在一心之內。能使難思教海，指掌而念念圓明；無盡真宗，目覩而心心契合。若神珠在手，永息馳求；猶覺樹垂陰，全消影跡。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 416 lines b28–c8. For another translation, see Welter pg. 235–236.

⁵⁷ 未有一門匪通斯道，必無一法不契此宗。過去覺王，因茲成佛；未來大士。仗此證真。則何一法門而不開？何一義理而不現？Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg 417 lines a9–12. For another translation, see Welter pg. 239.

Since Yanshou argues that the principle of the mind is the overarching source of coherence in Buddhist doctrine, as has been discussed previously, the general consensus among scholars is that Yanshou wrote the *Records* with the aim of unifying the teaching. While the unification of doctrine is the predominant theme of the *Records*, scholars have presented different explanations for his motivations. Some argue that Yanshou was moved to create a larger unifying framework for Buddhism because of a strong sense of crisis from his surroundings. This perceived threat, whether real or imagined, was sufficient motivation for the *Records'* composition. Juhn Ahn's study of the development and rising importance of Chan literature in the Northern Song dynasty provides some historical context for the text's composition. He argues that there was a drastic change in perception of the value of writing and reading in the Chan tradition due to a crisis in textual authority in the Chan Buddhist community—although there was an abundance of different styles of Chan, there was a lack of a unifying vision that could bring them together in a coherent manner.⁵⁸

In their studies of Yanshou's writings, both Chen Quanxin and Huang Yi-hsun provide context for the development of the Buddhist master's discourse by discussing the political and cultural background of his time. Both are of the opinion that the overarching motivation in his writing was to unify the teaching due to factors in his surrounding environment. In support of this argument, Chen cites the general social and political unrest in the regions surrounding the kingdom of Wuyue, as well as fervent conflict along factional divides within Buddhism. While Wuyue itself was relatively peaceful and its rulers had a history of a patron-sponsor relationship with the Buddhist institution, surrounding states were almost constantly at war, and it was possible that this situation led Yanshou to reflect on the

⁵⁸ Ahn, "Who has the Last Word in Chan?", pg. 28.

survival of Buddhist doctrine.⁵⁹ In the *Records*, while Yanshou does not name individuals or detail specific disputes, he alludes to a degree of contention on multiple occasions:

Having attained the principle, one immediately enters the ranks of the patriarchs; who would [further] debate the merits of sudden and gradual enlightenment?⁶⁰ Having seen one's inherent nature, one attains perfect penetration in that very moment; how can grades of superiority and inferiority be labeled? In this way, how could there be any conflict?⁶¹

When one personally attains the plane of perfect brilliance and enters this one Dharma where all is equal, what Dharma is there that could be considered the teaching to be left behind? What Dharma is there that could be considered a lineage to be valued? What Dharma is there that could be considered sudden enlightenment to be desired? What Dharma could be considered gradual enlightenment to be denied?⁶²

Like Chen, Huang also views Yanshou as a “syncretist” who was moved to synthesize different components of Buddhist teaching due to a need for a comprehensive doctrinal superstructure for the purpose of combining and preserving the remnants of the Buddhist persecution in the later years of the Tang dynasty.⁶³

A compelling counterargument to the portrayal of Yanshou as “syncretist” can be found in Cox's work on Yanshou, which I cited in the previous chapter for his contributions towards a more nuanced picture of Yanshou's religious classification. In the same way that it is erroneous to view Yanshou as a member of the Fayuan lineage due to the posthumous nature of this categorization and the misleading picture it creates of Yanshou's own religious views, the idea that Yanshou was attempting to bring together separate components of

⁵⁹ Chen, *Yongmin Yanshou yuanrongguan yanjiu*, pg. 36.

⁶⁰ Here, Yanshou's mention of the dichotomy of sudden and gradual enlightenment is a reference to the conflict of discourse between the purported Northern and Southern traditions of Chan which were said to respectively champion the teaching of gradual enlightenment, in which enlightenment is a gradual process that requires specific practices, and the teaching of sudden enlightenment, in which enlightenment is instantaneous and is not completely dependent on practice.

⁶¹ 得旨即入祖位，誰論頓漸之門？見性現證圓通，豈標前後之位？若如是者，何有相違？ Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 418 lines a26–28. For another translation, see Welter pg. 246–247.

⁶² 當此親證圓明之際，入斯一法平等之時，又有何法是教而可離？何法是祖而可重？何法是頓而可取？何法是漸而可非？ Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 419 lines c13–15. For another translation, see Welter pg. 262.

⁶³ Huang, *Integrated Buddhism*, pg. 9–10.

Buddhism reinforces the retroactive perception that there was a discrete movement of the Chan tradition that was distinct from other teachings.⁶⁴ In other words, “Chan” for Yanshou cannot be viewed as a separate disembodied entity that existed apart from other doctrines, and thus to portray him as a syncretist would be inaccurate. Cox’s rebuttal against the “syncretist” narrative indeed provides an added nuance to the understanding of Yanshou. However, Yanshou’s conciliatory undertones when discussing contemporary discourse are still significant. While there is no way of ascertaining it, we can entertain the possibility that just because Yanshou did not perceive the ideas that he wrote about as fundamentally opposed to each other does not mean that he was not writing with an intent to provide a new synthetic framework due to external circumstances.

Another factor that may have shaped Yanshou’s composition of the *Records* was the influence of the figure Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780–841), who identified himself as a member of the Heze 荷澤 lineage of Chan. Zongmi was posthumously recognized as the fifth patriarch in the Huayan tradition, writing extensively on both Chan and Huayan doctrine. As Alan Cox and Jeffery Lyle Broughton argue, rather than viewing Yanshou as part of the lineage he was later portrayed to have belonged to, it is more accurate to view him in terms of his intellectual heritage that connected him to Zongmi, for they shared certain similarities—both were erroneously identified with retroactively envisioned lineages or traditions, and due to their scholastic tendencies, were sidelined from conventional Chan lineages.⁶⁵ In terms of Zongmi’s intellectual influence on Yanshou, Broughton argues in his study of Zongmi’s writing on Chan that as an intellectual endeavor, it is very likely that the

⁶⁴ Cox, *The Axiom of the One-mind*, pg. 3.

⁶⁵ Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pg. 45.

Records is the successor to Zongmi's *Chan Canon* (*Chanyuan zhuquanji* 禪源諸詮集), a herculean overview and hermeneutical ranking of different contemporary Chan teachings. Although the *Chan Canon* is no longer extant, it is still possible to obtain an idea of its discourse by reading its preface, the *Chan Prolegomenon* (*Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* 禪源諸詮集都序).⁶⁶ Zongmi and Yanshou differ perhaps in that the latter only presents himself as a follower of Bodhidharma Chan and does not explicitly rank Buddhist doctrines relative to each other. However, the two figures shared the basic goal of creating an inclusive framework to understand the Buddhist religious landscape of their time, so much so that Yanshou could be portrayed as “a conservator of the legacy of Chan inclusiveness found in Zongmi's *Chan Prolegomenon*.”⁶⁷ Broughton's argument for a direct connection between the *Records* and the *Chan Canon* suffers from the fact that the latter source is no longer extant and as a result, it cannot be compared to the former. However, he still argues on the basis of the *Chan Prolegomenon* that insofar as the equivalence that the *Records* draws between Chan and doctrinal teachings, the emphasis it places on Chan as taught by Bodhidharma, and its discussion of sources by condensing them into their main points, it is a continuation of the *Chan canon*. In addition to sharing a similar structure and proportional length, the *Records* emulates the *Chan Canon*'s literary style and borrows terms, phrases, and quotes from it as well.⁶⁸

As for the reception of the *Records* after its publication, the text was first published during the opening years of the Song dynasty and reissued about a century later. As Welter notes, the *Records* was not well known in the years after its initial publication and only rose

⁶⁶ Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pg. 22–23, 26.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 24.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 24–25.

to prominence upon its second publication. There were two reasons for this: first, its association with the kingdom of Wuyue, Yanshou's place of origin, gave it a certain stigma as the product of a region that was politically opposed to the Song state. Even after Wuyue was subsumed into the Song in 976, Song leaders still tried to minimize their association with anything perceived to be connected to the former region. Second, state-sponsored and literati-supported Buddhist textual production at the time emphasized the "lamp records" (*denglu* 燈錄) style of Chan literature of the early tenth- and eleventh-centuries that served as a foundation for Chan identity. Lamp records⁶⁹ created a framework of ancestral and lineal connections through the documentation of Chan masters throughout history and organized them according to the lineal factions that they were affiliated with.⁷⁰ Both the its association with Wuyue along with its particular style, which stood in contrast to contemporary Chan literature, contributed the text's initial obscurity during the early Song dynasty. However, by the time it was reissued in 1091, originally hostile perceptions of Wuyue had faded, and the *Records* came to be recognized for its contributions to scholastic Buddhism. By the later Song, its influence extended widely throughout both Buddhist and literati spheres.⁷¹ In general, Yanshou's efforts to write about Chan doctrine side by side with scholastic Buddhist teaching was of significant impact on East Asian Buddhism as a whole; as Welter points out, his blending of Chan with scholastic Buddhist writing remains a large influence on Chinese

⁶⁹ Also known as "transmission of the lamp" histories, this genre is so called because of the title of its defining text, the *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp [compiled in] the Jingde [period]*, or *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 Taishō vol 51 no. 2076. (McRae, *Seeing through Zen*, pg. 48.)

⁷⁰ Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, 49.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

Chan communities, and his writing was an important source of inspiration for Korean Sŏn doctrine and the early development of Japanese Zen.⁷²

C. Lineage

Having discussed some general aspects of the *Records*, we may now proceed to a discussion on the characteristics of Yanshou's Chan Buddhism as seen in this text. The first of these is the idea of lineage. As discussed in the previous chapter, lineage came to represent a fundamental part of Chan identity, and Yanshou is typically portrayed as a member of Fayan Wenyi's lineage, an erroneous depiction that was retroactively elaborated after his death. In the *Records*, Yanshou respected contemporary lineage narratives by frequently citing and referring to prominent Chan figures. His knowledge and mentions of "standard" Chan lineage that match with extant transmission record texts shows that he had access to these texts while writing the *Records*. As Welter writes, "While championing Chan as the 'mind school' that transcended lineage, Yanshou still built his framework of Chan masters around implicit, if not always acknowledged, lineage affiliations. By admitting the standard list of Indian and Chinese patriarchs, one could argue, Yanshou had no choice but to also concede the importance of lineage associations as a major feature of Chan identity."⁷³ However, Yanshou's vision of the Chan teaching that was traced in the *Records* was depicted as having been transmitted from the Buddha via Bodhidharma. This can be observed in the text whenever Yanshou tries to support an argument by citing preexisting discourse as precedents. This is usually accomplished by referring to a specific figure in recent history by name, or by citing the Buddha, Bodhidharma, or the collective group of Chan patriarchs.⁷⁴

⁷² Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, 93–94.

⁷³ Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 127.

⁷⁴ For instance, "This is the teaching of Caoxi (Huineng) [said to be the sixth Chan patriarch] which is of a singular unique flavor and is transmitted by all the patriarchs; it is the nondual principle taught in the śāla

Here, to support his argument that the teaching of the mind has been transmitted throughout the history of Buddhist doctrine, Yanshou cites the ways in which important figures emphasized its significance:

Now, according to the words and teachings of the patriarchs and the Buddhas, I summarize them for the learners of the present. In accordance with the source of illumination of the all-perceiving nature of the mind, I establish the mind as the principle. Therefore, Śākyamuni Buddha of India said: 'The Buddha said that the mind is the principle, and that which is without a gate is the gate to the Dharma.' [attributed to Lankvatara] In this land [China], the first patriarch great master Bodhidharma said: 'With the mind, the mind is transmitted; it is not established on words or letters.' Thus, in their personal giving of the teaching from Buddha to Buddha, this very teaching is given; in the mutual transmission of the teaching from patriarch to patriarch, this very mind is transmitted. This is the establishment of the principle and the teaching according to the patriarchs and the Buddhas.⁷⁵

Thus, for Yanshou, the idea of lineages was an important part of his conception of Buddhist doctrine insofar that it was through the historical members of this lineage that the teaching about the mind's relationship to enlightenment was made possible. His emphasis on Bodhidharma as the source of the teaching of the mind did not prevent him from

forest [the place where the Buddha entered *nirvāṇa*], which is described in the sutras." (斯乃曹谿一味之旨，諸祖同傳；鵲林不二之宗，群經共述。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 416 lines b9–10; for another translation, see Welter pg. 233–234.)

Another passage reads: "It should be known clearly: in their categorization of the teachings of Chan, the patriarchs transmit the correct principle of tacit reconciliation; in his expression of the gates of the teaching, the Buddha establishes the great principle of the discourses. Thus, that which is presented by the sages of the past serves as a refuge for learners of the future. Therefore, I first list and categorize the principle and the sections. For the sake of those with doubts, questions are posed; to eradicate said doubts, answers are provided. Because of these questions, doubts receive clarification; because of these answers, wondrous understanding gradually arises. It is said that this perfect principle is difficult to believe in and difficult to understand; it is the supreme interpretation which encompasses those of the highest capabilities." (詳夫 – 祖標禪理，傳默契之正宗；佛演教門，立詮下之大旨。則前賢所稟，後學有歸。是以先列標宗章，為有疑故問，以決疑故答。因問而疑情得啟，因答而妙解潛生。謂此圓宗難信難解，是第一之說，備最上之機。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 417 lines b5–9; for another translation, see Welter pg. 240–241.)

⁷⁵ 今依祖佛言教之中，約今學人；隨見心性發明之處，立心為宗。是故西天釋迦文佛云：「佛語心為宗，無門為法門。」此土初祖達磨大師云：「以心傳心，不立文字。」則佛佛手授，授斯旨；祖祖相傳，傳此心。已上約祖佛所立宗旨。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 417 lines b27–c3. For another translation, see Welter pg. 243–244.)

acknowledging figures associated with other lineal factions, but with the implication that they were much less significant than the line of teaching that he traced back to Bodhidharma.

D. Buddhist Scholasticism

The *Records* can be read as an exemplar of Buddhist scholasticism. Early and widespread scholastic works in Chinese Buddhism included the extensive compositions of commentarial exegeses derived from scripture. More significantly, they also included classifications in which scholar-monks from such doctrinal traditions as Tiantai and Huayan endeavored to organize the enormous corpus of Buddhist texts into a coherent whole by meticulously classifying texts into distinct categories according to their content, chronological order, and perceived superiority. Texts affiliated with the author's own tradition were usually given priority in hierarchies. A prime example of such a practice is the writing of Zongmi. From the Huayan tradition, he inherited the practice of categorizing and classifying various contemporaneous teachings into a framework. In his own taxonomy of Buddhist doctrine, keeping with his strong affiliation with Chan, he analyzed and ranked in painstaking detail the teachings of different traditions of Chan, and explicitly placed his own Heze 河澤 lineage above all others.⁷⁶

Yanshou's greater endeavor throughout the *Records*—to highlight the One-mind as the single source of truth in the entire Buddhist teaching—was, much akin to earlier efforts of doctrinal classification, an attempt to synthesize canonical Buddhist materials. However, instead of using a comparative ranking of different teachings, Yanshou minimized doctrinal differences between traditions by subsuming them under the same umbrella.

Therefore, as for the same principle of the patriarchs and the Buddhas and the mysterious refuges of the virtuous sages, though they differ in name, their substance

⁷⁶ Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 130.

is identical; though the conditions [of their coming into being] are separate, they are single in nature. Prajñā speaks only of nonduality; the *Lotus Sūtra* speaks only of the One Vehicle; for the layman Vimalakīrti, all places are the site of enlightenment; the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* returns all to the secret treasury; the Tiantai tradition concentrates solely on the three contemplations; the Jiangxi tradition⁷⁷ raises the concept of the complete reality of the substance; Mazu argued that the [enlightenment of the] Buddha is identical to the mind; Heze⁷⁸ pointed directly to the proper principles. Furthermore, there are two interpretations of the teaching: the manifest interpretation and the esoteric interpretation. As for the manifest interpretation, examples are the *Laṅkā Sūtra* and the *Great Vehicle Sūtra of the Densely Adorned [Pure Land]* and the discourses on the *Awakening of Faith* and the *Theory of Consciousness-only*⁷⁹. As for the esoteric interpretation, according to the principles of different texts, different ways of referring to it are established, just as the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* takes inconceivability as its principle, the *Vajra Sūtra* takes nonabiding as its principle, the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* takes the Dharma-realm as its principle, and the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* takes the Buddha-nature as its principle. Even if a thousand different paths are established, they are all separate doctrines of the One-mind.⁸⁰

Yanshou recognizes the various traditions within Buddhism, acknowledging their importance and validity. He departs from earlier Buddhist scholastic works in that he does not rank specific doctrines and traditions relative to each other. However, he does make sure to place the general Chan concept of the One-mind above all other doctrines and reiterate time and time again their incorporation within this particular implicit truth, thus also elevating his own tradition above others:

⁷⁷ A title of Mazu Daoyi.

⁷⁸ A title of Shenhui 神會, a monk who is credited with creating the narrative of the conflict between the Northern and Southern factions of Chan

⁷⁹ All four of these texts discuss the nature of the mind and its role in the construction of the phenomenal world.

⁸⁰ 是以祖佛同旨，賢聖冥歸；雖名異而體同，乃緣分而性合。般若唯言無二，法華但說一乘，淨名無非道場，涅槃咸歸祕藏，天台專勤三觀，江西舉體全真，馬祖即佛是心，荷澤直指知見。又教有二種說：一顯了說，二祕密說。顯了說者，如楞伽密嚴等經，起信唯識等論；祕密說者，各據經宗，立其異號，如維摩詰經以不思義為宗，金剛經以無住為宗，華嚴經以法界為宗，涅槃經以佛性為宗；任立千途，皆是一心之別義。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 427 lines c3–12.

There is not a single method of practice that does not lead to this path; there is not a single Dharma that does not tally with this implicit truth.⁸¹

As Welter's observes, "Rather than bypassing the Buddhist scholastic tradition... Yanshou's strategy offered a direct key for unlocking the barriers scholasticism presented. Rather than denying the scholastic tradition, Yanshou adapted it to new circumstances, and made it accessible through a simplified code."⁸² To this end, the *Records* can be seen as both a continuation and development of Buddhist scholastic writing.

E. Tathāgatagarbha

Another feature of Yanshou's Chan Buddhism is the *tathāgatagarbha* ("tathagata-storehouse," *rulaizang* 如來藏) teaching, which can be described as an expression of an absolute, and it serves as the basic ontological foundation for Yanshou's conception of Chan doctrine and practice. His emphasis on the One-mind (*eka-citta*, *yixin* 一心) throughout the *Records* is influenced by views on meditative practice rooted in the concepts of *Yogacāra* and the *tathāgatagarbha*.

The word *tathāgatagarbha* stands for the embryo of Buddhahood that implies that all beings possess the inherent potential for enlightenment. Discourse surrounding this concept encompasses the relationship between the sentient being and enlightenment on both the physical and ontological level. It endeavors to reconcile the impurity of the unenlightened mind of sentient beings with the fact that this very mind is capable of attaining enlightenment, which is wholly and completely pure and undefiled. The fundamental source of unenlightenment is said to be ignorance:

⁸¹ 未有一門匪通斯道；必無一法不契此宗。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 417 lines a9–10. For another translation, see Welter pg. 239.

⁸² Welter, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu*, pg. 59.

Furthermore, following defilement, original enlightenment further gives rise to two attributes which are not separate from original enlightenment. [...] First, the attribute of pure wisdom [...] As for the attribute of pure wisdom, it refers to true cultivation that depends on the power of the Dharma. Because one fulfills all provisional expedients, one destroys the characteristic of compound consciousness and eradicates the characteristic of the mental continuum. The dharma-body manifests as a result of the purity of wisdom. Why is this possible? Because all characteristics of the mental consciousness are caused by ignorance, but the characteristic of ignorance is not separate from the nature of enlightenment; it is indestructible yet must be destroyed. Just as the waters of the great ocean form waves because of the wind, the attributes of the water and the wind are not separate from each other, but the water in its nature is not something that is inherently moving. If the wind stops, then the appearance of movement ceases, for its [original] nature of wetness is not affected. Just as the pure mind of the self-nature of living beings moves because of the winds of ignorance, both the mind and ignorance do not possess a physical appearance and are not separate from each other; the mind in its nature is not something that is inherently moving. If ignorance is eradicated, then the mental continuum also disappears, for its [original] nature of wisdom is not affected.⁸³

As this passage illustrates, the relationship between the three distinct yet unseparated entities of the mind, the mental functions of the mind, and ignorance are compared to the relationship between water, waves, and the wind. The water, which is compared to the mind, cannot be separated from the waves, which are compared to the mental functions of the mind. Neither the water nor the waves can be separated from the wind, compared to ignorance, which causes the waves to appear in the water. In other words, the wetness of the water is not nullified by the wind or the waves, and so the enlightened essence of the mind is not nullified by the functions of the deluded mind or the ignorance that gives rise to those functions.⁸⁴ In

⁸³ 復次，本覺隨染，分別生二種相，與彼本覺不相捨離。云何為二？一者、智淨相，二者、不思議業相。智淨相者，謂依法力熏習，如實修行，滿足方便故，破和合識相，滅相續心相，顯現法身，智淨淨故。此義云何？以一切心識之相皆是無明，無明之相不離覺性，非可壞非不可壞。如大海水因風波動，水相風相不相捨離，而水非動性，若風止滅動相則滅，濕性不壞故。如是眾生自性清淨心，因無明風動，心與無明俱無形相、不相捨離，而心非動性。若無明滅相續則滅，智性不壞故。不思議業相者，以依智淨能作一切勝妙境界，所謂無量功德之相常無斷絕，隨眾生根自然相應，種種而見，得利益故。(Taisho vol. 32 no. 1666, pg. 576 lines c5–16. For another translation, see Hakeda pg. 46.

⁸⁴ Hakeda, *The Awakening of Faith*, 46–47.

sum, *tathāgatagarbha* thought posits a dialectic relationship between the enlightened mind and the ignorance that creates all experiential phenomena, where the two are practically distinct from each other, yet mutually inclusive and dependent in the ontological sense.

In the *Records*, influences from *tathāgatagarbha* thought can readily be observed in the preface, where Yanshou sets the stage for the foundational logic of the text and presents the noetic nature of the relationship between enlightenment and the mind. In this following segment, he outlines the decline from the original enlightened mind to the state of the non-enlightenment in sentient beings due to an initial moment of ignorance and defilement.

Think about it carefully in this way: the fount of reality is placid and tranquil, and the ocean of enlightenment is pure and clear. It transcends the bounds of names and forms and is without the traces of subject and object. In the very beginning, there is unenlightenment, and suddenly the agitated mind arises. This forms the source of karmic consciousness and is the downfall of enlightenment and illumination. Due to illumination, there is reflection, and views and distinctions arise immediately. With illumination, defilement is established, and characteristics and distinctions are formed accordingly. Like images appearing on the surface of a mirror, faculties and the physical body arise suddenly.⁸⁵

This passage begins with a description of the qualities of enlightenment. Tranquil and pure, it is beyond the dualities of names and forms, subject and object. Due to the initial moment of ignorance and defilement, unenlightenment arises and forms the agitated mind. This begins a domino effect that causes the appearance of duality, defilement, and conception. Keeping with the text's primary image of comparison, if enlightenment is compared to a mirror, then the phenomena that manifest afterwards are compared to images that appear on the mirror's surface.

⁸⁵ 伏以 – 真源湛寂，覺海澄清；絕名相之端，無能所之迹。最初不覺，忽起動心；成業識之由，為覺明之咎。因明起照，見分俄興；隨照立塵，相分安布。如鏡現像，頓起根身。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 415 lines b28–c2. For another translation, see Welter pg. 277–278.

Next follows cognition, and the world with all its differences is formed. Later, due to awareness, different emotions of hatred and love come into being. From then on, the true nature is lost, and one becomes attached to characteristics and seeks false designations. One accumulates emotional defilements of obstructive attachments, and creates waves of consciousness, which follow one after the other. Having locked away true enlightenment within the dream-like night, one sinks into the three realms; having blinded the eye of wisdom in muddled paths, one creeps along within the nine abodes of existence. Thus, one becomes entangled within the suffering of karmic ties, and loses the gate to liberation. In that which has no body, one takes rebirth in a physical form; with regards to that which has no destination, one establishes a path. With regards to the cause, the twenty-five stages of existence arise; with regards to the result, the twelve modes of being are formed. This is all a result of dispositional cognition, and with it, the difference between the circumstantial causes and the direct results are formed. With regards to the unmoving state, one erroneously undergoes rebirth; with regards to the Dharma that is without the concept of liberation, bonds and fetters arise on their own, just as a silkworm seals itself in its cocoon in the spring, and just as the moth throws itself into the lamp-flame in the autumn. Due to the threads created by views of duality and erroneous cognition, one is bound to the karma of aggregates of suffering. With wings made of ignorance, grasping, and emotional love, one flings oneself onto the fiery wheel of death and rebirth. With words and sounds and words that are as long-lasting as echoes in a valley, one discusses the attractive and displeasing qualities of the four kinds of birth; with the erroneous cognitions of the mirror-like mind, the appearances of the three existences appear. Thus, cognition regarding favorability and unfavorability, like a wind, moves the ocean of enlightenment. Like water, greed, delusion, and emotional love nourish the sprouts of suffering. One only knows to grasp defilement and knows not to return to the source. Bringing forth various views that are confused and chaotic, one blinds the mind; establishing illusory forms and sounds, one reckons that they are external phenomena.⁸⁶

The description of the domino effect caused by unenlightenment continues, leading to the formation of emotions, attachments to characteristics, and consciousness. Thus the initial

⁸⁶ 次則隨想，而世界成差；後即因智，而憎愛不等。從此遺真失性，執相徇名；積滯著之情塵，結相續之識浪。鎖真覺於夢夜，沈迷三界之中；瞽智眼於昏衢，匍匐九居之內。遂乃縻業繫之苦，喪解脫之門；於無身中受身，向無趣中立趣。約依處則分二十五有，論正報則具十二類生。皆從情想根由，遂致依正差別。向不遷境上，虛受輪迴；於無脫法中，自生繫縛。如春蠶作繭，似秋蛾赴燈。以二見妄想之絲，纏苦聚之業質；用無明貪愛之翼，撲生死之火輪。用谷響言音，論四生妍醜；以妄想心鏡，現三有形儀。然後一違順想風，動搖覺海；貪癡愛水，資潤苦芽；一向徇塵，罔知反本。發狂亂之知見，翳於自心；立幻化之色聲，認為他法。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 415 lines c2–c16. For another translation, see Welter pg. 228–229.

instant of ignorance is the foundational cause of death and rebirth and all erroneous perception of phenomena.

From this, a single particle causes the formation of a distinction [in the mind] and gradually forms high peaks that touch even the Milky Way; a single drop of water creates ripples, which in the end turn into giant swells that swallow vessels. Thereafter, if one wishes to go back to the initial state and return to the source, this differs according to the sharpness of one's faculties. In the single realm of true Thusness, the doctrines of the three vehicles and the five natures⁸⁷ of living beings are developed. Some may perceive emptiness and attain fruition; some may understand conditions and enter the true; some may practice over three *asamkhyeya kalpas* and gradually be replete with the gates of practice; some may perfect their practice in a single thought and suddenly attain Buddhahood. There may be differences in attainment, but the nature is singular and is not different.⁸⁸

Reiterating the initial cause of this process and the enormity of the results, Yanshou now describes its reversal. Though this may differ according to the faculties of living beings, he asserts that there is no difference in attainment because the nature of enlightenment is singular.

Thus, the designations of mundane and sagely are formed, and the characteristics of true and false are distinguished. If one wishes to exhaust the bounds of the subtle, reach the source, investigate the teaching, and understand the principle, then [one should know that] the foundation is free from all, and is ultimately tranquil; it transcends the differences of rising and falling, and is without the distinction between bondage and liberation. Since there is no person in the world, there is also not a person to attain cessation. The two planes are equal, and the singular path is pure and clear. Both consciousness and wisdom are empty; both the designation and the substance are tranquil. There is nothing other than the single true mind. Having

⁸⁷ The theory of the five natures is attributed to Yogacāra doctrine and divides the temperaments and capacities of sentient beings into five categories.

⁸⁸ 從此，一微涉境，漸成憂漢之高峯；滴水興波，終起吞舟之巨浪。邇後將欲反初復本，約根利鈍不同；於一真如界中，開三乘五性。或見空而證果；或了緣而入真；或三祇熏鍊，漸具行門；或一念圓修，頓成佛道。斯則剋證有異，一性非殊。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 415 lines c16–c21. For another translation, see Welter pg. 228–230.

attained it, one is known as a person who has seen the Way; not knowing it, it is called the beginning of death and rebirth.⁸⁹

The conclusion to this passage restates the qualities of enlightenment: as the ultimate foundation of all phenomena, it is tranquil and transcends all dualities. Singular in nature, it is the source of all things; attaining it leads to perception of the Way while not knowing it is the primary cause of death and rebirth.

From this comparison of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine and Yanshou's description of the creation of the phenomenal realm due to the initial instance of ignorance within the enlightened mind, we can observe the influences of the *tathāgatagarbha* conceptions of the relationship between the mind, ignorance, and enlightenment on Yanshou's understanding of this trifecta – he portrays ignorance as the fundamental cause of karmic consciousness, which gives rise to the mental continuum, dualistic views and conceptions, emotional defilements, and karmic formations that bring about the cycle of death and rebirth. The nature of enlightenment itself described to be inherently tranquil, singular, and all-encompassing. This vision serves as the basis for the entirety of the *Records*.

F. Antinomianism and Views on Language

A final aspect of Yanshou's Chan Buddhism that deserves closer examination in the context of this study is his stance on language. The Chan idea of a teaching independent from language can be traced to an oft-cited quote that is attributed to Bodhidharma:

⁸⁹因成凡聖之名，似分真俗之相。若欲窮微洞本，究旨通宗。則根本性離，畢竟寂滅；絕昇沈之異，無縛脫之殊。既無在世之人，亦無滅度之者；二際平等，一道清虛。識智俱空，名體咸寂；迥無所有，唯一真心。達之名見道之人，昧之號生死之始。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 415 lines c21–c27. For another translation, see Welter pg. 229–230.

The three realms arise amidst muddled confusion, but they all return to the One-mind. Buddhas of the past and Buddhas of the future, with the mind, transmit the teaching of the mind, independent of all words and letters.⁹⁰

Encounter dialogues written in the Song also attribute this phrase to the Buddha; for instance, Wuming's (悟明, dates unknown) *Five Lamps Unite at the Source* (*Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元) says in its hagiography of the Buddha:

In the assembly on Vulture Peak, the World Honored One held up a flower and showed it to the assembly. The people were all silent; only Mahākaśyapa's expression changed and he smiled gently. The World Honored One said: "I possess the treasury of the true Dharma-eye and the marvelous mind of nirvāṇa. Its true characteristic is that it has no characteristic – a Dharma-gate that is subtle and wondrous. Independent of words and letters, it is a separate transmission beyond the teaching. I now leave it in the hands of Mahākaśyapa."⁹¹

This saying eventually came to typify the essence of Chan teaching, and by the Tang and Song dynasties, it was widely cited in various biographies of Chan masters. For instance, the following passage is from the Tang-dynasty records of Chan master Linji's sayings, titled the *Record of Sayings of Chan Master Linji Huizhao of the Zhenzhou region* (*Zhenzhou Linji Huizhao chanshi yulu* 鎮州臨濟慧照禪師語錄):

It was not till the twenty-eighth patriarch Bodhidharma brought the secret seal of all Buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time to China; only then was it known in China of the Buddhadharma's separate transmission beyond the teaching, independent of words and letters, which points directly to the mind so that people see their nature and attain Buddhahood.⁹²

This idea of a teaching that did not rely on words and letters for transmission was based on the characterization of enlightenment and the experience thereof as ineffable, and the

⁹⁰ 三界混起，同歸一心；前佛後佛以心傳心，不立文字。Xuzang vol. 63 no. 1218, pg. 2, line a24.

⁹¹ 世尊在靈山會上。拈花示眾。眾皆默然。唯迦葉破顏微笑。世尊云。吾有正法眼藏。涅槃妙心。實相無相。微妙法門。不立文字。教外別傳。付囑摩訶迦葉。Xuzang vol. 79 no. 1557, pg. 14 lines a6–8.

⁹² [...] 逮二十八祖菩提達摩提十方三世諸佛密印而來震旦，是時中國始知佛法有教外別傳、不立文字、直指人心、見性成佛。Taishō vol. 47 no. 1985, pg. 495 lines a27–b1.

argument that language, due to the fact that it forces the mind to conceptualize and categorize in order to express ideas, is inadequate as a medium of description of enlightenment. In this context, language and attachment to language was viewed negatively as a possible obstruction to the attainment of enlightenment.

Distrust of language in Chan discourse also manifested in another characteristic of Chan literature: antinomianism. The encounter dialogues *Mazu's record of sayings* (*Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄) and the *Transmission of the Lamp* (*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄) are two representative sources. They did not come together as individual texts until the Song dynasty, yet Yanshou cites numerous excerpts in the *Records*. Taking the example of *Mazu's Record of Sayings*, much of the text consists of dialogues between the Chan master Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788) and a student or other interlocutor. In the text, Mazu frequently cites scriptures and authoritative Buddhist figures in order to support his arguments and also establish continuity between the emerging Chan movement and the dominant traditions of doctrinal Buddhism.⁹³ In these texts, antinomianism was often illustrated in narrative and action through unconventionality in dialogue and interaction of the characters in a setting, such as unconventional actions or replies on the part of a Chan master that went against normal rules of logic. By the Song dynasty, this image of the antinomian Chan master was irrevocably tied to Mazu and his lineage, and perceived as an indispensable component of Chan orthodoxy.⁹⁴

Turning now to the *Records'* treatment of language, the first of Yanshou's discussions on views on language, or rather, rejection thereof, occurs in the preface of the

⁹³ Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*, 140–141.

⁹⁴ Poceski, *The Records of Mazu and the Making of Classical Chan Literature*, 48.

Records, in which he details the basic framework of the Chan teaching of the mind, starting with the fundamental source of confusion and ending with the attainment of enlightenment.

After establishing the superiority of his teaching, he berates what he regards as a wrong approach to practice:

Furthermore, there are those of wrong faculties and external seed, with trivial wisdom, expedients, and capacities, who understand not the source of birth and death and know not the origin of the views of others and self. They wish only to despise noise and berate movement, destroy attachment to attributes and analyze objects of perception; though they may speak of the quietude of the teaching that is of a single flavor, or the emptiness of all things, they know not of the hidden truth and concealed enlightenment. They are like people who do not distinguish the red spots in their vision and only try to put out the rings of light seemingly emanating from the lamp; not exhausting the illusory body within the consciousness, they are like people who try in vain to flee from their shadow as the sun shines above. In this way, they exhaust their bodies and exert their minds, wasting effort and discarding accomplishment, no different from adding water to melt ice, or adding kindling to put out a fire. How could they know that the rings of light are due to spots in their vision, and or that the shadow follows the body? Rid the eye of illness and the rings of light disappear on their own; eradicate illusion and attachment, and illusory shadows vanish.⁹⁵

By comparing people who are attached to silence and reject noise to those who mistakenly think that problems in vision are caused by light instead of their own diseased eyes, Yanshou argues that people who are overly attached to the concept of emptiness and the rejection of language miss the forest for the trees and thus practice in vain. Thus, his views on language were less extreme and nihilistic than some of his contemporaries.

In the brief introduction to the question and answer segment of the *Records*, Yanshou sets out his intentions in compiling the text entire:

⁹⁵ 復有邪根外種、小智權機，不了生死之病原，罔知人我之見本；唯欲厭喧斥動，破相析塵。雖云味靜冥空，不知埋真拒覺。如不辯眼中之赤眚，但滅燈上之重光；罔窮識內之幻身，空避日中之虛影。斯則勞形役思，喪力捐功；不異足水助冰，投薪益火。豈知重光在眚，虛影隨身；除病眼而重光自消，息幻質而虛影當滅。 Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 415 line c27 – pg. 416 line a5. For another translation, see Welter pg. 230–232.

If one does not provisionally establish [explanations based in] words and languages, there will be nothing with which to eradicate sentiments and attachments. Due to the finger, one perceives the moon—all things are gates of expediency; having caught the rabbit, one forgets the trap—one naturally unites with the Way of thusness. Next, I shall establish the section on questions and answers. Due to the depreciation of present times, it is rare to encounter those with great capacities; people's views are shallow, their minds untethered, their capacities weak, and their knowledge of secondary quality. Though they may know the goal of principles and the teachings, [it is necessary to use] questions and answers to eliminate doubts and gradually eradicate the obstructions of confusion. In order to strengthen faith, it is necessary to provisionally rely on proof; therefore, I broadly take from the sincere speech of patriarchs and Buddhas to esoterically tally with the great Way that is perfect and eternal. I widely draw on the essential principles of sūtras and commentaries to reach perfect attainment of the definite true mind.⁹⁶

In the subsequent passage too, Yanshou's perspective on language is apparent.

If one truly attains complete enlightenment upon a single hearing [of the principle], and attains the great *dhāraṇī*, then why would one need to provisionally rely on words and speech? There would be no need for explanation. The boat and the oar serve to carry across those who are drowning; the master serves to guide those who have lost their way. All words and language with regards to that which is taught about the perfect principle is not ultimate; the fact that words and language are by nature empty is liberation. As for those who are confused with regards to the true nature of all phenomena, grasp at phenomena outside the mind, and give rise to interpretations with regards to words and language—now, one again uses words and language to counteract them, and show them truth. If one is enlightened to the original source of all phenomena, then one would not perceive language or have the slightest trace of perception; thus one knows that all phenomena are identical to the inherent nature of the mind. Thus, the state and wisdom perfectly interfuse, and both existence and emptiness are destroyed.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ 若不假立言詮，無以蕩其情執。因指得月，不無方便之門；獲兔忘罟，自合天真之道。次立問答章，但以時當末代；罕遇大機，觀淺心浮根微智劣。雖知宗旨的有所歸，問答決疑漸消惑障。欲堅信力，須假證明。廣引祖佛之誠言，密契圓常之大道；遍採經論之要旨，圓成決定之真心。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 417 lines b9–15. For another translation, see Welter pg. 241.

⁹⁷ 又若實得一聞千悟，獲大總持，即胡假言詮，無勞解釋。船筏為渡迷津之者，導師因引失路之人。凡關一切言詮，於圓宗所示，皆為未了；文字性離，即是解脫。迷一切諸法真實之性，向心外取法，而起文字見者，今還將文字對治，示其真實。若悟諸法本源，即不見有文字，及絲毫發現，方知一切諸法，即心自性。則境智融通，色空俱泯。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 419 lines c5–13. For another translation, see Welter pg. 261–262.

Here, Yanshou formulates his view of language as an expedient for expressing the teaching of the mind through a more accessible medium—using two well-known analogies expressing the utility of expedients, he compares language to the finger that points to the moon and the snare that aids in catching a rabbit.⁹⁸ However, his reliance on these examples shows that while Yanshou affirms the value of language as expedient means, he still emphasizes the non-ultimate nature of language; just as the finger ought to be disregarded once one catches sight of the moon and the trap should be forgotten once the rabbit is in the net, so too should language be discarded once the teaching has been understood. His views from these two excerpts on language as a provisional device can be summarized in the following lines: “Presently, for the sake of those who delight in the Buddha-vehicle and have yet realize attainment, I provisionally use this principle which is like a mirror to aid in the manifestation of the mind. Though it is dependent on knowledge, the wondrous teaching is present therein.”⁹⁹ Yanshou’s dialectical views on language are apparent: he simultaneously cautions

⁹⁸ These metaphors are originally found in Nagarjuna’s (c. 2nd–3rd centuries CE) *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra* (*Dazhi dulun* 大智度論, Taishō vol. 25 no. 1509) and the *Zhuangzi*. The metaphor on the finger and the moon is used to express the dependence of the teaching upon the meaning, not the language which conveys the meaning. “[...] language is used to convey the meaning; the language is not the meaning. It is like a person who uses a finger to point out the moon to a confused person. The confused person may look at the finger and not the moon. The first person then says: ‘I used my finger to point out the moon for you to see. Why are you looking at my finger and not the moon?’ This is the same – language is the finger that points to the meaning, and language is not the meaning. Therefore, the teaching should not be dependent on language.” (語以得義，義非語也。如人以指指月以示惑者，惑者視指而不視月，人語之言：「我以指指月令汝知之，汝何看指而不視月？」此亦如是，語為義指，語非義也。是以故不應依語。 Taishō vol. 25 no. 1509, pg. 125 lines b1–4.)

The image of the rabbit and the trap is found in the section of the *Zhuangzi* that discusses a variety of miscellaneous topics. The relevant section, which conveys a view on language that is similar to Yanshou’s, reads: “Bamboo is used to catch fish, and after the fish is caught, the trap can be disposed of; rabbit snares are used to trap rabbits, and after the rabbit is caught, the snare can be forgotten. Language is used to convey thoughts, and once the meaning is understood, the words can be forgotten. How will I ever be able to find a person who has forgotten words, so that I may converse with him?” (“荃者所以在魚，得魚而忘荃；蹄者所以在兔，得兔而忘蹄；言者所以在意，得意而忘言。吾安得夫忘言之人而與之言哉！” 莊子，雜篇，外物)

⁹⁹ 今為樂佛乘人，實未薦者，假以宗鏡，助顯真心。雖挂文言，妙旨斯在。 Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 419 lines b19–20. For another translation, see Welter pg. 259.

the reader against becoming erroneously attached to words and thus having incorrect interpretations, while insisting that the medium of language is vital for the transmission of the teaching to those who are attached to the concept of language. The importance and value of language as an expedient is affirmed but is accompanied with numerous qualifying statements about its dangers.

Having insisted on the importance of language as something of a semi-indispensable provisional means that should never become an object of attachment, Yanshou then cautions his readers against the dangers of erroneous attachment to silence and an overdependence on the complete rejection of language.

When [some people] see words and letters on a page, they find texts to be distasteful. Obsessed with tranquility and silence, they delight in it, taking it to be the essential teaching. Confusing their minds and becoming attached to the realm of sense-objects, they turn their backs on awakening and become one with defilement...Erroneously giving rise to limited views, they are afraid of learning...Because they do not understand the true nature of phenomena, they become affected in turn by the transformations of phenomenal forms, and fall into the trap of conceptualizing existence and nonexistence.¹⁰⁰

There may be people who have yet to bring forth faith [in this teaching] and become attached and grasp at myriad aspects; following conditions that they encounter, they become confused and are impeded by phenomena. They view emptiness not as a potential fetter, and only grasp at it while discarding all that is good; they do not understand existence for the purpose of bringing forth compassion, and only become attached to it and thus create negative karma. This is all because they do not understand that emptiness and existence [come from] the One-mind, which then causes them to create gains and losses in this way. If one enters the principle that reflects all like a mirror, even if one has only just brought forth the resolve, not only are one's practices perfected, one is also enlightened to the principle immediately.

¹⁰⁰ 唯見紙墨文字，嫌卷軸多。但執寂默無言，欣為省要。皆是迷心徇境，背覺合塵 [...] 偏生局見，唯懼多聞 [...] 以不達諸法真實性故，隨諸相轉，墮落有無。 Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 420 lines a5–10. For another translation, see Welter pg. 264.

Thus, one is identical to all Buddhas of yore, existing on the same plane without difference.¹⁰¹

In both of these examples, Yanshou singles out two characteristics of contemporary Chan discourse: antinomianism and the rejection of language in favor of an insistence on the complete emptiness of all phenomena. He takes these positions to be an obstruction to enlightenment; that Yanshou was so inclined to mention and rail against such views suggests that the popularity and significance of the trend of iconoclasm in Chan thought during his time merited a response of some sort in his mind. Yanshou's dialectical view of language encompasses both positive and negative attitudes towards its utility. Both attitudes—the necessity and therefore validity of language for the sake of transmission of the teaching, and the importance of nonattachment to language—are important, but they both take a secondary position to true understanding of the teaching. If one has not attained realization of the teaching itself, then both positive affirmation of the utility and value of language *and* antinomianism are both invalid and an obstruction to enlightenment.

On one hand, by insisting on the expedient value of language as a medium for transmitting the teaching, Yanshou was able to justify the act of composing the *Records*. On the other, by emphasizing the dangers posed by overdependence on language, similar to the discourse of his predecessors and contemporaries, he was also able to follow the established Chan precedent. Yanshou's dialectical view of language appreciated it as a temporary expedient means, affirming its positive aspect of conveying meaning while simultaneously warning against the hazard of being overly attached to words and concepts.

¹⁰¹ 若未信入，取捨萬端，隨境生迷，為法所害。不觀空以遣累，但取空而廢善；不達有以興慈，但著有而起罪。皆為不了空有一心，致茲得失。若入宗鏡，纔發心時，非唯行成，理即頓具；便同古佛，一際無差。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 425 lines b28–c3.

F. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter set out to answer the question of what Chan meant for Yanshou according to the first few fascicles of the *Records*. Drawing on the scholarship of Welter, Cox, and Broughton, I have also discussed the influences of antinomianism, *tathāgatagarbha* thought, lineage narratives, and scholasticism. I argue that the following significant characteristics can be observed in Yanshou's Chan Buddhism: First, Yanshou's foundations of Buddhist practice were based upon meditative and contemplative practice that can be traced to the doctrinal ideas of the *tathāgatagarbha* and the One-mind as described in the *Awakening of Faith*. Secondly, Yanshou identified with the narrative of a lineage, but contrary to later lineage narratives that portrayed him as a member of Qingliang Wenyi's Fayan lineage, he subscribed to a broader lineage narrative that found its source with the legendary Bodhidharma, and by proxy of Bodhidharma, the Buddha. Third, as opposed to the image of extreme antinomianism and anti-scriptural views that was depicted of Chan in Song dynasty encounter dialogue literature, Yanshou's views were still significantly connected to Buddhist scholasticism from the Tang dynasty. Finally, at the same time, his writing still displayed antinomian views regarding the nature of language. This stance grew in popularity during his time and doubtless contributed to the importance of this discourse in later Chan literature.

In the next chapter I will briefly discuss Huayan doctrine before analyzing the usages of Huayan sources in the *Records*. With this endeavor, it is possible to glean a glimpse of Yanshou's understanding of various Buddhist doctrines in relation to each other, and how he utilized different ideas in the creation of his own discourse.

IV. Chapter 3: The *Records* and the *Avataṃsaka*

A. Introduction

In the following pages, I will outline the terms and concepts that are typical of Huayan texts and also appear in the *Records of the Source-mirror*. This section is a preface to the textual analysis part of this project, whose overarching theme is the intersection of Huayan and Chan ideas in Yongming Yanshou's *Records*. More specifically, I will examine the usages and contexts in which Yanshou used Huayan sources throughout the first fifteen fascicles of the text. Yanshou's usage of sources in the *Records* manifests most obviously in copious citations and quotations from different sūtras and commentaries.¹⁰² To examine the ways he used these sources and how and why his usage may have departed from their original contexts, for each quotation, I will compare and contrast the context of the quoted portion in its original source with the context in which Yanshou uses it for the purposes of his own arguments. Through this examination, I will draw conclusions with regards to the fluidity of intellectual boundaries in Buddhist discourse during Yanshou's time.

Although Yanshou made ample usage of Huayan sources in both the forms of quotes from the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*¹⁰³ and its commentaries, I will exclusively focus on citations from the scripture alone. More pointedly, the analysis will concentrate on Yanshou's own

¹⁰² Yanshou also uses Huayan terminology quite liberally throughout; for instance, he might mention the six characteristics and the ten mysteries in passing like so: "...This unobstructed, vast Dharma door of mine has no characteristics, like space, yet it does not prevent the manifestation of various characteristics; like the essence of reality, it has no physical form, but it does not obstruct the immediate manifestation of all forms. Thus, only through understanding the six characteristics that encompass all phenomena are the views of nihilism and eternalism severed; only with the perfect interpenetration of the ten mysteries are the dispositions of rejecting and grasping eradicated." 我此無礙廣大法門。如虛空非相。不拒諸相發揮。似法性無身。匪礙諸身頓現。須以六相義該攝。斷常之見方消。用十玄門融通。去取之情始絕。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 419 lines c2–5.

However, the high frequency at which they are used does not make them an optimal object of study for this project in particular.

¹⁰³ *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, primarily Taishō vol. 10 no. 279; also Taishō vol. 10 no. 278.

interpretation of the *Avatamsaka* in the *Records* rather than his interpretation of other, second-order readings of the *Avatamsaka*. A contextualization of Yanshou's usage of Huayan sources and concepts in tandem with Chan writing also requires the examination of the discourse and arguments of his predecessors who also wrote about the two subjects together. Here, I will briefly discuss one such example that serves as a precedent for Yanshou's perspective to show that though his juxtaposition of Chan with other doctrinal traditions is notable, it is not unique or particularly innovative. The monk Zongmi 宗密 (780–841) is posthumously recognized as the fifth patriarch in the Huayan tradition, but is also perceived to be an important figure in the Heze 菏泽 lineage of Chan Buddhism, affiliated with the figure Shenhui 神會 (670—762). In his volume *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, which concerns Zongmi's writing and discourse, Peter N. Gregory cites the ways that he revised and reformulated the discourse of his predecessors to argue that an accurate understanding of Zongmi's writing can only be attained in the context of his attempts to provide an ontological basis for Chan practice.¹⁰⁴ Like Yanshou, Zongmi's goal was to formulate a universal intellectual framework that could unite contemporary sectarian conflicts and disagreements, and depict them as merely different perspectives. While his own self-presentation of his identity did not depict himself as specifically Chan or Huayan, Gregory concludes that his own viewpoint prioritized the teachings of the Chan monk Shenhui, for Zongmi made Shenhui's rhetoric the pinnacle of his organization of Chan teachings while he simultaneously tried to incorporate and validate the viewpoints of others.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pg. 11

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 25

Essentially, in his hierarchical systemization of Buddhist teaching, Zongmi departed significantly from his predecessors who placed Huayan doctrine at the topmost tier of their hierarchies of teachings. Instead, he subordinated Huayan to the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching, which he associated with Shenhui's sermons and not with Huayan doctrine.¹⁰⁶ In his categorization of the Buddhist teaching, Zongmi subordinated teachings that were conventionally associated with Huayan doctrine in favor of ideas that he associated with *tathāgatagarbha* teaching. Though, like his predecessors, he used Huayan doctrine and cited from the *Avatamsaka* to support his new hermeneutics, he emphasized sections that could be used in support of the *tathāgatagarbha* instead. Gregory argues that while Huayan doctrine played a significant role in Zongmi's writings, he only valued it insofar as it could be used to support the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching. His case is a clear example of the writing about different doctrines simultaneously in relation with each other and using specific aspects of one for the explicit purpose of elevating the other.¹⁰⁷

B. Huayan Foundations

Before discussing Huayan thought and its various characteristics, I will first provide a brief overview of its foundations.¹⁰⁸ The extensive doctrines and paradigms of Huayan

¹⁰⁶ Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pg. 149–151

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 164–165

¹⁰⁸ Throughout this project, I refer to Chan and Huayan thought as “thought” and not “philosophy.” In her article “Is there such a thing as Chinese philosophy?”, Carine Defoort problematizes the usage of the term “Chinese philosophy” by pointing out the issues that are inherent in its very existence. On the one hand, uncritical usage of the words “Chinese philosophy” to refer to the traditions of the old masters implies using the modern Western concept of “philosophy” to interpret a non-Western culture. (Defoort, pg. 394) “Philosophy” as defined in the West did not exist in China in the writings of the old masters, nor do their writings count as philosophy as defined in the Western sense; to use “philosophy” to refer to these traditions of thought assumes that the concept can be used universally and does not deny that it has a particular Western origin. (Defoort, pg. 394–396) Defoort describes the adoption of the term to refer to Chinese thought as a retrospective categorization. Labeling it as a form of “philosophy,” Defoort argues, was a hasty politically motivated decision that was supposed to make it possible to relate Chinese thought to its intended Western counterpart and portray the two as equivalent and comparable entities. (Defoort, pg. 397) However, this required the erroneous assumption that the two were mutually intelligible and could overlap seamlessly with

thought and literature are founded upon the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, a Buddhist megascripture of which there are four extant editions: Buddhahadra's 420 CE translation in 60 fascicles and 34 chapters; Śikṣānanda's 699 CE translation in 80 fascicles and 39 chapters; Prajñā's 798 CE translation in 40 fascicles and one chapter; and Jinamitra's 9th century Tibetan translation in 45 chapters.¹⁰⁹ Though there is no extant version of the text that served as the basis for all four editions, some early sources such as Zhiyan mention a Sanskrit version of the *Avatamsaka* at Great Ci'en Monastery 慈恩寺.¹¹⁰ What later became the *Avatamsaka* in its most popular iteration of Śikṣānanda's 80-fascicle version was most likely compiled over an extended period of time, but Kiyotaka argues that the most likely order of compilation of the texts are the 60-fascicle version, the Ci'en Sanskrit manuscript, the 80-fascicle version, and then the Tibetan version.¹¹¹ In sum, the content of the *Avatamsaka* concerns various descriptions of bodhisattva conduct and its myriad stages, the state of Buddhahood and the interfusion and identity of Buddhahood and the state of living beings, and the nature of the mind in terms of its relation to phenomena.

each other, when in actuality, Chinese terms that were used in these discussions already had their own native political, historical, and intellectual connotations. (Defoort, pg. 399) In addition, trying to uncritically force the two forms of thought into conversation presupposes the incorrect notion that discourse flowed freely across both sides, that the two influenced each other at comparable levels, and that both Western and Chinese traditions possess a perfect concrete insight on the meanings of their concepts when this is actually not the case. (Defoort, pg. 401) On the other hand, as opposed to mapping Chinese concepts onto the Western notion of philosophy, using Western concepts to understand traditional Chinese concepts also causes them to lose their coherence. It also portrays them as derivations of Western concepts, which themselves are problematic due to the fact that their definitions are not subject to sufficient scrutiny. (Defoort, pg. 402) Defoort's article is a preliminary discussion that problematizes the notion of "Chinese philosophy" and does not provide a concrete solution due to the complicated nature of the issue and the plurality of the voices that would be required for an adequate discussion involving all relevant disciplines. The temporary lack of a better approach is unfortunate, but in acknowledgement of this issue, I refrain from uncritical use of the term "philosophy."

¹⁰⁹ Kiyotaka, *Zhongguo huayan sixiang shi*, pg. 1–2.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 3.

¹¹¹ Takamine, *Huayan sixiang shi*, pg. 9–10; Kiyotaka, *Zhongguo huayan sixiang shi* pg. 9.

Huayan thought as presented in major commentaries on the *Avataṃsaka* is much more systematic and consists of various categorizations that serve to describe different aspects of reality.¹¹² However, since I will only be discussing Yanshou and his usage of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, I will not delve into these in detail. Instead, I will briefly discuss the text *Discernments of the Dharmadhātu: A Meditation Upon the Maha Vaipulya Buddha Avataṃsaka Comprising in Outline Three Levels of Discernment* (*Xiu da fangguang fo huayan fajie guanmen* 修大方廣佛華嚴法界觀門), ascribed to the monk Dushun 杜順 (557–640) who is regarded as the first Huayan patriarch. Though his background is rather obscure and the authenticity of this work is uncertain, the writings that have been ascribed to him certainly had a significant influence on the development of Huayan thought after his time.¹¹³ Using some segments from the *Discernments*, I will illustrate the logic of the Huayan conception of the mutual unobstruction between noumenon 理 (*li*) and phenomena 事 (*shi*).¹¹⁴ This is the very foundation of the Huayan view of reality and also an important component of Yanshou's presentation of the relationship between the mind and the world.

The *Discernments* discusses three different ways of observing the nature of reality: the characteristic of true emptiness, the mutual non-obstruction of noumenon and

¹¹² For instance, these include the four *dharmadhātus* (四法界), the six characteristics (六相), and the ten mysteries (十玄), which are developed and elaborated upon in such commentaries as Fazang's *Treatise of the Five Teachings* (華嚴五教章 Taishō vol. 45 no. 1866) and Chengguan's *Commentary on the Avataṃsaka Sutra* (大方廣佛華嚴經疏 Taishō vol. 35 no. 1735).

¹¹³ Gimello, *Chih-yen and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism*, pg. 5.

¹¹⁴ The terms *noumenon* and *phenomena*, as eloquently described by Robert Gimello, are a reworking of the earlier Mahāyāna concept of the relationship between form and emptiness, which is based on the theory of conditioned arising, the idea that all things are empty because they exist only through external causes and conditions, and therefore have neither determinacy nor an inherent independent existence. In this context, "emptiness" is not considered an alternative state of being to form, but rather a descriptor of the nature of form; therefore, the two concepts are perceived to share a mutual identity, and are not entities that are apart from one another. (Gimello, *Chih-yen and the Foundations of Huayan Buddhism*, pg. 8–9).

phenomena, and the discernment of total pervasion and accommodation.¹¹⁵ As seen from the name of the second discernment, one way of describing Huayan paradigm in its simplest terms would be that it views all phenomena to be ontologically identical to each other. This is because of the noumenon of conditioned arising, also known as emptiness, which is common to and pervades all things. The fact that phenomena are perceived as identical to the principle of conditioned arising which pervades phenomena then makes it possible for the self to be perceived as identical to Buddhahood. Conditioned arising is a concept that had already existed in Indian Buddhism and in early writings associated with texts that later became part of the greater *Avataṃsaka*, such as the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds* (*Daśabhūmika sūtra* 十地經), which concerns the ten stages of bodhisattva practice; therefore, this idea cannot be sourced to Huayan alone. However, the two are nevertheless strongly associated with each other due to its importance in the Huayan description of phenomena.

Conditioned arising is founded on the idea that the existence of all phenomena is completely dependent upon conditions external to themselves. Since nothing comes into existence and ceases to exist independently, it can therefore be said that all phenomena share this quality of conditioned arising, and therefore have no inherent existence that is completely independent of any other thing. This noumenon of conditioned arising is equated to the concept of emptiness. Since the noumenon of emptiness applies to all phenomena, it therefore pervades, embodies, and is embodied by all phenomena. The fact that it is common to all phenomena supports the idea that all phenomena are ontologically identical. This, in turn, illustrates the relationship of mutual identity 相即 (*xiangji*) between noumenon and

¹¹⁵ 觀曰。真空觀第一。理事無礙觀第二。周遍含容觀第三。Taishō vol. 45 no. 1883, pg. 672 lines c20–21.

phenomena, as well as the unobstructed relationship between phenomena and phenomena. The new nomenclature of noumenon vs. phenomena was first coined in the *Discernments*; with these terms, which already had a history of usage in Chinese philosophical writing, Dushun built on the preexisting relationship between form and emptiness. By defining noumenon as the absolute that all particulars are empty, and phenomena as the empirical form of elements of the experiential world, he broadened the original definition of forms as the mental constituents of phenomena.¹¹⁶ Since phenomena are an exemplification of this principle, the two concepts are regarded to contain, or mutually include 相入 (*xiangru*), each other.¹¹⁷ As for the relationship between phenomena, since phenomena depend on each other for existence and are all an exemplification of the same noumenon, they are thus said to be harmoniously related and mutually determinant of each other's character, or perfectly interfused 圓融 (*yuanrong*).¹¹⁸

The first discernment, the characteristic of true emptiness, is further divided into four aspects; in the interest of length, I will not discuss them in detail, but it is suffice to say that Dushun uses the first two, the coalescence of forms and their reversion to emptiness and the identity of emptiness with forms, to clarify the correct conception of emptiness. Using the formula “Forms are not identical to emptiness* because they are identical to emptiness,”

¹¹⁶ Gimello, *Chih-yen and the foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism*, pg. 23.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 21–22.

¹¹⁸ This theory of the *perfect interfusion* (*yuanrong*) of all phenomena is illustrated with the metaphor of Indra's net 帝網 (*diwang*), which compares the universe to an infinitely large net with jewels suspended at every point of intersection, where the jewels represent all phenomena within the universe. Due to the resplendent nature of the jewels, they reflect endlessly onto one another, so that when one looks at a single jewel, one sees all other jewels at the same time. The net, the jewels, and the reflections thus make up the whole which is known as Indra's net—without the jewels, the net is merely a net; without the net, the jewels have no support; without the existence of multiple jewels suspended in the net, there is nothing to reflect or to be reflected upon. This metaphor thus explains the unobstructed interrelation 無礙 of noumenon and phenomena, as well as phenomena and phenomena. (Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pg. 155–156.)

Dushun first addresses such erroneous conceptions of emptiness as nihilism, emptiness as an apparent feature of something, and emptiness as a transcendental absolute that exists apart from phenomena, and emphasizes the correct idea that emptiness refers to the fact that all phenomena lack an inherent existence. For instance,

Forms are not identical with emptiness because they are identical with emptiness. How so? Because forms are not identical with the emptiness of annihilation. [It is in this sense that they] are not emptiness. [However,] in their entirety forms are true emptiness and therefore have we said ‘...because they are identical with emptiness.’ Indeed, it is precisely because forms are identical with true emptiness that they are not the emptiness of annihilation. Therefore have we said that they are not emptiness because they are emptiness.¹¹⁹

Altogether, these two aspects serve to clarify the definition of true emptiness and eradicate any of the reader's prior incorrect understandings of the concept.

The third aspect of the first discernment maintains that emptiness and phenomena exist in mutual unobstruction – because emptiness is the one quality that all phenomena exhaustively share, phenomena are thus not different from emptiness because they are altogether one with emptiness; in the same way, emptiness is not different from phenomena because it is the exhaustive common quality of phenomena and thus is one with all phenomena. Therefore, Dushun argues that correct perception of one surely results in correct perception of the other, without mutual hindrance or obstruction:

This means that forms in their entirety are not different from emptiness, because they are altogether [one with] emptiness [in the sense that emptiness is] exhaustive of forms. Thus it is the exhaustion of forms that emptiness is manifest. [Likewise,] emptiness in its entirety is not different from forms, because it is altogether [one with] forms [in the sense that forms are in turn] exhaustive of emptiness. Thus, emptiness is identical with forms and yet emptiness is not [thereby] hidden. Therefore, the bodhisattva who discerns forms cannot but discern emptiness and he who discerns

¹¹⁹ 觀曰。就初門中為四。一色不即空。以即空故。何以故。以色不即斷空故。不是空也。以色舉體是真空也。故云以即空故。良由即是真空故非斷空也。是故言由是空故不是空也。Taishō vol. 45 no. 1883, pg. 673 lines a10–13.

emptiness cannot but discern forms. [The two] constitute a ‘dharma of one taste,’ without mutual hindrance and without mutual obstruction...¹²⁰

Building on this idea, the second discernment on the Mutual Non-Obstruction of Principle and Phenomena further elaborates on the implications of the relationship between the principle of emptiness and the phenomena that it universally pervades. Drawing from the water-wave metaphor used in the *Awakening of Faith* to explain the relationship between the mind and defilement, Dushun applies this image to his explanation of the principle and phenomena:

[Nevertheless, within the limits of this qualification we may say that the case is rather] like that of the ocean which is wholly present in each single wave and yet is not [thereby] diminished, [or] like that of a single small wave which enwraps the whole of the ocean but is not [thereby] made large. The ocean simultaneously pervades all waves and yet is not [thereby] differentiated. And although any particular wave enwraps the ocean at the same time [as others do], they do not thereby [all become] one [wave]. Also, at the time the ocean is pervading a single wave, it is not then hindered from pervading in its entirety all waves. And when a single wave completely enwraps the ocean, at that time too does each and every [other] wave also enwrap it completely. [The two are thus] not mutually obstructive. [So should one] contemplate it.¹²¹

From these passages, we can observe the deeply intertwined nature of the relationship between noumenon and phenomenon that serves as the basis for the Huayan view of the interrelationship between all phenomena.

¹²⁰ 觀曰。第三色空無礙觀者。謂色舉體不異空。全是盡色之空故。即色不盡而空現。空舉體不異色。全是盡空之色故。即空即色而空不隱也。是故菩薩觀色無不見空。觀空莫非見色。無障無礙為一味法。思之可見。Taishō vol. 45 no. 1883, pg 674 lines c25–29.

¹²¹ 觀曰。如全大海在一波中而海非小。如一小波匝於大海而波非大。同時全遍於諸波而海非異。俱時各匝於大海而波非一。又大海全遍一波時。不妨舉體全遍於諸波。一波全匝大海時。諸波亦各全匝。互不相礙思之。Taishō vol. 45 no. 1883, pg. 676 lines c17–21.

C. The Avatamsaka in the Records

In the *Records of the Source Mirror*, Yanshou uses quotations and key terms from various texts. Of these, Yanshou placed significant emphasis on Huayan texts and commentaries. This section will discuss the ways he used quotations from the *Avatamsaka* and how he interacted with their original contexts. By looking at how he used these citations to bolster his own arguments, it is possible to create a window into how he approached and related to different texts and ideas.

Although Yanshou made use of Huayan sources in both the forms of quotes from the *Avatamsaka* itself and commentaries written about the *Avatamsaka*, I will spend the majority of the study discussing Yanshou's usage of the *Avatamsaka* proper, and leave a detailed analysis of his usages of Huayan commentaries for later projects. Granted, this will limit the reconstruction of Yanshou's utilization and understanding of Huayan thought in general due to the contributions of these commentaries to Huayan scholarship; Yanshou was certainly and inevitably influenced by his predecessors and contemporaries. However, this study will focus on Yanshou's own interpretation of the *Avatamsaka* as presented in the *Records*, not his interpretations of others' interpretations of the *Avatamsaka*, which I will leave for future endeavors. In addition, for reasons of practicality, I will only concern myself with the sections where Yanshou quotes or refers from Huayan texts explicitly, mainly concentrating on quotations from the *Avatamsaka* itself, and I will not include sections where he merely used vocabulary that is conventionally associated with Huayan thought.

Length limitations of this project restricts the number of examples I will discuss, and the quotations I am using are from a survey of only the first fifteen fascicles of the *Records*. This is evidently far from a full view of the *Records* in its entirety, something I hope to

address in the future, but for this work it nevertheless provides a clear picture of Yanshou's usage of Huayan sources. For every quotation that I present, I will discuss three aspects: the context of the *Records* in which Yanshou uses the quotation, the original context of the quotation in the *Avataṃsaka*, and a comparison of the two. Translations, paraphrases, and glosses of the texts will be provided as needed.

Before providing examples of citations from the *Avataṃsaka* proper, I will discuss one of his citations from a commentary on the *Avataṃsaka* to acknowledge and illustrate his similar reliance on commentaries. The citation occurs in the first question and answer pair of the question and answer section that forms the larger part of the entire volume of the text. The interlocutor begins by questioning the validity of establishing an underlying principle:

The virtuous ones of old said: 'To teach me to create an underlying principle and establish an aim is like seeking fur on a tortoise or horns on a rabbit.' A verse in the *Lanka Sūtra* says: All phenomena do not arise; this should not be established as a principle. Why do you delineate the name of this chapter in this way [as 'establishing the underlying principle']?¹²²

In Yanshou's answer, which strives to justify to the interlocutor the fundamental basis of the *Records*, he uses a direct quote from Chengguan's commentary and subcommentary¹²³ on the *Avataṃsaka* that also concerns this quote, although he does not cite explicitly.

Answer: This [referring to the quote from the *Lanka Sūtra*] was said for the sake of eradicating attachments. If it is the underlying principle which is beyond any principle, then both the principle itself and explanations of it would [be needed to] elucidate it.¹²⁴

¹²² 問：先德云：「若教我立宗定旨，如龜上覓毛，兔邊求角。」楞伽經偈云：「一切法不生，不應立是宗。」何故標此章名？Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 417 lines b17–19.

¹²³ Chengguan's commentary is the *Da fangguang fohuayan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏 Taishō vol. 35 no. 1735, and his subcommentary, or the commentary on the commentary, is the *Da fangguang fohuayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔 Taishō vol. 36 no. 1736.

¹²⁴ 答：斯言遺滯。若無宗之宗，則宗說兼暢。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 417 lines b19–20.

The quote taken from Chengguan’s writing, marked in bold above, is found in the commentary’s third fascicle in which Chengguan engages in a discussion concerning the *zong*, the underlying principle, and the objective of Buddhist teaching as part of a larger section aimed at classifying the teaching of the *Avatamsaka*:

...as for the sameness and difference in underlying principle and objective: that which is expressed in language is the underlying principle, and that which the underlying principle returns to is the objective. First, one understands their commonalities, and then shows how they are different...As for showing the different underlying principles, all sūtras have their own underlying principle. Here, I shall define the underlying principle and objective of this sūtra [*Avatamsaka*]. However, *the Lanka Sūtra* says: “All phenomena do not arise; this should not be established as an underlying principle.” This was said for the sake of eradicating attachments. If it is the underlying principle which is beyond any principle, then both the principle itself and any explanations of it would [be needed to] elucidate it.¹²⁵

In Chengguan’s subcommentary, one can also observe a similar concern with the validity of explicitly defining a principle when it comes to the Buddhist teaching, due to the fear of attachment to any such a principle serving as a hindrance to enlightenment. Chengguan addresses this concern by using reasoning that is reminiscent of discussions of emptiness that are often found in Buddhist texts and commentaries on the subject of emptiness, in which negation is used to express a thing’s lack of an inherent existence, and therefore not something to be attached to.¹²⁶ Thus, he claims that the principle he is about to delineate is in actuality beyond the very concept of a principle, both conforming to the argument from the *Lanka Sūtra* that principles in general should not be delineated, while also explaining why it is justifiable and necessary to elucidate this principle. Upon comparison, the context of

¹²⁵ [...] 宗趣通別者：語之所尚曰宗，宗之所歸曰趣。先明其通後顯於別。 [...] 第二顯別宗者：一切諸經各自有宗；今此別明此經宗趣。然楞伽云一切法不生，不應立是宗者，斯言遣滯。若無宗之宗則宗說兼暢。大方廣佛華嚴經疏 *Da fanguang fo huayan jing shu* Taishō vol. 35 no. 1735, pg. 521 lines a2–c23.

¹²⁶ A prime example of the usage of this logic is the *Vajra Sutra*, where statements of the format “X is not X [and that is why it is X]”, such as “That which is known as the Buddhadharmā is actually not the Buddhadharmā” abound. 金剛般若波羅蜜經 *The Vajra Sūtra*, Taishō vol. 8 no. 235, pg. 749 line b25.

Yanshou's usage of this quote from Chengguan's commentary on the *Avatamsaka* is basically the same as Chengguan's original context: both were concerned with the possibility that others might use the ideas in Buddhist texts to find fault in the essentializing aspect of their systemization of Buddhist doctrine.

Throughout the *Records*, the way that Yanshou utilizes the *Avatamsaka* can be divided into three categories. The first category, and also the most common, is where Yanshou follows the original context in his usage of the quotation. For instance, in a section of the *Records* where he discusses the nature of the mind in relation to emptiness, he might cite in support of this point a section of the *Avatamsaka* that also discusses the emptiness of the mind. The second category, also fairly common, occurs where Yanshou may take certain liberties with regards to the context. An example of this situation would be Yanshou discussing a specific aspect of the mind, such as its universality, and citing in support of this idea a section of the *Avatamsaka* that also discusses the mind but deals with a different aspect than the point that he is trying to argue. The last category, which occurs less frequently but is the focus of this project, occurs where Yanshou departs from the original context of the quotation completely. For instance, while discussing a specific aspect of the mind, Yanshou may quote a section of the *Avatamsaka* that discusses bodhisattva practice in a way that is completely unrelated to the point he was trying to make originally.

In this project, I cite more examples of departure from original context in order to illustrate the different situations in which this has occurred, but in at least half of the instances where Yanshou cites from the *Avatamsaka* at all, he follows the original context or takes certain liberties with the text. Considering the fact that both Huayan and Chan doctrine share similar views on the relationship between the mind, enlightenment, and phenomena,

this is to be expected. However, the frequency to which Yanshou does depart from the original context of the *Avatamsaka* is still significant in terms of understanding how Yanshou utilized it in his argumentation, and deserves our attention nevertheless.

I will begin with an example where the context in which Yanshou uses it matches the context the quotation was taken from. This is an illustration of the first category of Yanshou's usage of the *Avatamsaka* that I mentioned above. It shows that he understood the text which he was quoting from, and that he was able to use it in his own writing to support his ideas in a way that made the two contexts compatible. This passage is found in the sixth fascicle of the *Records*, where Yanshou discusses the relationship between phenomena and the mind in terms of identity. The interlocutor's question at the beginning to this section asks about how it is possible to discuss the nature and lack of nature of things, or the existence and non-existence of things, if all phenomena are said to be identical to the nature of the mind:

If all phenomena are identical to the nature of the mind, then how is it possible to discuss the nature and lack of nature of things?¹²⁷

Yanshou responds by reiterating the universalness of the nature of phenomena and the mind as its source, as well as the deeply intertwined relationship between all phenomena due to the fact that they possess the same nature.

To say that it [the nature of things] is identical to the nature of the mind is a statement that makes a correct posit, for all phenomena lack a nature. To say that the true nature of the mind which the nature of phenomena is identical to is in fact a nature, while also lacking a nature, is a negative statement. If one is able to transcend the expedients of positives and negatives, and eradicate the attachment to identity and difference, only then will one see the inherent nature and possess perfect and luminous eyes by oneself. Presently, if one wishes to suddenly become enlightened to one's own mind and open the views and knowledge of the Buddha, one must only

¹²⁷ 問：若一切法，即心自性，云何又說性即非性？ Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 449 line a24.

understand that the inherent nature [of the mind] pervades all places, and that all that is perceived by the sight and hearing is a manifestation from the mind. Apart from the mind, there is not a single phenomenon as small as the tip of a hair that possesses an inherent substance. Each of them is unaware of each other, and each of them does not encounter the other. Why? Because they are all a single phenomenon, there is not a single one that could have awareness of another or encounter another. If they were dual, then they could interact with each other. Thus, it is known that whether they are the dualities of mundane versus sagely, state versus wisdom, they are of the same nature, which is that they possess no nature. This principle of naturelessness is the axiom to attaining the Way. It is the source of equality and the foundation of the teaching of emptiness. Having understood it, one attains Buddhahood, and one's efforts will not be lost. An *Avatamsaka* verse says: “The nature of phenomena is originally empty; there is nothing to grasp or perceive. The emptiness of this nature is Buddhahood, and it cannot be comprehended.”¹²⁸

In other words, Yanshou states that the mind is the source of all perceived phenomena, none of which have an independent existence. Since all phenomena share the singular ontological basis of the lack of an independent existence, they are ontologically identical and thus are of the same nature. This idea of naturelessness, Yanshou argues, is the key to enlightenment. He continues to support his point by citing a verse of the *Avatamsaka*. This verse is found in the Chapter on Praises spoken at Mount Sumeru and discusses the emptiness of all phenomena and the importance of its realization in the attainment of Buddhahood:

At that time the Bodhisattva All-wisdom, relying upon the awesome power of the Buddha, observed all things in the ten directions and spoke this verse:

Should there be a person who for hundreds of thousands of eons
Constantly perceives the Buddha,
Not relying on reality
To observe the savior of the world –

¹²⁸ 即心自性。此是表詮。由一切法無性故。即我心之實性。性亦非性者。此是遮詮。若能超遮表之文詮。泯即離之情執。方為見性己眼圓明。如今若要頓悟自心。開佛知見。但了自性遍一切處。凡有見聞。皆從心現。心外無有一毫蘄法而有體性。各各不相知。各各不相到。何者。以是一法故。無法可相知相到。若有二法。即相往來。以知若凡若聖。若境若智。皆同一性。所謂無性。此無性之旨。是得道之宗。作平等之端由。為說空之所以。了便成佛。不落功夫。如華嚴經頌云。法性本空寂。無取亦無見。性空即是佛。不可得思量。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 449 lines a26–b8.

This person who grasps various characteristics
And allows nets of delusion and mental disturbances to grow
Binds themselves in the prison of death and rebirth;
Blind and dumb, they do not see the Buddha.

One should observe that all phenomena
Are not possessive of an inherent nature;
Their appearances of rising and deterioration
Are merely provisional referents.

All phenomena do not arise;
All phenomena do not deteriorate;
If one can attain this understanding,
All Buddhas will always appear before them.

*The nature of phenomena is originally empty,
And there is nothing to grasp and nothing to perceive;
The emptiness of this nature is Buddhahood,
And it cannot be comprehended.*

If one is aware with regards to all phenomena
That their substance is this way,
This person will not be
Defiled by afflictions.

When commoners perceive phenomena,
They are moved by various appearances
And they do not understand that phenomena have no inherent characteristics;
Therefore, they do not see the Buddha.

The Great Sage [the Buddha] has transcended the three realms of existence
And is replete with various hallmarks;
He abides in nonabiding
And pervades all places without moving.

Having contemplated all phenomena
I understand them completely;
Presently I perceive the Tathagata
Decidedly and with no doubts.

[The Bodhisattva] Dharma-wisdom has spoken already
Of the true nature of the Tathagata;

Because of him I understand
The inconceivability of bodhi.¹²⁹

This verse emphasizes the importance of the correct perception of the nature of phenomena as the direct basis for enlightenment. The erroneous perception of phenomena as possessing an inherent existence is cited to be a significant obstacle to the perception of Buddhahood. In comparison to each other, both contexts of the *Records* and the source from which the quoted verse is taken are similar—they discuss the emptiness of all phenomena and reiterate the importance of realizing this concept in order to attain enlightenment.

The next example belongs to the second category, where Yanshou takes certain liberties with the context of the texts he is citing. This is a glimpse of how fluidly Yanshou used different texts in relation to their own contexts, and is a milder version of the third category. In this case, he still uses the quotation in a similar context in the *Records* in comparison to its original context, but with some variations in content. This quotation occurs in the first fascicle of the *Records* where Yanshou discusses a process of cultivation that is in accord with the teaching of the mind, and the way that a person undertaking this process ought to examine their own views on language:

Furthermore, if one wishes to investigate the Buddha's vehicle and seek the treasures, each [principle] must eradicate and return to the self; each word must correspond to the true mind. However, one must not be attached to the words [that convey] the meaning and give rise to views/interpretations following the words. One needs only to examine the principles in the words and tally with the original underlying principle; thus, wisdom which one attains without external guidance manifests, and the way of original thusness is hidden no longer. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* says:

¹²⁹ 爾時，一切慧菩薩承佛威力，普觀十方而說頌言：「假使百千劫，常見於如來，不依真實義，而觀救世者。是人取諸相，增長癡惑網，繫縛生死獄，盲冥不見佛。觀察於諸法，自性無所有，如其生滅相，但是假名說。一切法無生，一切法無滅，若能如是解，諸佛常現前。法性本空寂，無取亦無見，性空即是佛，不可得思量。若知一切法，體性皆如是，斯人則不為，煩惱所染著。凡夫見諸法，但隨於相轉，不了法無相，以是不見佛。牟尼離三世，諸相悉具足，住於無所住，普遍而不動。我觀一切法，皆悉得明了，今見於如來，決定無有疑。法慧先已說，如來真實性，我從彼了知，菩提難思議。」 Taishō vol. 10 no. 279, pg. 81 lines c5–c26

“Knowing that all phenomena are identical to the inherent nature of the mind, they attain the wisdom body and do not attain enlightenment through reliance on others.”¹³⁰

Here, Yanshou states that in order to attain Buddhahood, each aspect of practice must be tied to the realization of the mind. However, though the teaching that one follows may be based in words and language, it is important not to be attached to these words, and to only understand the underlying principle behind them. The quote he uses is found in the “Pure Conduct Chapter” chapter of the *Avatamsaka*, which discusses the contemplation of ten different objects, practice, or objects of practice and their emptiness and impermanence as a basis for contemplation of the mind as a means of attaining the pure conduct of a bodhisattva. The sentence Yanshou takes is the last sentence in the entire chapter, and describes the result of the practice of such a method of contemplation:

[...] If all bodhisattvas can be in harmony with this practice of contemplation, and not have dual understandings of all phenomena, then all Buddhadharma will quickly manifest before them, and when they bring forth the initial resolve, they shall attain unsurpassed, proper, equal enlightenment. *Knowing that all phenomena are identical to the inherent nature of the mind, they attain the wisdom body and do not attain enlightenment through reliance on others.*¹³¹

In this case, like the section from the *Avatamsaka*, Yanshou also uses this quote to describe a result of practice, but in his usage, the practice he referred to was no longer presented in the context of bodhisattva practice specifically. Additionally, he also uses it in the context of a discussion on how a practitioner ought to navigate possible views on language, something that was not present in the source.

¹³⁰ 又若欲研究佛乘，披尋寶藏，一一須消歸自己，言言使冥合真心。但莫執義上之文，隨語生見。直須探詮下之旨，契會本宗；則無師之智現前，天真之道不昧。如華嚴經云：「知一切法，即心自性；成就慧身，不由他悟。」 Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 219 lines b6–11.

¹³¹ 若諸菩薩能與如是觀行相應，於諸法中不生二解，一切佛法疾得現前，初發心時即得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提，知一切法即心自性，成就慧身，不由他悟。 Taishō vol. 10 no. 279, pg. 88 lines c29–a3.

The final two quotations I will discuss are situations where Yanshou quotes from the *Avatamsaka* and seems to depart from the original context of the quote altogether. As I stated earlier, the frequency of this occurrence makes up roughly a third of the situations where Yanshou quotes from the *Avatamsaka*; however, the presence of this phenomenon is significant nevertheless in understanding how Yanshou approached the sources he used and how comfortable he was with making them align with his own points.

The first of these can be found in the second fascicle of the *Records*. In a discussion of the myriad wonderful qualities of the principle of the One-mind, Yanshou tries to answer the interlocutor's question about the purpose of provisional discussion and elaboration of the teaching if it can be realized from a single verse or a single expression of its meaning:

The great vehicle of explicit meaning is replete whether it is long or short. Having understood one meaning, one attains the perfect interpretation; having heard a single verse, one has already made an effort towards attaining Buddhahood. What is the purpose of provisional discussion and going to the trouble of an explanation?¹³²

Yanshou argues that this expedient is necessary to express the teaching to beings of different capacities, and elevates the teaching as presented in the *Records* by stating that those who are able to hear of this teaching are truly rare. In support of this point, he cites similar quotations from various texts on the rarity and wholesome karma of those people who are able to hear of the Buddhist teaching.

Therefore, it should be known that through faith in the principle of the mind, one attains the *Mahāyāna* – equivalent to the attainment of the Buddhas of the three periods of time, there is no limit to the principles and meanings that one perceives; ascending the vehicle upon which the bodhisattvas of the ten directions ride upon, one attains inexhaustible merit. Having stumbled upon these mysterious transformations, one rejoices and transcends the depths of the teaching. Following the Buddha's teaching and repaying the kindness of the Buddha, there is no teaching of any prior

¹³² 問。了義大乘。廣略周備。解一義具圓通之見。聞一偈有成佛之功。何假述成。仍煩解釋。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 422 lines a22–a23.

transmission; expounding the sun-like teachings of the Buddha and attaining the Buddha's omniscience, the sole key is to understand the mind. Within this mirror of the principle, if even a single sentence enters the consciousness of a person, it will become a seed that lasts for eons to come, let alone speaking correctly of its deep mysteries [...] Furthermore, the chapter on manifestations says: "This Dharma door is called the secret place of the Tathagata [...] it is called expounding the inconceivable ultimate Dharma of the Tathagata's fundamental true nature."¹³³

This next quotation is found in the chapter of the *Avatamsaka* called "The manifestations of the Tathagata" which discusses the characteristics of the Buddha, such as his physical appearance, sounds, and mind, as manifested in the world. The specific quotation used is found in the section discussing how the Buddha preaches, and the Dharma door it refers to presumably refers to the dharma of the Buddha.

Disciples of the Buddha! The Tathagata uses all sorts of analogies to speak about all kinds of things, but there is no analogy that can explain this teaching. And why? The way to the wisdom of the mind is nonexistent and inconceivable. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas only speak of analogies in accordance with the minds of living beings to make them happy; they are not ultimate. Disciples of the Buddha! This Dharma door is called: the secret place of the Tathagata; it is called: that which is unknowable by all the world; it is called: entering the seal of the Tathagata; it is called: opening the gate to great wisdom; it is called: manifesting the lineage of the Tathagata; it is called: the accomplishment of all bodhisattvas it is called: that which is unbreakable by all the world; it is called: completely according with the states of the Tathagata; it is called: capable of purifying the realms of all beings; it is called: expounding the inconceivable ultimate Dharma of the Tathagata's fundamental true nature. Disciples of the Buddha! As for this Dharma door, the Tathagata does not speak of it for other living beings, and only for those bodhisattvas who aspire to the great vehicle and those bodhisattvas who have ascended the inconceivable vehicle. This Dharma door enters not the hands of all other living beings, only those of the great bodhisattvas.¹³⁴

¹³³ 故知信此心宗。成摩訶衍。同三世諸佛之所證。義理何窮。等十方菩薩之所乘。功德無盡。偶斯玄化。慶幸逾深。順佛旨而報佛恩。無先弘法。闡佛日而開佛眼。只在明心。此宗鏡中。若得一句入神。歷劫為種。況正言深奧 [...] 又出現品云。此法門。名為如來祕密之處。乃至名演說如來根本實性。不思議究竟法。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 423 lines a16–b13.

¹³⁴ 佛子！如來以一切譬諭說種種事，無有譬諭能說此法。何以故？心智路絕，不思議故。諸佛菩薩但隨眾生心，令其歡喜，為說譬諭，非是究竟。佛子！此法門名為：如來祕密之處，名：一切世間所不能知，名：入如來印，名：開大智門，名：示現如來種性，名：成就一切菩薩，名：一切世間所不能壞，

This passage describes the way that the Buddha speaks the teaching as ultimately inconceivable and ineffable. After listing a series of names that can be used to provisionally refer to the act of the Buddha teaching the Dharma, with the names serving to emphasize its esoteric and wondrous nature, the profoundness of the teaching is emphasized again by asserting that it is only ever accessible to great bodhisattvas. Yanshou's usage of the quote, however, takes it from a discussion of the perception and characteristics of the Buddha to a discussion on the mind by taking these referents to the way the Buddha speaks the Dharma and equating them instead to the principle of the One-mind as the root of all merit and practice.

The next example can be found in the further along in the second fascicle of the *Records* in response to a question about the justification of establishing the teaching of the mind as foundational principle of Buddhist doctrine. Citing the existence of myriad different teachings and expedients due to the varying capacities of living beings the interlocutor asks Yanshou why he picks solely the teaching of the mind as the principle:

The gates of teaching of expediency of all Buddhas are all established in accordance with the capacities of living beings; because their faculties are not equal, there are as many kinds of teachings as there are grains of dust and sand—the thirty-seven gates that aid in the attainment of the Way, and the fifty-two stages of practice. Why do you delineate only the One-mind as the mirror of the principle?¹³⁵

In his answer, Yanshou argues the correct nature of his approach by asserting the superiority of the teaching of the mind:

Answer: This teaching of the One-mind is replete and perfect with both principle and phenomena; it is both the father of great compassion and the mother of *prajna*; it is

名：一向隨順如來境界，名：能！淨一切諸眾生界，名：演說如來根本實性不思議究竟法。佛子！此法門，如來不為餘眾生說，唯為趣向大乘菩薩說，唯為乘不思議乘菩薩說；此法門不入一切餘眾生手，唯除諸菩薩摩訶薩。Taishō vol. 10 no. 279, pg.277 lines b21–c3.

¹³⁵ 問。諸佛方便教門。皆依眾生根起。根性不等。法乃塵沙。三十七品助道之門。五十二位修行之路。云何唯立一心以為宗鏡。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg. 242 lines c5–c7.

both the treasury of Dharma and the source of all practices. This is because within the entire Dharma realm, the Buddhas in all ten directions, all great bodhisattvas, *pratyekabuddhas*, sound-hearers, and all living beings identical are identical to this mind. All buddhas are already enlightened to it; living beings know not of it. Now, for those who have yet to know of it, I make an expedient which points directly to it. Because it is replete with the source, it is not false; because it is to be attained, it is not erroneous. Therefore, a verse from the *Avatamsaka* says: "It is just like a person who hears of a place where there is treasure. Because it is attainable, they become extremely joyful." The place of the treasure is the mind of living beings. Having just entered the door of faith, it manifests by itself. Having become enlightened to the fact that one originally possessed it, what is the use of attainment?¹³⁶

Comparing the verse's image of a treasure trove to the mind, Yanshou uses this verse from the *Avatamsaka*'s Chapter on the Ten Kinds of Patience to illustrate the primacy of the mind in both practice and attainment.

A closer look at the quote itself, however, shows that Yanshou's reading and usage of this image brings it out of the original context. The verse from which this stanza is taken comes from the Chapter on the Ten Kinds of Patience, which, as the title implies, discusses the ten kinds of patience that the bodhisattva should possess: "Disciples of the Buddha! The bodhisattva mahasattva possesses ten kinds of patience; if one attains this patience, then one attains the stage of unobstructed patience of all bodhisattvas, where one they obtain unobstructed and inexhaustible perception of all buddhadharmas." Each patience is first elaborated upon in prose; for instance,

Disciples of the Buddha! What is the bodhisattva mahasattva's patience with regards to sounds? It means that when the bodhisattva hears the dharma spoken by all Buddhas, they are neither surprised, shocked, nor fearful. They are deeply faithful in their understanding, strive towards them with delight, are mindful of them single-

¹³⁶ 答。此一心法。理事圓備。是大悲父。般若母。法寶藏。萬行原。以一切法界。十方諸佛。諸大菩薩。緣覺聲聞。一切眾生皆同此心。諸佛已覺。眾生不知。今為未知者。方便直指。以本具故不虛。以應得故非謬。故華嚴經頌云。譬如世間人。聞有寶藏處。以其可得故。心生大歡喜。寶藏處者。即眾生心。纔入信門。自然顯現。方悟從來具足。豈假功成。Taishō vol. 48 no. 2016, pg 424 lines c8–c15.

mindedly, and dwell peacefully in their practice. This is called the first of the
patiences of the bodhisattva mahasattva, patience with regards to sounds.¹³⁷

The chapter ends with a verse summarization of the different kinds of patience and their
significance. The verse, and also the lines that Yanshou quotes here, begins with asserting the
greatly valuable nature of the teaching:

It is just like a person
Who hears of a place where there is treasure.
Because it is attainable,
They become extremely joyful.

In this way, with great wisdom,
the bodhisattva, the true disciple of the Buddha,
listens to the Buddhadharma
and its characteristic of profound tranquility.

When he hears this profound teaching,
his mind is at peace;
neither shocked nor fearful,
he does not have any apprehension.

When the great knight seeks Bodhi,
he hears this great sound
and his mind, purified, is capable of patience
and has no doubts.

He reflects that having heard this
truly profound and wondrous teaching,
he will attain omniscience
and become the great guiding teacher of humans and gods.

When the bodhisattva hears this sound,
his mind is greatly joyful
and bringing forth determination of mind,
he vows to seek all Buddhadharmas.

Because of his joy in Bodhi,
his mind becomes gradually refined;

¹³⁷ 佛子！云何為菩薩摩訶薩音聲忍？謂聞諸佛所說之法不驚、不怖、不畏，深信悟解，愛樂趣向，專
心憶念，修習安住。是名：菩薩摩訶薩第一音聲忍。Taishō vol. 10 no. 279, pg. 232 lines b12–15.

his faith quickly increases
and he does not oppose the teaching.¹³⁸

The verse begins with a comparison of the teaching of the ten kinds of patience to a great trove of treasure, thus asserting that any person who hears this teaching has attained something truly valuable. It then goes on to describe the effects of hearing it: the mind becomes peaceful, joyful, and purified, and one will definitely attain Buddhahood in the future. The entire verse is situated in the context of the specific teaching of the ten kinds of patience that were elaborated upon immediately prior, though the verse only begins with an implicit reference to it and does not mention it directly. However, Yanshou takes the first stanza of the verse and makes use of its ambivalent nature to apply it to the superiority of the teaching of the mind, thus taking it out of its original context and using it to support his own argument.

D. Conclusion

From this overview of Yanshou's utilization of Huayan sources in his writing, it can be seen that he approached the contexts of Huayan sources rather freely. He didn't always use quotes from the *Avatamsaka* in their original contexts, as can be seen from the examples discussed in this chapter; he might use a quote discussing one topic to support his point about a different topic altogether. If it was necessary, he did not hesitate to use these quotes in such a way that would best support the point he was trying to make in the moment about the

¹³⁸ 佛子！是名菩薩摩訶薩十種忍。爾時，普賢菩薩摩訶薩欲重宣其義而說頌言：譬如世有人，聞有寶藏處，以其可得故，心生大歡喜。如是大智慧，菩薩真佛子，聽聞諸佛法，甚深寂滅相。聞此深法時，其心得安隱，不驚亦不怖，亦不生恐懼。大士求菩提，聞斯廣大音，心淨能堪忍，於此無疑惑。自念以聞此，甚深微妙法，當成一切智，人天大導師。菩薩聞此音，其心大歡喜，發生堅固意，願求諸佛法。以樂菩提故，其心漸調伏，令信益增長，於法無違謗。Taishō vol. 10 no. 279, pg. 234 line c16 – pg. 235 line a5.

doctrine of the mind. If the subject of discussion was different or not explicitly related to the mind, he was comfortable with disregarding the original context of the text. His willingness to override native contexts in favor of supporting his own arguments regarding Chan teaching is indicative of the fluidity with which he understood and utilized ideas from various doctrines. His understanding, interpretation, and usage of the *Avataṃsaka* did not limit it to its own context; it could be used and could exist in tandem with other modes of thought. This means that his understanding of different scriptures and the corpuses affiliated with them was that they could be open to interpretation outside of their own original contexts. The possibility that Yanshou was merely cherry-picking when he needed to cannot be ignored; however, the ways in which he used other doctrinal sources, such as Tiantai texts, in similar ways suggests that his view of other swaths of Buddhist doctrine was similar.

As can be seen from Chapter 1's discussion of the changing definition of "Chan," it is necessary in Buddhist studies to problematize contemporary and previously popular notions of traditions as unchanging monoliths, for they were entities that were constantly in flux. What "Chan" meant for Yanshou may not have meant the same even for the people who later composed his hagiographies and labeled him as a Chan master. From the example of Yanshou's writing in the *Records*, we can infer that the boundaries between these dynamic "traditions" were fluid as well – if different doctrinal sources, such as the *Avataṃsaka* and Yanshou's conception of Chan as mind-only thought, were understood to be mutually intelligible, he would not have used one in his discussion of the other at all. If he understood the two to be similar entities but clearly divided from one another, it is unlikely that Yanshou would have brought quotes from the *Avataṃsaka* out of their original context when he was using them. Just as a lagoon near the ocean is formed where fresh water and salt water meet

without a physical boundary in between, making it difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins, so we can imagine the boundaries between different schools of thought – fluid points of contact that allowed for free usage and interaction with different ideas. This is not to say that all boundaries envisioned or discussed later are fictitious or inaccurate. They may have existed at some time at varying degrees of substantiality, but ultimately, it is unknown to us the exact extent to which they were real. Whether boundaries that are depicted to exist between traditions of thought are accurate or not, they are still useful for supplementing our understanding of history and revealing the motivations of the people who introduced these ideas in the first place.

V. Concluding Remarks

In this project, I have discussed the problematization of the conventional understanding of Chan, as well as the importance of approaching this idea critically and avoiding the tendency to treat it as a monolithic tradition that meant the same thing to all people. Using hagiographies of Yanshou as an example, I examined different portrayals of the figure and various understandings of his lineage to show how writers represented him to suit their own, often sectarian purposes. I discussed the complexities of calling Yanshou a Chan master, why uncritical usage of this term is problematic, and how it must be approached if this label is to be retained – to describe him as a Chan master in the terms that he would have understood Chan to embody, not how medieval hagiographers or modern scholars might have imagined. I went on to answer the question of what Chan meant for Yanshou as illustrated in the *Records of the Source-Mirror*, and proposed that for Yanshou, Chan was a kind of Buddhism that included such characteristics as an emphasis on meditative practice, mind-only ontology, a lineage associated with Bodhidharma, scholastic writing, and antinomianism. After examining Yanshou’s usage of Huayan sources in the *Records*, relying on his tendency to freely quote the *Avatamsaka sūtra* regardless of their original context, I attempted to argue for a fluid conception of sectarian identity in medieval Chinese Buddhism.

In a broader scope, however, I began this project with the question “What is Chan Buddhism?” This question is fundamentally based on the concepts of definitions and categories, and why the way we understand them is important. The reason this question is significant to Buddhist studies, and at the same time so difficult to answer, can be explained

with the effect of scientific scrutiny upon phenomena.¹³⁹ By shedding light onto the nature and the characteristics of phenomena, study brings about change in phenomena by causing the formation of their identity as they are gradually amalgamated into a coherent category, and the criteria of what is included and excluded in that category is developed. The identity of this category is solidified as more qualities about the phenomena are revealed and characteristics in their regularities are established. A category of a scientific object (as opposed to the its own existence as a phenomenon) is formed through a continuum in which our understanding of it changes as it is subjected to scrutiny; as Lorraine Daston states, “...scientific objects might not be invented, but they grow more richly real as they become entangled in webs of cultural significance, material practices, and theoretical derivations. In contrast to quotidian objects, scientific objects broaden and deepen: they become ever more widely connected to other phenomena, and at the same time yield ever more layers of hidden structure.”¹⁴⁰ In the same way, our understanding of the notion of “Chan” began as a monolithic entity whose image was significantly influenced by posthumous texts and hagiographies, and did not take into consideration surrounding sociopolitical factors. With scrutiny, we now have a more nuanced view of Chan, the changes it has undergone over time, and the diverse backgrounds, motivations, and positions of figures who have been

¹³⁹ Lorraine Daston’s article on the coming into being of scientific categories discusses the applied metaphysics of scientific domains of phenomena, and how they come into being and pass away as objects of scientific inquiry. Phenomena already exist in the colloquial sense and so are already “real,” but the intensity of how real they are depends on how much they are subject to scientific scrutiny and their involvement in scientific practice. (Daston, “Introduction: The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects”, pg. 1) An example provided to explain this is the category of “monsters.” As an idea in the imagination, monsters have existed for a long time, but the process that incorporated them into scientific study, where they were investigated in terms of such sciences as taxonomy, anatomy, and embryology, was neither complete nor instantaneous. Applied metaphysics is based on the study of the realness and historicity of scientific objects and categories become salient through scientific attention and thus are transformed from unprepossessing phenomena into scientific objects.

¹⁴⁰ Daston, “Introduction: The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects”, pg. 13.

placed in this category. The more knowledge is gained about this phenomenon, the more complex it becomes, and the more dangerous it is to think about it in simplistic terms that disregard these intricacies.

To acknowledge the complexity of the concept of Chan, in labeling Yanshou as a Chan master, I proposed making the definition of Chan specific to him, problematizing this categorization of him and defining what Chan meant for him in particular. This makes the idea of “Chan” vary from person to person, bringing less clarity of what the concept is in definitive terms, but better approximates the fluidity of the concept and recognizes the distortion that is generated by the gaze of those who follow. The modern scholarly gaze of Chan, which is already shaped by the distortion of building an ultimately incomplete view of the past, is further dependent upon the distortions created by the generations of gazes before us, be it writers of histories or previous scholars. Thus, through scientific scrutiny, we are actually compounding distortions; to accept and approach this inevitable aspect of scholarly study requires an awareness of how it affects the questions we ask and the answers we find. With this approach, I propose using the idea of a polythetic class as a model for thinking about the definition of Chan.¹⁴¹ Since it is difficult, and arguably impossible, to locate an

¹⁴¹ In his article “What, if anything, is Mahāyāna Buddhism?”, Jonathan Silk reframes the question of “What is Mahāyāna Buddhism?” by proposing a polythetic definition for the concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which has historically been defined as an existence in opposition to the other concept of Hinayana Buddhism. This has been called into question due to the problematic nature of treating both ideas as monolithic entities; in addition, the distinction between the two establishes the question of its identity in a dichotomous framework that sets Mahāyāna against something that is not Mahāyāna. (Silk, “What, if anything, is Mahāyāna Buddhism?”, pg. 383) Instead of asking what Mahāyāna Buddhism is, Silk suggests thinking about the issue at hand in terms of the relation between Mahāyāna and the Buddhism of sects. He argues that “Mahāyāna” scriptures are actually embodiments of a criticism of certain kinds of thinking, a product of certain groups expressing their doctrinal opposition to other groups. His proposed picture of authors of Mahāyāna scriptures supposes that each scripture represents a different community and thus a “different” kind of Mahāyāna. (Silk, pg. 319) This problematizes the view of Mahāyāna literature as belonging to a singular chronological progression, which conflates multiple lines of Mahāyāna literature into the monolith of “the” Mahāyāna. (Silk, pg. 372) In sum, asking the question “What is Mahāyāna Buddhism?” requires recognizing and questioning the framework that is the basis of an originally dualistic distinction, and discussing different possible models of

essence for the definition of Chan Buddhism that is common to all the different kinds of Chan over all periods of time, it is more practical to think of Chan in terms of a polythetic class, where members belong to a class if they possess a large but indefinite number of characteristics that are necessary for inclusion. As opposed to a monothetic class, a polythetic class allows the incorporation of as many relevant features as necessary, but does not have clear boundaries as to what is included or excluded. By collecting a large number of features to establish a pattern of resemblance between individual members, a polythetic class provides a framework for creating a specific category for a group of phenomena while simultaneously acknowledging the plurality that is present in the group. Understanding Chan as a polythetic class by making the definition specific every time the term is applied to someone or something allows us to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the different aspects of this concept and the figures to whom it applies, to use it in a way that is less problematic, and embraces the diversity of the medieval Chinese religious landscape.

definition and classification in order to address it in a way that is not problematic. Due to these concerns, Silk argues that a monothetic definition of Mahāyāna Buddhism, in which a class is defined upon a feature (or a group of features) that a phenomenon must possess to be a member of the class, is insufficient to acknowledge the plurality of different kinds of Mahāyāna.

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VII. Appendices

Appendix I: A list of hagiographical collections that mention Yanshou, in chronological order of composition

1. 968: *Records of High Sanghans of the Song* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳) by Zanning (贊寧, 919–1001); Taishō vol. 50, no. 2061, pg. 887, lines a29–b16.
2. 1004: *Records of the Transmission of the Lamp* (*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄) by Daoyuan (道原, dates unknown); Taishō vol. 51, no. 2076, pg. 421, line c6 – pg. 422, line a20.
3. Composed during the early years of the Xuanhe 宣和 period, 1119–1125, actual date of composition and/or publication unknown: *Biographies of the Sangha-jewels of the Chan grove* (*Chanlin sengbao zhuan* 禪林僧寶傳) by Huihong (惠洪, 1070–1128); *Xuzangjing* vol. 79, no. 1560, pg. 510, line a16 – pg. 511, line c4.
4. Composed during the Southern Song period, 1127–1279, actual date of composition and/or publication unknown: *Complete Collection of the Chan Tradition's Verses* (*Chanzong song gulianzhu tongji* 禪宗頌古聯珠通集) by Faying (法應, dates unknown); *Xuzangjing* vol. 65, no. 1295, pg. 717, lines a22–b12.
5. Written 1183, published 1189: *Essential Collected Teachings on the Joining of the Lamp* (*Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要) by Wuming (悟明, dates unknown); *Xuzangjing* vol. 79, no. 1557, pg. 243, lines b5–16.
6. 1252: *Five Lamps Unite at the Source* (*Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元) by Puji (普濟, dates unknown); *Xuzangjing* vol. 80, no. 1565, pg. 211, lines a2–b12.
7. 1254: *Praises of the Masters of the Five Schools of the Correct Principle* (*Wujia zhengzong zan* 五家正宗讚) by Shaotan (紹曇, ?–1297); *Xuzangjing* vol. 78 no. 1554, pg. 621, lines a5–b22.
8. 1256: *Brief Accounts of Prominent Monks in the Regions of Wulin Mountain [Hangzhou region]* (*Wulin xihu gaoseng shilue* 武林西湖高僧事略) by Yuanjing and Yuanfu (元敬, 元復, dates unknown for both); *Xuzangjing* vol. 77, no. 1526, pg. 583, line c11 – pg. 584, line a1.

9. 1268: *A Comprehensive Record of the Buddha and the Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀) by Zhipan (志磐, dates unknown); Taishō vol. 49, no. 2035, pg. 264, line b28 – page 265, line a7.

10. Published 1341: *A Comprehensive Record of the Buddha and Patriarchs Throughout Generations* (*Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載) by Nianchang (念常, 1282–1341); Taishō vol. 49, no. 2036, pg. 658, line a11 – pg. 659, line a1.

Appendix II: Another translation of a hagiographical account of Yanshou

宋 紹曇《五家正宗贊》卷 4

永明智覺禪師

師諱延壽。嗣韶國師。餘杭王氏子。自幼知敬佛乘。既冠。不茹葷酒。日惟一食。持法華七行俱下。感羣羊跪聽。年二十八。為華亭鎮將。屬翠巖參禪師遷止龍冊。大闡玄化。師遂求出家。請于朝。文穆王從其志。禮參為師。執勞供眾。身惟一布衲。後往天台天柱峯。九旬習定。有烏類斥鷃巢于衣衲中。暨謁國師。一見深器之。密授玄旨。仍謂師曰。汝與元帥有緣。他日大作佛事。惜吾不及見耳。

Song dynasty – Shaotan, *Praises of the Masters of the Five Schools of the Correct Principle*, fascicle #4

Chan Master Yongming Zhijue

The Master was posthumously known as Yanshou, and he received the transmission of the teaching from National Master (De)Shao. He was descended from the Wang clan of the Yuhang region. From a young age, he was aware of and respected the Buddha vehicle, and after he came of age, refrained from consuming the five pungent vegetables, meat, and alcohol, only eating one meal a day. When he read the *Lotus Sutra*, he read seven lines at a single glance, and herds of goats were moved to kneel beside him and listen to his recitation. At the age of twenty-eight, he served as the general of the Huating regiment. At the time, Chan Master Can of Cuiyan moved to Longce Monastery and expounded broadly on mysterious principles. The Master [Yanshou] then sought to leave the householder's life and made his request to the court. King Wenmu granted his wish and he took Master Can as his teacher. Performing labor to serve the community, he possessed only a single robe made of cloth. Later, he dwelled at Tianzhu Peak in the Tiantai mountains, in the ninety days he spent practicing meditation, birds and quails built nests in his robes. National Master Jiye [presumably Deshao] met him and recognized his potential immediately. Having secretly transmitted to him the mysterious teaching, he said to Yanshou: "You have affinities with the commander, and in the future, you will accomplish great things for Buddhism. It is a shame that I will not live to see it."

初住雪竇。上堂。雪竇者裏。迅瀑千尋。不停織粟。奇巖萬仞。無立足處。汝等諸人向甚麼處進步。

僧問。雪竇一徑。如何履踐。

曰。步步寒華結。言言徹底冰。又偈曰。

孤猿叫落中巖月。野客吟殘半夜燈。

此景此時誰得意。白雲深處坐禪僧。

建隆元年。忠懿王請入靈隱。為第一世。明年。請住永明。為第二世。

Initially, the Master dwelled at Xuedou Mountain. One day, he ascended to the hall and said: "In Xuedou Mountain, there is a swift waterfall that is hundreds of meters high, and the flow of the water does not stop for even a single millimeter. The cliffs on its sides are steep and sharp, and there isn't even a single place to find one's footing. To what place do you direct your efforts?"

A monk asked: "How should the path to the peak of Xuedou Mountain be traveled?"

The Master said: "With every step taken, frigid flowers bloom; with each word spoken, the ice [presumably on the surface of the water] is penetrated to its very depths."

A verse says:

"The cries of the solitary monkey echo over the cliffs and the moon;
The traveler in the wilderness sings by the light of the lamp in the night.
In this scene, at this time, who can grasp the meaning?

Only that monk who sits in meditation in the depths of the white clouds."

In the first year of the Jianlong era, King Zhongyi requested him to serve as the first abbot of Lingyin Monastery. The next year, he was asked to serve as the second abbot of Yongming Monastery.

僧問。如何是永明旨。

曰。更添香著。

曰。謝師指示。

曰。且喜沒交涉。有偈曰。

欲識永明旨。門前一湖水。

日照光明生。風來波浪起。

A monk asked: "What is the teaching of Yongming?"

The Master said: "Refill the incense."

The monk said: "I thank the Master for this teaching."

The Master said: "Simply be happy and do not cultivate relations with others."

A verse said:

"If you want to know the principle of Yongming,

There is a lake near the entrance.

When the sun shines, light is reflected;

When there is wind, waves rise."

僧問。學人久在永明。為什麼不會永明家風。

曰。不會處會取。

曰。不會處如何會。

曰。牛胎生象子。碧海起紅塵。

A monk asked: "This student has stayed long at Yongming Monastery. Why don't I understand the traditions of Yongming?"

The Master said: "Understand it at the site of not understanding."

The monk said: "How does one understand at the site of not understanding?"

The Master said: "The womb of the cow gives birth to an elephant; the blue ocean is the source of red dust [mundane defilement]."

師著宗鏡錄一百卷。播於海外。高麗國王覽師言教。遣使賣書敘弟子禮。又遣僧三十六人問道。皆承印記。前後歸本國。各化一方。以開寶八年十二月二十六日示寂淨慈。塔于大慈山。

The Master composed the *Records of the Source-mirror* in a hundred fascicles, and it spread across the oceans. Having read the teachings of the Master, the king of Koryeo sent envoys to convey rites of becoming a disciple. He further dispatched thirty-six monks to ask for the teaching, and each of them received confirmation that they had comprehended it. One by one they returned to their own country and traveled in different directions to teach people. He manifested passing into stillness on the sixteenth day of the twelfth month, eighth year of the Kaibao era [975]. A stupa was built in his honor on Daci Mountain.

贊曰。

一出頭來 風標迥別
棄華亭鎮將 腰佩寶刀
依龍冊老僧 身被布衲
誦法華七行俱下 感群羊跪聽座隅
習大定三月方回 有斥鷃巢栖衣襪
天台得片言悟旨 念念幻緣空
乳峯指一路通玄 步步寒花結
迅瀑千尋不停織粟 探水丈痕深
奇巖萬仞迥絕躋攀 望崖心路絕
牛胎生象子 垂示太分明
碧海起紅塵 家風重滿洩
枕藜床喚回清夢 野客吟殘半夜燈
倚蒲團坐斷白雲 孤猿叫落中巖月
著宗鏡一百餘卷 點鐵成金
印高麗三十六僧 證龜作鱉

潛行密用。佛眼亦難窺。真精進幢。慧日峯前亘百世。光明燦發。

法眼至此三世。師雖印高麗三十六僧。然傳燈不載名字。機緣。茲不及贊。」

The praise says:

"As soon as he appeared, the winds of tradition became greatly different.

He gave up his position as the general of the Huating regiment, a jeweled sword at his waist. Relying upon the old monk of Longce [Monastery], cloth robes cover his body.

Reciting the *Lotus*, he read seven lines at a single glance, moving herds of goats to kneel beside him to listen.

Practicing the great concentration, he only returned after three months, and quails made nests in his robes.

At Tiantai mountain, he received a single word of the teaching, and every single thought became empty of illusory conditions.

At Ru Peak [presumably Xuedou], if connected to the dialogue in the prose section], he pointed to a single path, and every single step causes frigid flowers to bloom.

The swift waterfall, a thousand meters tall, doesn't stop for even a single moment; seeking the depths of the water, its traces run deep.

The steep cliff, as sharp as a thousand blades, defies all efforts to scale it; gazing into the heart of the peak, the path disappears.

The womb of the cow gives birth to an elephant; the great and clear teaching is expounded.

The blue ocean is the source of red dust; customs and traditions are replenished anew.

Lying in bed on pillows made of goosefoot, one summons refreshing dreams; the traveler in the wilderness sings by the light of the lamp in the night.

Sitting on cattail mats, the source of the white clouds is cut off; cries of the solitary monkey echo over the cliffs and the moon.

He wrote the *Zongjing lu* in a hundred chapters--pointing at iron, it becomes gold.

He verified the attainment of thirty-six monks from Koryeo--mere turtles turn into *bie* [soft-shelled turtles, valued as a delicacy]."

As for his secret practices, it is difficult even for the Buddha to perceive them. [or, it is difficult to perceive them even for one who possesses the Buddha-eye]. As for the banner of his true diligence, it shall extend for a hundred generations over the peak of Huiri Mountain. Luminous and brilliant, Fayan's lineage reaches the third generation. Though the Master verified the attainment of thirty-six Koryeo monks, the transmission does not record their names.

(Xuzangjing vol. 78, no. 1554, pg. 621, lines a5–b22)