

BOOK REVIEWS

Iron Eyes: The Life and Teachings of Zen Master Tetsugen Dōkō. By Helen J. Baroni. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006. 259 pages. Paperback, \$25.95.

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Helen J. Baroni's pioneering efforts at introducing Ōbaku Zen to English readers continues in her latest work, *Iron Eyes*, a study of the well-known Ōbaku monk Tetsugen Dōkō (鉄眼道光, 1630–1682). Tetsugen, as Baroni explains, is the most well-known Ōbaku monk both inside and outside of Japan due to his legendary social welfare activities. Within Japan, Tetsugen is also well known for completing the first wood block copy of the Chinese Buddhist canon, for being both a model Buddhist and Japanese citizen, and for his dharma teachings. In *Iron Eyes* Baroni critically evaluates all of these understandings of Tetsugen, and in addition she provides translations of Tetsugen's teachings and three biographies.

Baroni begins with a brief introduction that provides an overview of Buddhism during the Tokugawa era and the establishment of the Ōbaku school in Japan. Following this, Baroni turns her attention to Tetsugen's life, work, and teachings. Chapter 1 explores Tetsugen's life. In this chapter, Baroni explores Tetsugen's ordination as a Shin Buddhist priest, his decision to leave the Shin Buddhist priesthood, and his entry into and life as a monk in the Ōbaku school. While Baroni is clear in acknowledging that there is uncertainty regarding the exact reasons why Tetsugen left Shin Buddhism, she does review a number of relevant works that explore possible reasons why he abandoned the Shin tradition for the Ōbaku school. Baroni begins by considering how

the events of the *Jōō no kyōgi ronsō* (承応の協議論争, the Jōō incident) in which Saigin (西吟, 1605–1663), a former Zen monk and Tetsugen’s teacher at the Hongwanji-ha Gakuryō (本願寺派学寮), was accused of mixing Zen teachings with Shin Buddhist teachings. The doctrinal controversy became so intense that Shin Buddhist officials asked the government to become involved, resulting in the closing of the Gakuryō in 1654 and Saigin leaving Kyoto and returning to his hometown. Baroni speculates that perhaps Tetsugen’s interest in Zen was a result of his encounters with Saigin. This interest in Zen, coupled with Tetsugen’s recurrent teachings on the necessity that both laypeople and monastics keep the precepts, something Shin Buddhism does not expect, may help to explain why Tetsugen chose to become a student of Yinyuan Longqi (隱元隆琦, 1592–1673), the Chinese Zen master credited with founding the Ōbaku school in Japan.

In chapter 2, Baroni explores Tetsugen’s undertaking of efforts to complete the carving of a woodblock edition of the Wanli edition of the Chinese Buddhist scriptures brought from China by Yinyuan. Baroni draws upon a number of sources to describe the possible influences that provided the impetus for the project, the support and the difficulties he faced, and Tetsugen’s undying resolve to see the project through to completion.

The focus of chapter 3 is on Tetsugen’s teachings. Baroni begins by noting that while Tetsugen is usually thought of in association with the carving of the scriptures, during his own life he was also highly regarded as a teacher of laypeople. In this chapter Baroni focuses not only on the themes of Tetsugen’s teaching but also his methodology. Baroni is thus able to highlight the role that the Buddhist scriptures played within the Zen tradition, offering another corrective to the popular view that Zen shuns the written word. Tetsugen’s teachings often took the form of him quoting a text in Chinese or classical Japanese and then expounding on its meaning for laypeople. Baroni’s analysis leads her to conclude that Tetsugen’s skill in teaching was “not in elucidating new ideas for the tradition, but in translating and presenting the existing tradition for believers of his own generation” (p. 76).

The fourth chapter explores what Baroni calls “the myth of Tetsugen.” Drawing on both religious and secular works, she explores the hagiography of Tetsugen in the pre-modern and modern eras. In addition, Baroni briefly explores how the myth of Tetsugen has been used by Western Buddhists in order to promote a more socially active form

of Buddhism. Unfortunately, while Baroni refers to certain “negative biographies” that sought “to discredit Tetsugen” (p. 79), she does not consider them along with the traditional hagiographies. Neither in the body of the work nor in the notes does she state what texts she is referring to, a serious limitation as these works would no doubt help to explain why Tetsugen left the teachings of Jōdo Shinshū and the larger social context in which Tetsugen lived and worked.

The second half of the work presents translations of a number of Tetsugen’s writings. These highly readable translations help the reader to understand the variety of roles that Tetsugen filled throughout his life. The majority of these are translations of his teachings. Also included are translations of Tetsugen’s poetry, a number of letters, and progress reports related to the carving of the scriptures. This section, like chapter 4, reinforces the role of Buddhist scriptures in Tetsugen’s teachings as well as providing a firsthand account of how the tremendous task of producing a complete wood block edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon was completed.

Although *Iron Eyes* as a whole is a solid work, there are some problematic aspects to this study. Baroni’s conventions for translating proper names are not explained. This problem is compounded by the fact that there is no character list, nor is transliteration from Japanese consistently provided. Readers are thus expected to know that the Jōō Incident is Baroni’s somewhat interpretive translation of the *Jōō no kyōgi ronsō*, literally the “Jōō era doctrinal debates.” Furthermore, the author at times fails to provide adequate citations. Baroni’s discussion of the *Jōō no kyōgi ronsō* contains no reference to either primary or secondary sources. These are, however, small detractions from a well-written book.

In conclusion, the overall contribution of this book is substantial. *Iron Eyes* adds to the increasing number of scholarly understandings of Tokugawa era Buddhism, reinforces the importance of the written word within Zen Buddhism, and provides translations and analysis of Tetsugen’s written work.

Inventing Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch: Hagiography and Biography in Early Ch'an. By John Jørgensen. *Sinica Leidensia* Vol. 68. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2005. 862 pages. Hardcover, \$299.

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Whether one chooses to see Huineng (638–713), the purported Sixth Patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism, as a purely hagiographical construct, as a leading historical figure of the Tang (618–906), or as a combination of both, the persona of Huineng stands centrally in the history and formation of Chinese Chan. In fact, the many-faceted Huineng-figure is pivotal to the Chan tradition, whether seen from a sectarian or a hermenutical perspective, or from a historical perspective based on modern, analytical scholarship. Since the publication in 1967 of Phillip Yampolsky's ground-breaking and annotated translation of the Dunhuang version of *Huineng's Platform Scripture (Liuzu tan jing)*, there has been a growing interest among scholars in the West in the history of early Chan to which Huineng belonged. This interest culminated during the second half of the 1980s with a series of high-quality publications, mainly by American researchers following the lead of a number of Japanese scholars, in particular Yanagida Seizan (1922–2006), the distinguished doyen of Chan studies in Japan.¹ The 1990s saw a general decline of interest in Chan Buddhism under the Tang among Western scholars in the field, with focus shifting to the following Song dynasty (960–1279). Moreover, this change also heralded a shift away from Chan as the sole focus of attention to encompass other denominations of Chinese Buddhism. This development was in many ways a natural reaction to the previous great interest that had been invested in Tang Chan, but also a result of the growing recognition that most of the primary sources on Chinese Chan had in fact been produced during the Song. As a consequence of this it had gradually dawned on the concerned scholars that it was the Song vision of Tang Chan that had dominated their own understanding of the developments of that tradition.

Despite this, the extant, primary material on Tang-dynasty Chan is really rather extensive, and there are many areas and topoi that still need to be looked at. Indeed, in the light of what we know today, in particular as Dunhuang studies have progressed rapidly during the

past two decades, quite a few areas in the study of early Chan are in need of being redressed in a more critical light, Huineng and his *Platform Scripture* being one of them. Jørgensen's new work is in fact the fruits of more than twenty years of research on the Chan tradition of the Tang, and as such can be seen as having had its roots in the scholarly interest in early Chan that peaked during the 1980s as mentioned above. Jørgensen's interest in and fascination with Tang-dynasty Chan to a large extent can be traced back to the influence of Yanagida, with whom he was closely associated. Jørgensen's deep interest in the early Chan tradition did wane, however, and he continued doggedly in his investigation of the primary and secondary sources, especially those connected with the name Huineng. Hence, the present study is not only an attempt at setting things right in the sense of elucidating the complex and multifaceted Huineng persona, it is also an update of previous scholarship on this important monk as well as a critical review of studies on Tang Chan in the past four decades, and more. Therefore, *Inventing Hui-neng* is a most welcome addition to the fairly extensive number of studies on Huineng and the history of early Chan Buddhism available to us today in several languages.

Jørgensen's bulky study consists of seven chapters divided into two major parts as well as two lengthy appendices. In addition there is an introduction, a conclusion, and the standard bibliography and topic index. The contents of the book is as follows.

Introduction. Here, Jørgensen sketches the book's scope. This includes the figure of the Chan master Huineng, the cult of relics and the cult of the book, ideas about inventing or fabricating history, characteristics of medieval history, historiography and biography, hagiography, etc.

Part I: The Hagiographical Image and Relic Worship. This section comprises four chapters. Chapter 1 contains an analysis of Huineng's hagiography. This includes a discussion of Confucian ancestral concerns, the cultural background for the rise of Chan during the early eighth century, and a comparison of Huineng's hagiography to the hagiographies of the figures of Confucius, Buddha, and Bodhidharma. In chapter 2 Jørgensen focuses on the role of Huineng as relic, including discussions of the Huineng "mummy"; the after-life of relics, portraits, reliquaries, and *stūpas*; and so on. Chapter 3, "Secondary Relics, Ancestor Worship and Lineage Legitimation," includes a discussion of the patriarch's robe and bowl, ancestor worship, and lineage legitimation.

In short, it is an investigation of the political dimension of Huineng's relics. Chapter 4, "The Furtum Sacrum," is devoted to a comparative discussion of relic theft in relation to the extended hagiography of Huineng—in particular, the so-called "skull-relic," which modern Korean Buddhists believe is kept at Ssangye Temple in Mt. Chiri.² Jørgensen show that this "relic" is a fabrication, the history of which only dates back to the late nineteenth century.

Part II: The Writing of the Hagiography. Part 2 of Jørgensen's work is divided into two sections. Section A, "Place and Authority in the Life of Hui-neng," deals with both the socio-political and geographical background of the Huineng hagiography. Section B, "The Chan Hagiographies: Authors and Places," attempts to trace the evolution and authorship of Huineng hagiographies and the *Platform Scripture*.

Chapter 5 deals with the socio-political background and the intellectual milieus in relation to the rise of Chan Buddhism. The author also touches upon literary concerns, in particular the connection between the *guwen* movement and Buddhism. He also tries to pinpoint the identity of the author(s) of the *Platform Scripture* and the *Baolin zhuan*, and in this process he investigates the possible author/compiler roles played by the Chan monks Jiaoran (ca. 734–791?), Fahai (fl. eighth century), Lingche (746–816), and Dayi (746–818).

In chapter 6, "Place Authority, Regional Images and the Evolution of Chan Hagiography," Jørgensen deals with the role of location, what he terms "religious geography" in relation to the development of the various Chan Buddhist centers that rose in the various parts of China during the Tang. Included is a discussion of the North–South dichotomy, the importance of metropol vs. province, as well as a description of a number of regional centers including the areas around Yizhou (Sichuan), Jiangnan (Hunan, Jiangxi), and Lingnan (Guangzhou, Shaozhou, and Xinzhou).

Chapter 7, "Evolution of the Huineng Hagiographies," begins Section of B of Part II. Here, Jørgensen seeks to identify the various authors of the Huineng hagiographies and to place them within their respective religious and cultural settings. The bulk of this chapter is devoted to a comparative analysis of the *Caoqi dashi zhuan*, the *Platform Scripture*, and finally the *Baolin zhuan* in descending order. As to who the author of the *Platform Scripture* was, Jørgensen concludes that it was in all likelihood a monk associated with both the Mazu Daoyi and Shenhui lineages, who the author believes may have composed the scripture

or part of it, probably built up around an actual sermon attributed to Huineng (pp. 592, 626–627). Three possible candidates are held up as the authors, one being Chengguang (717–798), his disciple Zhenshu (d. ca. 820), and Dayi, the latter of whom we have already encountered. Literary concerns are also dealt with here, including a discussion of what constitutes biography and autobiography in the context of contemporary Tang literature as well as a review of the developments that preceded the composition of the hagiography of Huineng. Jørgensen then provides a conclusion to his analysis in which he sums up his earlier findings.

Appendix 1: The Translations. Jørgensen presents (a) three translations of Huineng biographies/hagiographies, including that of the *Caoqi dashi zhuan*; (b) the stele of the Korean Sōn master Hyeso/Chingam; (c) the text of the inscription of the Hair Stūpa in Guangxiao Temple in Guangzhou; and (d) a discussion of the bibliographical issues concerning the above three translations.

Appendix 2: Korea and the Compilation of the Tsu-t'ang chi. In this appendix the author endeavors to come to terms with the textual and historical problems of the *Zutang ji* (Collection of the Patriarchs' Halls) from 952 CE, also known under its Korean name *Chodang chip*, a Chan collection consisting mainly of material related to the so-called “recorded sayings” (*yulu*; Kor. *ōrok*) type of Chan literature. Jørgensen provides an outline of previous scholarship on this important Chan/Sōn classic, while attempting to solve the many questions concerning the supposed different versions of the *Zutang ji*.

As we proceed to a critical review of *Inventing Hui-neng*, let me begin by saying that I find Jørgensen's work a monumental achievement. First of all, he demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of essentially all the relevant primary sources down to the smallest detail. Moreover, the extent to which he is able to contextualize the history of early Chan on the basis of the available secondary historical sources is nothing short of impressive. Virtually all the relevant characters and persons who figure in Jørgensen's account are provided with detailed biographical data lifted from the primary sources. Not only has the author here made an in-depth study of one of the central figures in the history of Chinese Chan, but he has also included a synopsis of all the relevant scholarly writings on Huineng in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Western languages from the past fifty years and more. This alone makes his study a highly useful and important resource for everyone

interested in the history of Chinese Chan Buddhism. In addition to this, the author's deep and extensive knowledge of both Chinese and Korean Buddhism and their respective sources is noteworthy. As there is actually only a very limited number of Western scholars in the field today who are equally well versed in both traditions, this makes Jørgensen's achievement so much more relevant and useful. It may be no exaggeration to consider this study the single most important work to have appeared in the field of Chan Buddhist studies for the past two decades.

Inventing Hui-neng is much more than a book about the Sixth Patriarch and his rise to prominence as the founder of Chinese Chan Buddhism. In fact, Jørgensen's study is both an account of the rise and formation of what later became orthodox Chan as well as its subsequent developments throughout the Tang dynasty and into the Five Dynasties period. More than any previous study on Huineng, this work goes into detail with a great variety of aspects concerned with Chan Buddhism, including its textual history; Tang culture, in particular that of the literati class; geography; local history; as well as the various economic aspects. Not only does this make Jørgensen's study much richer and more multi-faceted than what has been presented in earlier scholarship, but it also reflects the ease with which the author utilizes and navigates through the staggering amount of primary and secondary sources on Chan in the Tang dynasty that is available to us today. Jørgensen "weaves" with much skill all these diverse and discrete pieces of information into a detailed and fascinatingly fine-meshed historical "fabric." Among the highlights is the way he uncovers and links together the various Chan masters he discusses with the political leaders—metropolitan as well as local—and the educated elite in general. As an example of this, mention can be made of Jørgensen's eminent discussion of several of the important Tang literati whose involvement with Chan helped shape its future development and success as a religious movement. In this connection, the author's treatment of the figure of Liu Zongyuan (773–819), the celebrated Confucian literatus whose Buddhist involvement is laid out in great detail as part of the background information on Huineng (Liu authored one of the later stele inscriptions on the master's life), is a balanced and wonderfully detailed account that by far out-classes earlier discussions of Liu's life-long involvement with Buddhism.

One of the special features of Jørgensen's study is the manner in which he treats the Huineng biography/hagiography as a distinct genre within classical Chinese literature. Indeed his interest in the construction of the Huineng hagiography constitutes a central part of the book (pp. 76–190). Already several years ago Jørgensen proposed that the construction of the Southern school of Chan and the role played by Huineng as its central figure should be “read” in accordance with the cultural terms of Confucian ancestral worship and secular lineage construction in traditional China.³ In *Inventing Hui-neng* the author takes this “reading” a step further when he compares the way the Huineng biography/hagiography has been constructed in comparative light of the traditional biographies of Śākyamuni, Confucius, and Bodhidharma respectively, the latter taken by the mid-Tang Chan tradition as its founding patriarch. On the basis of this approach Jørgensen concludes that the Huineng hagiography borrowed more or less directly from those other biographies in terms of style, structure, and content. He makes it clear that the Huineng biography was written over a historically well-seasoned template. Moreover, while the Huineng story was obviously couched in Buddhist trappings, Confucian ideology and concepts such as filial piety and ancestral lineage are overriding concerns throughout the Huineng biography.

When it comes to detail and background discussion in *Inventing Hui-neng*, one may well argue that the author often takes his reader far afield in lieu of the overall topic of Huineng. However, these “excursions” into the wider field of Tang history and culture is what make Jørgensen's study so interesting and significant. Even though it is clear that one of the aims of his study is to deconstruct the traditional image(s) of Huineng and through this process to show it as a product of certain historical, religious, and political forces, the Huineng persona, together with the many associated topics, becomes larger than life in Jørgensen's account.

As already noted, the author also demonstrates extensive knowledge of early Sōn Buddhism, the Korean pendant to Chan. This asset gives added import and significance to his arguments and shows at the same time how closely intertwined the two traditions were in terms of shared history, practices, beliefs, and literature.

It is of course both alluring and reasonable to see Jørgensen's book as a continuation and supplement to the earlier studies of early Chinese Chan such as those by Bernard Faure and John R. McRae, especial-

ly the former's *Le bouddhisme ch'an en mal d'histoire*⁴ and its companion volume, *La volonté d'orthodoxie dans le bouddhisme chinois*, as well as the latter's acclaimed study on the school(s) of Northern Chan.⁵ However, their respective interests and foci are in many ways quite different from what Jørgensen has set out to do here. Where Faure is a postmodern deconstructionist at heart (something that is actually not too evident in his early works referred to above) and McRae a more classical historian of religions in the formal sense, Jørgensen's approach is more text-analytical with a penchant for historical details and context. This does not mean that he has an overwhelmingly positivistic and/or essentialist approach per se, although one may well argue that his work evidences a strong leaning towards formal historical writing and a preoccupation with the text-critical approach. Rather, Jørgensen's reaches his conclusions by exploring different avenues of possibility on the basis of his reading of the data yielded by his sources. In practice this amounts to collateral, investigative—almost detective-like—approaches in which he tests the various hypotheses he brings to the fore, others as well as his own, against information carefully gathered from his analysis of the primary sources.

Probably due to the many still unresolved problems with the history of Tang Chan—including the issue of denomination, sect, or school; hermeneutical and practical interaction between Chan and the other Buddhist schools; the seminal question of Chan language as a special pedagogical tool, including Chan poetics; and the use of symbolic charts, just to mention a few areas that even the extensive and long-lasting Japanese scholarship in the field has been unable to deal with in a satisfying manner—Jørgensen can be seen to vacillate here and there in his work as regards the datings of the historical texts of the Chan traditions. This is not really a serious mistake, as the material is in many ways difficult to date precisely. Hence it makes sense to assign a fairly liberal and open-ended dating for several of the works in question, which he also does. The overall arguments concerning the creation of the biographies (actually hagiographies) of Huineng, and the eventual making of the *Platform Scripture*, are all placed within a logical and historically verifiable time-frame based on a careful reading of the primary sources.

It is self-evident that one of the important questions as regards Huineng and the *Platform Scripture* concerns the identification of its author(s) or at the very least its author-milieu. Many theories have

been forwarded to this end, but unfortunately very few of them, if any at all, have been really convincing. Were we to take seriously all the various views that concerned scholarship has put forth in the past half a century concerning the authorship of the *Platform Scripture*, we would end up with a highly fragmented and bifurcated result, to the effect that the book would be a sort of “textual patchwork.” Furthermore, based on this type of reading, it would convey the idea that nobody as such wrote the text, but that it was nevertheless made up by virtually everybody who played a role in Chinese Chan during the eighth century! Jørgensen also gets stuck in the authorship question, although it must be said in his defense that he strives bravely to overcome the problematics of this central issue. In the end he subscribes to a sort of hypothetical compromise and offers various alternative solutions. However, the fact that he essentially ends up without a final answer to this central question shows the depth of the problem of providing a viable solution to the authorship of the *Platform Scripture*.

It may very well be that the Dunhuang *Platform Scripture*, the oldest extant version of the text, has many layers, even contradicting ones, and that it reflects a wide variety of religio-political and ideological concerns going beyond the narrow interests of one single sectarian discourse. However, I am uncomfortable with the “fragmented” solution presented by Jørgensen, and believe that we might be able to narrow down the field of possibilities for finding a likely author, or rather author-context. Let me review some of the relevant issues, so that we may be able to at least narrow down the field for possible authors or, perhaps more properly, author-milieus.

According to Jørgensen’s final findings, Wuzhen (816–895), the celebrated monk-leader at Shazhou (Dunhuang),⁶ might be counted be among the candidates for the authorship of the *Platform Scripture*. The reason for this is that the text includes a monk with this name among the disciples of Huineng, actually a disciple of Fahai if we follow Jørgensen (p. 518). Somehow I find this identification unlikely. First of all, the Wuzhen from Dunhuang did not belong to any of the Chan traditions current during the first half of the ninth century, but was a scholar-monk with a special interest in the teachings of the Faxiang school and in particular that of the *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra*. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, had he been involved with the creation of the *Platform Scripture*, we would have to assign its date to some time between 840 to 895 CE given the dates of Wuzhen. This is much too

late given what we otherwise know about the book, the history of Chinese Chan, and Chinese Chan literature. Thirdly, there is the problem with the location. Shazhou was an outpost of the Tang dynasty that had recently fallen to the Tibetans and remained under their control ca. 786–848 CE when the Returning Righteous Army regained control of the area on behalf of the Tang throne. The implications of this are that Shazhou and the Buddhist communities at the Mogao Caves were more or less cut off from contact with the central provinces of Tang China for more than half a century, a period that roughly corresponds with the life of Wuzhen. Had Wuzhen been working with the *Platform Scripture*, he must have done so on the basis of data available to him prior to the Tibetan occupation of the area. However, Wuzhen was clearly not in a historical position to put together the *Platform Scripture* and should therefore neither be considered its author nor its compiler. At best he may have added his name to one of the copies produced in Dunhuang, but its author he certainly could not have been. Moreover, given that it is most likely Wuzhen from Dunhuang, whose name is on the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Platform Scripture*, it seems to me that the text actually was in Dunhuang prior to the Tibetan takeover in the late 780s. Moreover, Jørgensen dates the Dunhuang version to ca. 781 (p. 577). If we reject that the *Platform Scripture* was produced in Dunhuang, something I consider more than likely, it means that the scripture already existed in a similar form to the one we know today prior to its arrival in Dunhuang. This, then, would indicate that it was already in circulation among Buddhist centers in the central provinces of Tang China for at least a full decade or so before it was brought to Dunhuang. If this scenario holds true, then we should date the version from which the Dunhuang version was copied to around 870 CE at the very latest (it actually may have been composed as early as around 750 CE), in which case neither the *Caoqi dashi zhuan*, the *Lidai fabao ji*, nor the *Baolin zhuan* could have served as its direct inspiration. Rather, it was, in my view, this earlier version of the *Platform Scripture* that—directly or indirectly—gave rise to their respective discourses on Huineng.

This leads us to reviewing the question of the so-called “ur-version” of the *Platform Scripture*. Given that excerpts and passages from what appears to have been an earlier version of what later became the Dunhuang *Platform Scripture* have been identified in Chan material dating to after the death of Shenhui and before the ca. 775 CE dating for the compilation of the *Lidai fabao ji*, it is highly likely that an early ver-

sion of the scripture in question did indeed exist. Jørgensen appears to believe that it was Shenhui and his followers who fabricated the first version of the *Platform Scripture* as part of their campaign at bolstering Southern Chan. In this sense the author follows the view previously held by Yanagida and Yampolsky, who again were following the lead of the Chinese scholar Hu Shi (1891–1962).⁷ However, I am not so sure that this was the case. As repeatedly stated, the earliest extant version of the *Platform Scripture* is represented by the Dunhuang manuscript. It features material that is not overwhelming positive towards Shenhui, although the fact that he does figure there indicates an acknowledgment of sorts. Actually the *Platform Scripture* is critical of Shenhui, and more than once. Nevertheless, he plays a minor role in the overall narrative of the scripture, and even if we postulate that he or his followers added his name to the text, it does not really add up. For a sectarian founder, politically active figure, and important person such as Shenhui to go to the length of fabricating an entire scripture without at the same time assigning himself a leading role in it, as is not at all the case with the *Platform Scripture*, seems to me rather unlikely. This problem was first pointed out by Morten Schlütter more than two decades ago in his comparative study of the stemma of the various editions of the *Platform Scripture*.⁸ It is of course possible that Shenhui or his followers tampered with an early version of the *Platform Scripture* that had arrived in the central provinces from the south, that is, from Caoqi, and that they either inserted the name of their master into the text or otherwise tampered with it. However, if so, such a version of the scripture is no longer extant, and if it existed it hardly looked anything like the Dunhuang version we now have as it is bound to have left more telling evidence of itself (and of Shenhui). Is it not more likely that the text as we have it now was actually composed by descendants of Huineng, possibly descendants who were at the periphery of the contest for patriarchal supremacy, but who nevertheless had a vested interest in bolstering Huineng as the Sixth Patriarch of Chan? The famous Fahai character, who the *Platform Scripture* makes a direct disciple of Huineng, but who nobody for some reason is able to identify, might very well have been a historical person associated with Caoqi and the old temple of Huineng in Shaozhou. If he is a pure fabrication and/or a character without significance, why does his name appear in the scripture? Why mention him and not instead give a more convenient name that would have fitted more closely with the agenda of whoever

fabricated the *Platform Scripture*? Jørgensen does look in this direction, but eventually abandons it for what he eventually considers a more plausible stance.

If the author of the *Platform Scripture* was a member of the Niutou school, as Yanagida once believed, it does strike one as odd that the text does not contain any references to this tradition of Chan, which, after all, was rather important during the second half of the eighth century in southeastern China. Hence, I find it downright unlikely that a monk with Niutou affiliation should have composed such a central and important, doctrinal *cum* polemical tract without mentioning his own spiritual ancestry with as much as a single word. After all, this is what the *Platform Scripture* was meant to do. The fact that there are doctrinal passages in the *Platform Scripture* that reflect teachings and expressions similar to statements in the Niutou material is not sufficient to establish a historical connection between the two.

The view that we should look for a monk of Southern Chan persuasion as the author of the *Platform Scripture* also has problems, even though I admit that Jørgensen argues his case well. However, this scenario is complicated by Huineng's testament at the end of the scripture (unless, of course, one dismisses it as a later addition). But as already argued, why propose a lineage of transmission different from one's own if the whole rationale behind a Chan book such as the *Platform Scripture* was to cement and construe a connection between oneself and the patriarchal transmission?

Jørgensen is in my view correct in focusing his attention on the site of Baolin. It is certainly no coincidence that Caoqi and Baolin are singled out for attention in the *Platform Scripture*. Not only is Baolin an important holy site associated with Huineng, but it is also associated with a lineage said to comprise the Patriarch's ten major disciples, including the enigmatic Fahai. Hence, we shall have to ask ourselves why the list of Huineng's ten disciples looks the way it does, as well as why it does not include mention of any of the other disciples, such as Huichong (d. 776), Jiangu (fl. eighth century) Huairang (677–744), and Xingsi (d. 740), who the later Chan history has made the Patriarch's primary successors. The view that the *Platform Scripture*'s author/compiler should be a monk affiliated with the Hongzhou branch of Southern Chan, such as Jørgensen advocates, is in my view only possible if his own lineage is mentioned or some sort of clear-cut link is provided in the text. Such is, however, not the case. Given the strong sectarian

slant and political import of the *Platform Scripture*, we cannot afford to ignore an analysis of its political discourse. As the text ends with a sort of testament, a statement as to who inherited Huineng's legacy, I am inclined to accept that these were in fact the very persons, known and unknown, who transmitted the *Platform Scripture*. Moreover, there should be a limit to the view that accepts that the scripture solely came about due to a continuous process of cut and paste, at least in the form we know it. Would it not have been easier to compose an alternative book with the same title presenting Huineng and his legacy according to one's particular doctrinal and historical requirements rather than constantly amending a book that was not too close to one's purpose? After all, this is exactly what the Chan tradition did with its competing sectarian histories of the Five Dynasties period and the early Northern Song. It simply created pious revisions of existing hagiographical grids to serve its own purposes.

Since most of Jørgensen's study is devoted to a dismantling of the traditional image(s) of Huineng, I feel obliged to point to a simple fact that Jørgensen gives little credit to beyond mentioning it in passing. The fact is that the name of Huineng does crop up among the Fifth Patriarch Hongren's disciples in the *Lengqie shizi ji* (Record of Successive Masters of the Laṅkāvatāra), a sectarian work with a clear-cut political agenda to serve the sect-political pretensions of mainstream Northern Chan. This appearance is in my view more significant than Jørgensen and others tend to credit it. Despite the fact that the Huineng persona we encounter in the *Platform Scripture* as well as the other sources written during the late eighth century is by and large the product of hagiographical construction, the reference to him in this important, early historical work of Northern Chan provenance would seem to signal that a monk by this name actually did exist and was sufficiently well known even to the Chan communities in Northern China. It even mentions him as living in Shaozhou! Otherwise, why did Jingjue (683–ca. 750), the author of the *Lengqie shizi ji*, take the trouble to mention him at all? Moreover, from where did he get the date and name of Huineng? While it is possible that Shenhui during the 730s picked up Huineng's name from among Hongren's disciples without actually having met him and subsequently built a hagiography and context around the name in order to serve his own religio-political ends—such as many scholars think he did—it would appear that Huineng, or at least his legacy, was well known and respected by the time the *Lengqie shizi ji* was compiled

at the beginning of the Kaiyuan period (713–741).⁹ Furthermore, it is most likely that this legacy was being promoted by his own disciples, just like the cases with most of Hongren's major disciples including Faru, Huian, and of course Shenxiu (ca. 606–712). Despite the fact that historically reliable data on Huineng is wanting, there can be in my view little doubt that he was a historical figure of some importance in his own day. Now the question is, how much fire may we deduce from the smoke behind the proverbial hedge?

The *Caoqi dashi chuan* (History of Great Master Caoqi) is an interesting work, to which Jørgensen provides a detailed discussion, including a full-length, annotated translation (pp. 677–705). Jørgensen dates this relatively short work, in my view a bit conservatively, to 781 CE (p. 577; later he actually gives 765 CE as a possible date, p. 583), a dating that in his view makes it the first attempt at a full-length Huineng biography outside the *Platform Scripture*. This is really a work of propaganda meant to bolster Shenhui and his claim of succession to the authentic Chan patriarchal lineage, for which reason I am reluctant to accept it as dating much later than the end of the 760s CE. In fact the famous episode found in all Huineng hagiographies, namely the transmission of the mind dharma (*xinfa*) from Hongren to Huineng, is replicated in the *Caoqi dashi chuan* when Huineng bestows the transmission on Shenhui. As no other among Huineng's disciples are given serious mention, beyond of course Shenhui, it can be taken as a clear indication that this text was part of the drive to bolster him and the lineage he claimed for himself. As is well known, Shenhui's lineage did not continue long after his death, for which reason assigning a late eighth-century dating to this text makes little sense. At that time there were no Shenhui followers of importance who could benefit from writing a tract meant to inflate their own position in the history of Chan. Despite the fact that the *Caoqi dashi chuan* gives much attention to Huineng's relics, that is, the robe and the mummified body of the patriarch, no one but Shenhui, or someone close to him, could have benefitted from the way its discourse unfolds. Therefore the data provided by the *Caoqi dashi chuan* must be older than Jørgensen thinks.

One of the few real weaknesses of *Inventing Hui-neng* has to do with one of the aspects of the author's methodology. In his penchant for reviewing the entire scholarly tradition's writings on Huineng, something he admittedly does in a most brilliant manner, Jørgensen faithfully summarizes the various views and findings of a succession

of scholars in the field. However, he often tends to leave out his own understanding and evaluation of what they have written on a given subject. This is in my view a weakness, since we as readers would very much like to know what he actually thinks of the previous research on Huineng, what still holds water and what in his view has by now become outmoded. Instead we are left with a staggering amount of referent information, but too often without sufficiently qualifying argumentation on Jørgensen's side. It is of course not the case that he does not relate to this material, he certainly does, but he very often forgets to tell us how and why he evaluates a given piece of information as he does. Given Jørgensen's extensive knowledge in the field of Chinese Chan Buddhism, he ought to have let his readers benefit more from his own insights than from those of others. Probably he has felt that he could not criticize his Western and Japanese peers too openly. However, if we do not address previous errors and mistaken views as we see them, and of course in an open and fair manner, how are we to progress along the road to a better and more precise understanding? And is progress in this sense not what proper scientific development and scholarly analysis dictate?

Jørgensen steps lightly over the important issues of Chan practice and to some extent Chan doctrine as well, since these in his own admission are not central to his research into the construction of the Huineng myth. From one perspective I can sympathize with such a view. It really would have been overkill to try to address these rather significant questions within the same tome presently under review. On the other hand, a good understanding of both Chan practice(s) and doctrine(s), in the historical and cultural context of the Tang, are critical to an overall understanding of both the Huineng persona and of the type of Chan with which the later tradition has credited him. As already stated, I do not think that it would have been realistic or practical for the author to encompass the issues of Chan doctrine and practice fully in his study, but some degree of perspective on these issues may have given him more solid evidence for dating the *Platform Scripture*. Perhaps this added angle even could have made it easier to pin down a possible author or author-context?

There are other issues in the book, some more significant than others, with which this reviewer has problems. One example is the manner in which Jørgensen treats the important, and indeed for his own argumentation, central Chan history, the *Zutangji* (Collection from the

Patriarchal Halls) or *Chodang chip*, compiled in or around 952 CE. Although this Chan history has been the subject of literally hundreds of academic articles, no one, as far as I am aware, has been able to solve the basic historical problems concerning the history of the *Zutang ji*, and neither does Jørgensen (although it must be said to his credit that he does devote a full appendix to this work alone). None of the various theories that have been forwarded in the past three decades involving the supposed versions of the *Zutang ji* in one, ten, and twenty chapters are in my opinion creditable (pp. 738–740). Given that this Chan history contains an unusually large amount of material pertaining to early Korean Sōn Buddhism, material which is unlikely to have been available in China at the time of the book's first compilation, we need more research into the Korean side of the *Zutang ji* before making too firm conclusions based on the data it yields. Let us begin by acknowledging that the Korean Sōn material that we find in the *Zutang ji* is somewhat awkward. And as Jørgensen himself notes, it is different in both style as well as character when compared with most of the Chinese material that makes up the bulk of its text. It may very well be that most, if not all, of the Korean material was inserted into the book later as many believe it was. But when? And if so, how does it relate to the overall format of the *Zutang ji*? If we look closer at the Korean material we cannot help but realize that it is peculiar in more ways than one. As Jørgensen notes, much of it appears to have been lifted from stele inscriptions—not really copied, but rather in re-worked form. Secondly, it is highly selective in nature, that is, it does not reflect the full range of data on early Sōn Buddhism that we know was available in Korea at the time the wood blocks for the twenty-chapter *Zutang ji* version we have today were being prepared and carved during the mid-thirteenth century. Thirdly, the text excerpts of Korean origin found in the *Zutang ji* are in many cases corrupt or otherwise written in a strange, somewhat countrified style that does not match very well with most of the Korean Sōn Buddhist material we have from the mid-Koryō. Here it should be remembered that some of the Korean passages from the *Zutang ji* do actually occur in more polished form in the *Sōnmun pojang nok* (Records from the Precious Treasury of the Sōn Tradition), a compendium compiled during the late thirteenth century.¹⁰ All in all these questions indicate that the Korean material in the *Zutang ji* was not inserted into the book at a very late stage in its history as commonly held. In any case, it could hardly have been done as late as the time of its printing in

1252 CE. Most probably the Korean Sōn material had been incorporated at a much earlier stage, maybe even as early as shortly after the book itself had been brought to the Korean Peninsula during the mid-tenth century. Finally, I should add that although the *Zutang ji* appendix is useful for our understanding of the development of the hagiographies of Huineng, it is not of primary significance. It would have been better if Jørgensen had published it as a separate study than as part of *Inventing Hui-neng*.

As a last point of criticism I cannot help noting the absurdity of producing a study of such extensive size and not including a list of Chinese characters for the names and terms that otherwise crowd the book. Is this a simple (but grievous) omission on the part of the author and/or editor, or has it been done on purpose? If it is the latter, I must admit that I remain dumbfounded. A list of characters would have enhanced this work greatly and made it so much easier for us as readers to navigate the maze of Chan history and Chan studies as presented by Jørgensen. This omission is truly a shame!

These lesser points of criticism apart, *Inventing Hui-neng* is an impressive and praiseworthy accomplishment. As far as our understanding of the persona of Huineng and the associated literature go, Jørgensen's book is destined to remain *the* authoritative study on this topic in the next several decades to come. This study is actually a sort of encyclopedia on the study of Huineng and Chinese Chan, and any scholarly undertaking involving Huineng and his legacy that chooses to ignore Jørgensen's work will be doomed to failure. Let me end this review by saying that *Inventing Hui-neng* is not for use in the classroom. It is a specialist's handbook, a research tool of the highest order, and an extremely valuable addition to the ongoing research worldwide on the history and development of Chan Buddhism during the Tang and beyond.

TABLE OF CHARACTERS

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| Baolin 寶林 | <i>Baolin zhuan</i> 寶林傳 |
| Caoqi 曹溪 | <i>Caoqi dashi zhuan</i> 曹溪大師傳 |
| <i>chan / sŏn</i> 禪 | Chengguang 乘廣 |
| Chiri-san 智理山 | Dayi 大一 |
| Dunhuang 敦煌 | Fahai 法海 |
| Faxiang-zong 法相宗 | <i>Han'guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ</i> 韓國佛教全書 |
| Hongren 宏忍 | Hongzhou 洪州 |
| Huairang 懷讓 | Huizhong 慧忠 |
| Huineng 慧能 | Hu Shi 胡適 |
| Hyeso / Chingam 慧昭 / 真艦 | Jiangnan 江南 |
| Jiangu 堅固 | Jiaoran 皎然 |
| Jingjue 淨覺 | Koryŏ 高麗 |
| <i>Lengqie shizi ji</i> 楞伽師資記 | <i>Lidai fabao ji</i> 歷代法寶記 |
| Lingche 靈徹 | Lingnan 嶺南 |
| Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 | <i>Liuzu tan jing</i> 六祖壇經 |
| Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 | Mogao-ku 莫高窟 |
| Niutou 牛頭 | Shazhou 沙州 |
| Shaozhou 紹州 | Shenhui 神會 |
| Shenxiu 神秀 | <i>Sŏnmun pojang nok</i> 禪門寶藏錄 |
| Ssangye-sa 雙溪寺 | Wuzhen 悟真 |
| <i>xinfa</i> 心法 | Xingsi 行思 |
| Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 | Yizhou 益州 |
| <i>yulu / ōrok</i> 語錄 | Zhenshu 甄叔 |
| <i>Zutang ji / Chodang chip</i> 祖堂集 | |

NOTES

1. The number of monographs and articles on early Chinese Chan written in English during the 1980s is staggering. For a comprehensive list, the interested reader may consult the extensive bibliography at the back of *Inventing Hui-neng*. The majority of the important Japanese studies on Chan Buddhism from the past five decades can be found listed in the *Zengaku kenkyū nyūmon* (Entrance to Zen Studies), comp. Tanaka Ryōshō (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1994).
2. This relic has also been discussed by Bernard Faure in his *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 160–164. But whereas Jørgensen places the relic in a historical and textual context, Faure is chiefly concerned with dissecting and deconstructing the myths surrounding the relic.
3. See John Jørgensen, “The ‘Imperial’ Lineage of Ch’an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch’an’s Search for Legitimation in the mid-T’ang dynasty,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 35 (1987): 89–133.
4. Bernard Faure, *Le bouddhisme ch’an en mal d’histoire* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1988); and *La volonté d’orthodoxie dans le bouddhisme chinois*, Publications de l’Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient Vol. 158 (Paris: EFEO, 1989).
5. John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early of Ch’an Buddhism*, Studies in East Asian Buddhism 3 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).
6. The hero of the important study by Chen Tsu-lung, *La vie et les oeuvres de Wou-tchen (816–895)*, Publications de l’EFEO, vol. 60 (Paris: EFEO, 1966).
7. Later Yanagida modified this view and came to believe that the *Platform Scripture* was a product of the Niutou school and that its probable author was Fahai (fl. second half of the eighth century), a disciple of Xuansu (d. ca. 766). For this, see John McRae, “The Ox-head School of Chinese Ch’an Buddhism: From Early Ch’an to the Golden Age,” in *Studies in Ch’an and Hua-yen*, ed. Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory, Studies in East Asian Buddhism (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 183–185.
8. Cf. Morten Schlütter, “A Study in the Genealogy of the *Platform Sūtra*,” *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 2 (1989): 53–114.
9. McRae believes that Huineng was considered an important master of Chan on par with Hongren’s other major disciples prior to the middle of the eighth century when the implications of the north/south dichotomy manifested as a political reality in earnest. Cf. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch’an Buddhism*, 38–39.
10. *Han’guk pulgyo chōnsō*, 6:469c–484a; see esp. 473b–474b and 478c–479a.