Apparition Painting
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Apparition painting

YUKIO LIPPIT

An episode from the second chapter of the Zhuangzi, just before the famous parable concerning Zhuang Zhou's dream of the butterfly, involves a conversation between Penumbra and Shadow:

> Penumbra said to Shadow, "A little while ago you were walking and now you're standing still; a little while ago you were sitting and now you're standing up. Why this lack of independent action?"
>
> Shadow said, "Do I have to wait for something before I can be like this? Does what I wait for also have to wait for something before it can be like this? Am I waiting for the scales of a snake or the wings of a cicada? How do I know why it is so? How do I know why it isn't so?"[1]

At issue in this exchange is a normative view of causation that assumes Shadow's dependence upon that of which it is a shadow for its own actions, much like a snake upon its scales or a cicada upon its wings. This tethering of the logic of causality to local, physical, and immediately observable phenomena is just one example of the type of simplistic worldview that is consistently an object of derision in the *Zhuangzi*. Both Penumbra and Shadow, through their very immateriality, personify precisely those qualities of in-betweenness and insubstantiality that problematize the dualistic understanding of cosmic processes.

Such was the classical exchange invoked during China's Southern Song period (1127–1279) to describe a kind of painting rendered in such pale ink that it verged on complete indistinction. More specifically, the word *wangliang* (commonly translated as "penumbra"), and the name given to one of the parable's principals, was used in reference to the works of the Chan (J. Zen) monk Zhirong (1114–1193), who was known above all for his pictorial renderings of oxen and Chan Buddhist exemplars. As related by a colophon on one such painting by a later monk, Beijian Jujian (1164-1246): "Critics say that Old Man Rong's works will not endure because they are so vague, their ink is so pale. Hence they call his works apparition painting (*wanglianghua*)."[2] In classical texts *wangliang* appears to have designated not only the idea of a penumbra, but of a "shadow of a shadow," a ghostly, tenuous quality that defies easy description or representation, which is why it is translated here as "apparition."[3] Unfortunately, because none of Zhirong's paintings have survived, there is no way of assessing their pallor first-hand.[4] But modern scholars of Chinese painting have observed that textual descriptions of Zhirong's inkwork accord well with a group of approximately a dozen or so paintings of Chan figural subjects, all from the thirteenth century, that have survived in Japanese collections.[5] Despite postdating

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1. Translation by Burton Watson in *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 49. The exchange comes at the end of the "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" chapter, the second of the Outer Chapters.

2. From "Scroll Painting of Scattered Holy Men by Old Man Rong" (*Lao Rong sansheng hua zhou*), found in *Beijian wenji, juan* 8, in *Zhibuzuzhai congshu,* comp. Bao Tingbo (Taibei, 1964). The full colophon is discussed below. The English translation is based upon an earlier version by Yoshiaki Shimizu in "What Happened to Wang-liang-hua (Mōryōga)?" in *Tōyō bijutsu ni okeru eikyō no mondai,* vol. 7 of *International Symposia on Art Historical Studies* (1988):65–73.

3. My understanding of this term is particularly indebted to two studies by Zhuangzi specialists on the "Penumbra and Shadow" parable. See Yamada Katsumi, "Mōryō kō," *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 3 (1951):53–63; and Kōma Miyoshi, "Mōryō to kage no taiwa ni tsuite," *Bunrin* 15 (March 1981):1–16.

4. A painting titled *Herdboy and Buffalo* (*Muniu tu*) attributed to Zhirong in the Kōzō Yabumoto Collection (Amagasaki, Japan) has been published several times, most notably by James Cahill, but is difficult to accept as proximate to the mode of painting under discussion here. See Cahill, *Sōgen-ga: 12–14th Century Chinese Painting as Collected and Appreciated in Japan* (University of California, Berkeley: The University Museum, 1982), p. 33, pl. 29.

5. The modern usage of "apparition painting" (*mōryōga*) begins with Shimada Shūjirō in a seminal two-part essay "Mōryōga," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 84 (December 1938):4–13 and 86 (February 1939):8–16, later reprinted in Shimada Shūjirō, *Chūgoku kaigashi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūōkōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1993), pp. 112–135. All subsequent inquiry, including the present article, is heavily indebted to this study.

Zhirong by several generations, they reflect his artistry insofar as it can be inferred from Song commentary, most notably in the following ways: 1) an extraordinarily pale use of ink to depict subject matter; 2) jet-black accents to the face and select attributes; 3) a blank background; and 4) a relatively detailed rendering of the face, combined with abbreviated brushwork for the clothing. Following Zhuangzi's cue, these works have come to be referred to as apparition painting. In turn, apparition painting has become an important organizing principle for a type of painting associated with Chan/Zen Buddhism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, one that went unrecognized in later Chinese aesthetic discourse and survived into the modern era only because of its canonization in the Japanese archipelago.

The paintings thus designated are among the most remarkable works of figure painting from any tradition. A representative example is *The Sixth Patriarch Carrying a Pole,* in the Daitōkyū Memorial Library in Tokyo (fig. 1). Executed by the obscure monk-painter Zhiweng Ruojing and inscribed by the prominent Chan abbot Yanxi Guangwen (1189–1263), this painting dates to sometime between 1254 and 1256. Its subject is Huineng, the legendary sixth patriarch of Chan Buddhism, captured in a celebrated episode from his youth recorded in Song-period hagiographies. According to these accounts, when still a woodcutter supporting a feeble mother, Huineng embarked on a path to awakening when one day, while selling brushwood in the city market, he became mesmerized by a distant intonation of the *Diamond Sutra*.[6] *The Sixth Patriarch* captures this moment of auditory immersion and spiritual enchantment. Against the void of an unpainted background, Huineng stands inert, bearing a pole on his left shoulder, an axe and rope to secure brushwood dangling from it. The rapt expression of his face, as well as the absence of tension in his body—as suggested by his slumped neck and shoulders and the dead weight of his left forearm bearing down on the pole—indicate the patriarch's total absorption in the wafting incantation. Huineng's enthrallment is also suggested by his otherworldly faintness. The brushstrokes constituting his robe, and even more so those of his face, hands, and

Figure 1. Zhiweng Ruojing (act. mid-thirteenth century), *The Sixth Patriarch Carrying a Pole,* ca. 1254–1256. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 92.5 x 31.0 cm. Daitōkyū Memorial Library, Tokyo.

6. Legends concerning the Sixth Patriarch can be found in his entries in the earliest surviving transmission records (lamp histories), such as *Record of the Patriarch's Hall* (*Zutang ji*; compiled in 952) and *Jingde-Era Record of the Transmission of the Lamp* (*Jingde chuangdeng lu*; compiled in 1004). On Huineng's biography, see *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch,* trans. Philip Yampolsky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 58–88.

Figure 2. *The Sixth Patriarch Carrying a Pole,* detail of figure 1.

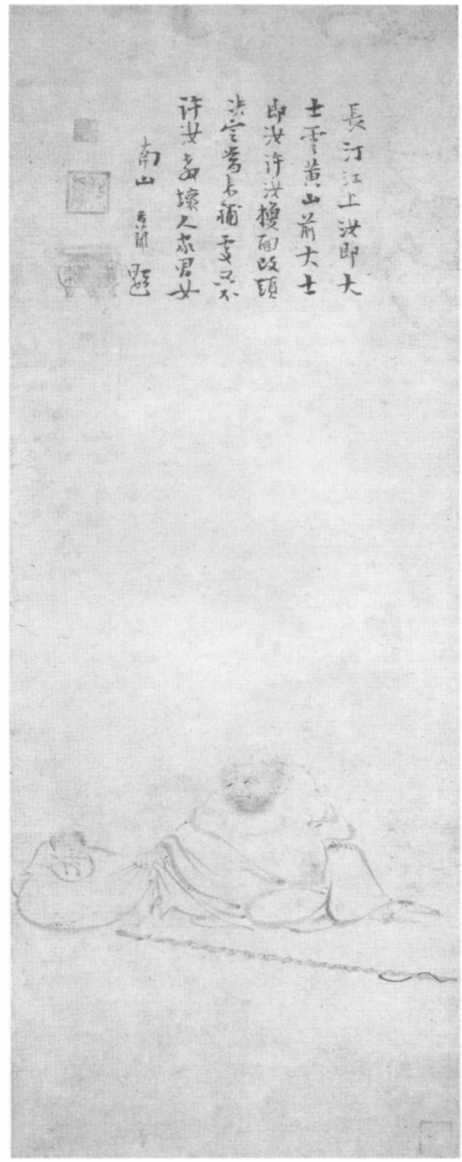

Figure 3. Attributed to Hu Zhifu (act. thirteenth century), *Budai,* ca. 1251–1254. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 83.9 x 32.1 cm. Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya.

feet, are executed in an exceedingly low saturation of ink, so much so that the details of figuration are fully perceived only with difficulty (fig. 2). The painting's dimness is only accentuated by the black touches of ink applied to the figure's upper eyelids, pupils, nostrils, and inner ear. These obsidian sparks have the effect of inspiriting the otherwise lackluster woodcutter, instilling radiant embers of presence into an otherwise ashen face, and providing the viewer with points of engagement to an otherwise engaged subject. The highly abbreviated brushwork and lack of setting further enhance the sense of an ethereal, incorporeal figure, a wraith-like form slowly blanching into vacancy. Shadow of a shadow indeed.

Two further examples, both close in date to *The Sixth Patriarch,* similarly portray exemplars of Chan Buddhist awakening. *Budai* (fig. 3) depicts the legendary portly eccentric whose name ("Cloth Bag") refers to the large sack that typically accompanies him on his peregrinations. A popular subject in painting associated with Chan/Zen Buddhism, the Budai (J. Hotei) of this version sits with one knee raised, looking towards his left and tugging with his hand at a bag on which a young child slumbers.[7] Like *The Sixth Patriarch,*

7. *Budai,* in the Tokugawa Art Museum collection, is flanked by two later scrolls depicting Chan monks mending their robes (right scroll) and reading under moonlight (left scroll); see Suzuki Shinobu, "Den Ko Chokufu hitsu Hotei zu, Mujūji hitsu Chōyō Taigetsu zu

Budai is painted against a blank background in highly distilled tones of monochrome ink, with only select details of his face darkened along with a winding piece of rope at the end of his staff. *Bodhidharma on a Reed* (fig. 4), a work like *Budai* in the Tokugawa Art Museum (Nagoya, Japan), depicts the first Chinese patriarch of Chan Buddhism in a legendary anecdote that describes his crossing of the Yangtze River on a single reed.[8] Here, too, the wispy, silvery indistinction of the overall figure is interrupted only by glimmers of sparkling, deeply saturated ink applied to Bodhidharma's facial features. Both paintings differ in notable ways from *The Sixth Patriarch.* The brushwork in *Budai,* for example, undulates and is slightly more stylized, with a kind of blotting, erasive technique used for facial hair, whereas that of *Bodhidharma on a Reed* is slender and elongated. These distinctions, however, are trumped by the qualities shared among all three works, ones closely associated with apparition painting: a *pianissimo* of ink tone relieved only by scintilla of black accents in select areas; a void background with no details of setting; and a combination of shorthand brushwork on clothing and relatively meticulous—if still hueless and obscure—rendering of the face. This combination results in remarkably self-dissembling images that somehow compromise their own visibility. Apparition painting appears to capture its subjects in mid-fade, as if managing to preserve only a dimly translucent afterimage of a bygone entity. In so doing, it seems to propose a certain implausibility to its subjects. This general disposition, it will be argued here, holds the key to understanding its bleached, subtractive tonality and threshold absenteeism.

The present study proposes that the washed-out profile of apparition painting was calibrated to exhibit a new type of discursive voice associated with Chan Buddhism during the Song period. The engineering of this voice was a collective project of the Chan establishment and came to be associated with the contrarian but penetrating

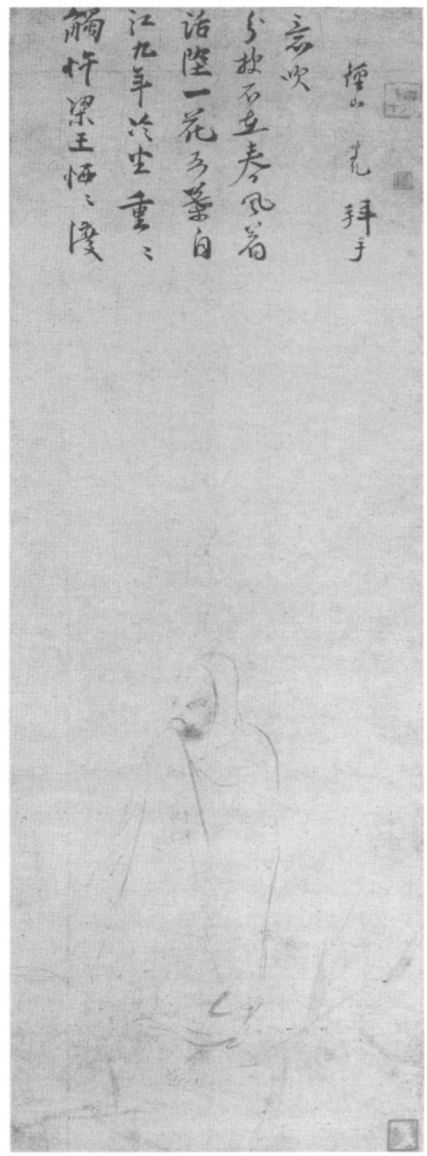

Figure 4. Attributed to Wuzhun Shifan (1178–1249), *Bodhidharma on a Reed,* ca. first half of thirteenth century. Hanging scroll, part of triptych, ink on paper, 89.1 x 32.0 cm. Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya.

insight of the fully enlightened Chan/Zen monk. As such, it evoked an impious but illumined subject position manifesting the intuitive grasp and singular understanding of the Dharma claimed by members of the Chan lineage. Expressed in an array of different mediums, including various forms of Chan oratory and literature, its most impressive material manifestation was

ni kansuru ichikōsatsu—sono kaiga hyōgen ni okeru kyōtsūsei—," *Bijutsushi ronsō* 21 (2005):75–90. The flanking scrolls are discussed in Shiga Tarō, "Mujūji hitsu Chōyō Taigetsu zu tsuifuku no shudai to sakusha," *Kinko sōsho* 34 (2008):91–127.

8. *Bodhidharma on a Reed* is also part of a triptych of scrolls, all inscribed by the prominent Chan abbot Wuzhun Shifan (1178–1249); the flanking scrolls depict the legendary Chan monks Yushanzhu ("The Master of Mount Yu"; right scroll) and Zhang Huangniu ("Zheng of the Yellow Ox"; left scroll). These and other works are discussed in Itakura Masaaki's important entries in *Nansō kaiga—saijō gachi no sekai,* ed. Nezu Institute of Fine Arts (Tokyo: Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, 2004).

in the verse inscriptions that accompanied ink paintings. There the words of prominent abbots conveyed in colloquial but allusive language their own unique purchase on the Buddha's wisdom, intended both to edify patrons and inspire practitioners.

Although the Chan/Zen subject position could accompany a wide spectrum of painting subjects, it was set most effectively to a select group of exemplars—an eccentric and offbeat cast of mostly legendary characters recruited to the Chan corps from a variety of sources—whose nonconformity underscored the enchantment of Chan practice. These exemplars served as foils against which inscriptions could query the common sense and grandiloquence of the world. And among the many ink painting modes in which these figures were depicted, apparition painting proved to be the most finely attuned to the rich modulations and teasing timbre of this *parole*. Its infinitely faint tones offered a pitch-perfect prompt for Chan commentary on its own special transmission of the Dharma. The pages that follow reassess apparition painting by appraising the historical, artistic, and ideological contexts within which the staging of a Chan subject position emerged as a primary focus of Chan pictorial production. In doing so, they aspire to new testimony on the challenges of understanding and experiencing this most inscrutable of painting traditions.

Shimada Shūjirō was the first to map out a genealogy of apparition painting by excavating Song-period testimony on the elusive Zhirong.[9] As discussed by Shimada, the most informative account of the monk-painter is found in a biographical text by the literatus Lou Yue (1137–1213), a high-ranking official and acquaintance of the monk-painter.[10] Lou Yue first met Zhirong in either 1184 or 1185 and appears to have had occasional contact with him until the latter's death.[11] The biographical account in question, "Concerning the Old Ox [Painter] Zhirong" (*Shu Laoniu Zhirong shi*), is undated but reads like a lengthy, eulogizing remembrance, possibly a preface to some sort of compilation relating to the monk-painter.[12] There the bare facts of his life can be gleaned: Zhirong died in 1193 at the age of eighty; he was born to a family of doctors in Kaifeng who relocated to Lin'an (Hangzhou), the newly designated imperial capital, after the Jurchen invasion of 1127; he practiced medicine by the name of Xing Cheng and had entrée to the imperial court; in 1163, at the age of fifty, he took vows—leaving family and court rank behind—and entered Lingyin si monastery overlooking Lin'an's West Lake; thereafter he traveled widely to the major monasteries and sacred sites of the Jiangnan region before spending his final years at the Buddhist monastery Zisheng si on Mount Xuedou near the port city of Siming.

Lou's text casts its subject as a cultivated gentleman and master painter.[13] The monk Zhirong is introduced as a noble recluse sequestered on Mt. Xuedou, a "gentleman of the Way" (*you dao zhi shi*) whose words are full of "spirit resonance" (*qiyun*). Lou describes his painting according to a variation on a common

9. See Shimada, "Mōryōga" (note 5).

10. The career of Lou Yue, a *jinshi* degree holder from 1163 who eventually served as vice prime minister during the middle Southern Song, is summarized by Shiba Yoshinobu in *Sung Biographies,* ed. Herbert Franke (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976), pp. 668–672. Studies that explore Lou Yue in a cultural context include Kanda Kaichirō, "Shunjō Risshi to shodō," in *Kamakura bukkyō seiritsu no kenkyū—Shunjō Risshi,* ed. Ishida Mitsuyuki (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1972), pp. 271–280; and Dōtsu Ayano, "'Hokkanshū' ni mirareru Rō Yaku no bunkateki eikyō ni kansuru ichikōsatsu," *Shūgaku kenkyū* 39 (March 1997):276–281.

11. A total of five painting inscriptions on Zhirong's works are recorded in *Gongkui ji,* Lou Yue's collected writings compiled in the *Sibu congkan* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1919–1936), vol. 61. The latter was well positioned to be a commentator on Zhirong's artistry; his collected writings include numerous texts and colophons to paintings, reflecting the degree to which he was interested in and knowledgeable of the brush arts. Born into a prominent family from the southeastern coastal city of Mingzhou (later known as Siming, in present-day Zhejiang province), Lou also appears to have had ties to the many venerable Buddhist monasteries located in the region, on Mt. Tiantai and Mt. Xuedou.

Lou Yue's close ties to the religious community are underscored by his eulogies on a pair of Song portraits at Sennyūji monastery in Kyoto, *The Priest Yuanzhao* and *The Vinaya Master Daoxuan.* These works, inscribed in 1210 and taken to Japan by the Japanese Ritsu sect monk Shunjō (1166–1227) the following year, are discussed in Susan H. Bush and Victor H. Mair, "Some Buddhist Portraits and Images of the Lü and Ch'an Sects in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century China," *Archives of Asian Art* 31 (1977–1978):32–51. For an extensive discussion in relation to East Asian portraiture practice, see Ogawa Hiromitsu, "Sennyūji zō Shunjō risshi, Nanzan daishi, Daichi risshi zō sanpuku—Tōyō kaiga ni okeru renpuku hyōgen no mondai—," pp. 67–108 in *Nihon kaigashi no kenkyū,* ed. Yamane Yūzō sensei koki kinenkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1989).

12. While Lou Yue only knew Zhirong for the last ten years or so of the monk's life, he states that his text was supplemented by material provided to him by a disciple of Zhirong, as was the case in many such writings. For more on *Gongkui ji,* see Ishii Shūdō, "'Kōgishū' ni mirareru Zenshū shiryō—Tōshi Gisei no hōkei o chūshin to shite—," *Tōhū shūkyō* 39 (April 1972):32–49.

13. The full text can be found in *Gongkui ji, juan* 8 (see note 11), and is reprinted in Shimada, *Chūgoku* (see note 5), p. 114.

encomium, stating that "whereas painters of old may have cherished ink like gold, Zhirong cherished it like life itself."[14] The monk's works are "desolate and tranquil" (*jiliao xiaosan*) and yet filled with "vitality and dynamic movement" (*shengyi feidong*). To enhance the aura of his subject's artistry, Lou includes several examples of the monk's image magic, including a painted dragon that induces rain and painted demons that scare away mountain snakes, but for the most part the author strains to characterize Zhirong according to the standards of lofty amateurism. Thus, he is compared to the celebrated poet Tao Qian (365–427), who "composed poetry without volition, simply expressing the marvels in his breast" and to the famous painter Gu Kaizhi (ca. 345–ca. 406), whom Zhirong resembled in his habit of "chew[ing] sugarcane upside down," an expression of his cultivated violation of convention.[15] And for good measure, Lou asserts that to admire Zhirong's paintings was to admire the painter, just as Su Shi had claimed of Wen Tong, thus comparing his subject to the most famous scholar painter in literati lore.

Although Lou's encomium is not overly explicit regarding the appearance of Zhirong's painting, neither is it devoid of suggestion. The ink cherished "like life itself" hints at the subdued tonality common to apparition painting. An abbreviated approach is likewise suggested by the observation that "when occasionally he created the image of things, he did not use more than a few brushstrokes," and more generally that his brushwork "transcended the conventions of ink." These properties resulted in works in which it was as if "the forms were already forgotten but their shadows still glowed." But perhaps the most revealing point with regard to his figure painting is a conversation between Lou and Zhirong included in the former's text:

> Once I asked him if he still paints figures. He replied, "I am too old and am no longer able. As my eyes have weakened, I can no longer do the two stroke method. I then asked, 'Is this not simply a matter of grasping the essence in some detail?" Zhirong replied, "Although this is an ancient saying, when you try to do it, it is not the same. What I call 'two strokes' in figure painting is the necessity of first painting the subject's eyelids. If these two strokes are satisfactory the rest will follow naturally and the painting will be completed, full of vitality."[16]

Zhirong's emphasis on the necessity of beginning a figure painting with the eyelids and of determining the sense of vitality in a given representation from this motif is significant when considering the nature of his now-lost oeuvre. The passage above suggests that the eyes were the epicenter of the figure's aura of inhabitation. Although this idea held common currency in Chinese painting practice throughout the premodern period—religious icons were often consecrated by dotting the eyes, and portraiture discourse was explicit in situating the locus of the depicted sitter's essence therein—Zhirong's comments offer an intriguing obliquity to this understanding by specifically mentioning the eyelid as the master motif of envisagement. All of the surviving works associated with apparition painting consecrate select features of the face with dabs of deeply saturated pigment. These include in every case the upper eyelids, which thus emboldened play a leading role in dramatizing the tenuity of the image.

Zhuangzi's Penumbra, then, was not an arbitrary characterization of Zhirong's now-lost figurations. The monk Beijian appears to have been highly familiar with apparition painting, and the full text of his previously cited inscription reflects his high regard for this pictorial mode:[17]

> [The scroll] depicts ten figures, beginning with Puhua of Jinhua and ending with Xianzi [the Shrimp Eater]. Their essence and aspect are depicted just as recounted in their biographies. The painting has lofty thoughts and untrammeled ideas, and is free of restraints. Old Rong's

14. The Lou Yue variation essentially modifies only the final character of the second line; see *Gongkui ji, juan* 8 (note 11).

15. The phrase "chewing sugarcane" is closely associated with Gu Kaizhi, the epitome of the gentleman-painter, who was fond of eating sugarcane in unorthodox fashion, from the ends toward the sweeter midsection. When asked why, he stated that one should "enter gradually the realm of delights." See Fang Xuanling, *Jin shu* [History of the Jin], 10 vols. (Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 8:2405 (*juan* 92, "Gu Kaizhi zhuan"), trans. Chen Shih-hsiang in *Biography of Ku K'ai-chih*, vol. 2 of Chinese Dynastic Histories Translations series (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 14.

16. Hui-shu Lee called attention to this particular passage in *Exquisite Moments: West Lake and Southern Song Art* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 2001), p. 124. The translation here modifies slightly her version.

17. Although active a generation later than Lou Yue, Beijian may have been even better acquainted with Zhirong's artistry. Beijian's training on Mt. Xuedou during the Chunxi era (1174–1189) and his many peregrinations in the Siming (Ningbo) region most likely brought him into contact with Zhirong on more than one occasion. A total of four references to Zhirong's painting are found in Beijian's collected writings.

In addition, Beijian was well versed in scholar painting, as attested by his multiple inscriptions on works by the Northern Song

> brush and ink show no trace of convention. He has established his own style, one that is not easy to follow. Earlier he lived for a lengthy time in Siming. When his paintings were available, enthusiasts would snatch them away, and now only this one scroll remains. Critics say that Old Man Rong's works will not endure because they are so vague, their ink is so pale. Hence they call his works apparition paintings.[18]

Despite the fact that the term "apparition painting" here reflects a pejorative usage, Beijian's colophon offers a glimpse of Zhirong's popularity in his day. It also offers insights into his range of subject matter. From various accounts, Zhirong is known to have painted oxen, figures, pine trees, bamboo, plum trees, dragons, demons, rocks and cliffs, Maitreya, and landscapes of mist and rain. His reception was linked in part to the question of subject matter. Oxen painting, for example, Zhirong's specialty, meant different things to different audiences. Thus for Lou Yue, beasts of burden were associated with scholar painting and were represented by a specific lineage of specialist painters; Zhirong's examples derived from those of Fan Zimin of the Five Dynasties period (907–960).[19] In officialdom, cattle were catalytic of sentiments of pastoral freedom and reclusion. At the same time, they were incorporated into a vigorously expanding menu of Chan Buddhist painting subjects during the Song, both as general expressions of spiritual emancipation and as part of a ten-stage allegory of awakening.[20] Beijian and other faith-based commentators naturally tended to interpret his ox paintings according to a Buddhist hermeneutic. Not only did they frequently frame images according to the Ten Stages of Oxherding in their inscriptions,[21] but on one colophon, Beijian makes a point of discouraging comparisons between Zhirong's oxen and Li Gonglin's horses by invoking a famous anecdote concerning the latter: "Some would associate [these works] with the story of Xiu Guanxi's admonition of Longmian, but this does not even merit a laugh from Laozi."[22] The reference here concerns the monk Fayun Faxiu (Xiu Guanxi; 1027–1090), who warned the scholar-painter Li Gonglin (Longmian; 1049–1106) that if he did not stop painting horses, he would be reborn as one, after which Li is said to have devoted himself to the painting of religious icons.[23] Beijian alludes to the anecdote to imply that Zhirong's oxen are not secular images but allegorical beasts of a distinctly Chan nature.

From Beijian's time onward, Zhirong's memory appears to have been kept alive primarily in monastic circles. His name occasionally surfaces in the recorded sayings (*yulu*) of Chan monks throughout the thirteenth century, mostly in the form of verse eulogies on encountered paintings.[24] Significantly, these eulogies reveal that he had a number of followers, as in the inscription by Yuansou Xingtan (1261–1341) on a painting of a luohan, or Buddhist sage, by the scholar-official Gong Kai (1222–1307?):

> [Zhirong's] legacy has been transmitted in Siming to Hu Zhifu, and in Western Shu, to the Monk Yuan [Huiyuan]. At present I view twelve figures painted by Gong Cuiyan [Gong Kai] which follow in the manner of Old Rong; his use of brush and ink does not conform to narrow convention, nor can Hu or Yuan compare with him.[25]

scholar-official Li Gonglin (1049–1106). A total of seven of Beijian's inscriptions on Li Gonglin works have been recorded. For more on Beijian's cultural and religious significance, see Shiina Kōyū, "Sōgenban zenseki kenkyū (shichi)—Hokkan goroku geshū bunshū shishū zenshū—," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 33, no. 1 (Dec. 1984):179–183, and "Hokkan to Mossho no chosaku ni kansuru shoshiteki kōsatsu," *Komazawa daigaku bukkyōgakubu kenkyū kiyō* 46 (March 1988):196–230; Itakura Masa'aki, "Hokkan Kyokan san Zenzai dōji zu," *Kokka* 1181 (April 1994):15–21; Dōtsu Ayano, "Hokkanshū" (see note 10), and "Hokkan Kyokan no bunkateki soji ni tsuite," *Komazawa daigaku Zen kenkyūjo nenpō* 9 (1997):233–249. See also the discussion to follow on *The Pilgrim Boy Sudhana*.

18. Translation based on that of Shimizu in "What Happened to Wang-liang-hua" (see note 2), p. 66.

19. Lou writes: "He was fond of painting oxen, and gave himself the sobriquet 'Old Ox Zhirong.' It is said that his oxen derived from those of Fan [Zimin], yet surpassed them in their subtlety," *Gongkui ji, juan* 8 (see note 11).

20. The semantics of ox painting are discussed in Scarlett Jang, "Ox-herding Painting in the Sung Dynasty (960–1279)," *Artibus Asiae* 52, 1/2 (1992):54–93. See also Yukio Lippit, "Tawaraya Sōtatsu and the Water Poetics of Japanese Ink Painting," *RES* 51 (Spring 2007):57–76.

21. Concerning the Ten Oxherding Stages as an interpretive frame in Chan pictorial inscriptions, see Dōtsu Ayano, "Nansōdai no Rinzaisō ni yoru kaiga kaishaku ni tsuite," *Zen bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 23 (June 1997):203–221.

22. *Beijian wenji, juan* 8 (see note 2).

23. The anecdote can be found in the *Imperial Painting Catalogue of the Xuanhe Era* (*Xuanhe huapu*). See *Xuanhe huapu, juan* 7, in *Huashi congshu,* ed. Yu Anlan (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963), vol. 2, pp. 74–79.

24. The monks include Baotan Xiaoyun (dates unknown), Xutang Zhiyu (1185–1269), and Xisou Shaotan (d. 1279 or flourished ca. 1247–1274). See Shimada, "Mōryōga" (note 5), pp. 129–135.

25. The translation modifies an earlier one by Yoshiaki Shimizu in "What Happened" (see note 2), p. 67. The original is found in *Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Yuansou Xingtan* (*Yuansou Xingtan Chanshi yulu*), *juan* 7, in *Shinsan Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō,* ed. Kawamura Kōshō (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1986), vol. 71, pp. 541c–542a.

The association of the monk-painters Huiyuan and Hu Zhifu mentioned here with apparition painting is echoed by other testimony.[26] Yet it is striking that Gong Kai, otherwise famous as a Song loyalist who further refined an iconography of resistance to Mongol rule during the early Yuan period, would be understood by Yuansou as a follower of Zhirong. This is certainly not the way he has been situated in standard accounts.[27] The casting of Gong Kai as an apparition painter, however, speaks to the intertwined nature of Chan and scholar-official communities throughout the Song and Yuan periods, as well as the proximity of the painting modes current therein.

Yuansou's colophon represents the last appearance of Zhirong's name in the documentary record. As Shimada has speculated, the inclusion of Gong Kai among Zhirong's followers may hint at the demise of this practice during the early Yuan period through its absorption into other spheres of painting.[28] While the fate of apparition painting will be addressed later on, suffice it to say here that of the other monk-painters associated with this pictorial mode—Huiyuan and Hu Zhifu—none were listed in Chinese painting histories and no firmly attributable works have survived.[29] Their memory has only been preserved in Japan, where their works were brought back by pilgrim monks and became an important component of a Zen-inflected continental painting canon unique to the archipelago. Zhirong himself was listed in the *Kundaikan sōchōki,* a Japanese connoisseurial manual associated with the Ashikaga shogunal collection.[30] He was overshadowed, however, by Hu Zhifu, whose name was affixed to hundreds of anonymous Chan/Zen figure paintings in Japanese collections and became associated with the highest standards of the genre.[31]

Authorship, however, is not the most productive avenue of inquiry into apparition painting. Most examples are unsigned because they tended to be executed by monk-painters of low monastic rank. During the Southern Song period, acolyte artisans of this kind became common presences in the orbits of prominent abbots, attending to their masters' myriad pictorial needs. Zhiweng Ruojing is one of few such monk-painters to have impressed his seals on extant scrolls. Two works that directly reflect the mirage-like figural mode under discussion here, *The Sixth Patriarch Carrying a Pole* (fig. 1), and *Budai* (fig. 5), in a private collection in Tokyo, both bear his square vermilion relief seal in the lower-left corner.[32] Despite its slightly more stylized drapery folds on Budai's robe, the latter work bears a close resemblance in composition and technique to other apparition paintings and can be considered representative of Zhirong's legacy.[33] As to be expected, Zhiweng is entirely absent from Chinese painting histories and nothing is otherwise known about his biography or artistic output; even in Japan, his seal was consistently misread as Luweng (J. Sotsuō or Sottō) until the mid-twentieth century.[34]

A more promising vector of exploration into the production contexts of apparition paintings concerns the monks who inscribed them. The scrolls that have

26. Lou Yue, while inscribing Huiyuan's *Seven Worthies of the Wintry Forest* by Huiyuan, mentions that his "original master was Old Rong," and that accordingly "wind and rain are brushed in pale ink." See *Gongkui ji, juan* 2 (note 11). Later on the monk Xutang Zhiyu (1185–1269) would inscribe a poetic quatrain on an "Ink Play by Master Chu of an Old Rong Ox," suggesting that the Zhirong ox was a recognizable stylistic entity by the mid-thirteenth century. See *Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Xutang Zhiyu* (*Xutang Zhiyu Chanshi yulu*), *juan* 10, in *Shinsan Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō,* ed. Kawamura Kōshō (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975–1989), vol. 70, p. 202b.

27. For more on Gong Kai, see Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "Siyah Qalem and Gong Kai: An Istanbul Album Painter and a Chinese Painter of the Mongolian Period," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987):59–71, and Itakura Masaaki, "Kyō Kai hitsu 'Shunkotsu zukan' ni tsuite," *Gekkan Shinika* 9, no. 10 (October 1998):86–91.

28. See Shimada, *Chugoku,* (see note 5), p. 131.

29. The same can be said of a third monk-painter, Li Yaofu, to whom many Chan/Zen figure paintings in Japan are attributed.

30. The manual was compiled during the fifteenth century based upon a Chinese text, *Precious Mirror of Painting* (C. *Tuhui baojian,* preface dated to 1365), and works found in the Ashikaga collection and Kyoto temples. See Yukio Lippit, "The Birth of Japanese Painting History: Kano Artists, Authors, and Authenticators of the Seventeenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2003), pp. 227–233.

31. Hu Zhifu is discussed in Shimada, *Chūgoku* (see note 5), pp. 132–133, and Shimizu, "Problems of Moku'an Rei'en (?1323–1345)" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1974), pp. 258–259.

32. In addition, *Budai* bears a second seal with the sobriquet "Ruojing," leading to the assumption that the monk-painter's full four-character name is "Zhiweng Ruojing." There is still some question as to what the status is of these names and sobriquets. For more on the names of Chan/Zen monks, see Tamamura Takeji, "Zensō no hōi ni tsuite" and "Zensō shōgō kō," in Tamamura Takeji, *Nihon Zenshūshi ronshū jō* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1976), pp. 3–20, in ibid, pp. 21–94.

33. See Itakura's entry in *Nansō kaiga* (see note 8).

34. See Tanaka Toyozō, "Sotsuō ni tsuite," *Bijutsu gahō* 513 (1920) (unpaginated), reprinted in *Chūgoku bijutsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1964), pp. 239-241. The *Kundaikan sōchōki* lists Zhiweng as active during the Yuan period (erroneously) and as a specialist in "Budai and other figures." Itakura Masaaki notes that Zhiweng Ruojing may possibly be referred to in the religious encomium or "dharma words" (C. *fawu,* J. *hōgo*) of the Chan monk Chijue Daochong (1169–1250) found in his recorded sayings. See Itakura, "Enkei Kōmon o meguru sakuga—Ryō Kai, Chokuō, Mokkei," pp. 19–24 in *Nansō kaiga* (note 8).

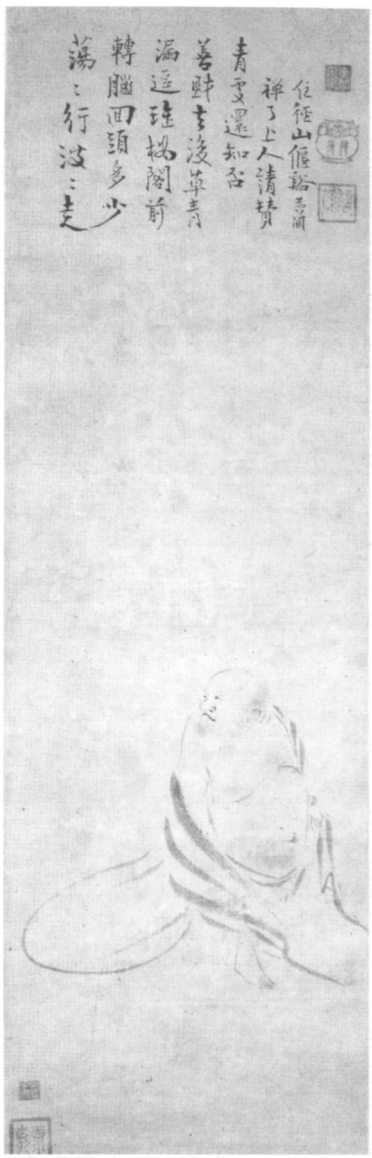

Figure 5. Zhiweng Ruojing (act. mid-thirteenth century), *Budai,* ca. 1256–1263. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 91.8 x 28.8 cm. Private Collection, Tokyo.

survived are primarily linked with a small group of Chan abbots during the thirteenth century. Although Zhiweng's profile is elusive, his two signed works are both inscribed by Yanxi Guangweng (1189–1263) who also left verse eulogies on some eight other extant works.[35] This corpus is unusually large for Chan-related painting and can furthermore be dated with a reasonable amount of specificity. Yanxi, a monk of the Linji lineage, was the recipient of imperial patronage and held abbacies at several of the most important Chan monasteries in the Siming and Lin'an regions.[36] Because his affiliations during his late years—at Jinci si (1251–1254), Lingyin si (1254–1256), and Wanshou si (1256–1263), all Chan monasteries in and around Lin'an—are included on the scrolls themselves, they can be ascribed space-time coordinates that are unusually precise by the standards of Southern Song painting.[37] Yanxi himself was part of a culturally dynamic community that included not only several other monk-painters such as Li Que and Muqi (discussion to follow) and disciples from Japan and other overseas locales, but also companionship with prominent scholar-officials. One such official, Lin Xiyi (ca. 1200–1273), who authored Yanxi's epitaph and preface to his recorded sayings, was the leading commentator on the *Zhuangzi* of his day and annotated the seminal texts of philosophical Daoism by citing poetic equivalents for every line.[38]

The example of Yanxi, however, also suggests that apparition painting may ultimately be linked as closely to places as to people. All of the scrolls associated with Yanxi were inscribed during his residencies at the major Chan monasteries of Lin'an. These monasteries were among the "Five Mountains," leading administrative

35. There is also evidence of many more inscriptions on works whose whereabouts are now unknown. See the list compiled in Itakura (ibid.), p. 19.

36. A sense of Yanxi's career and range of writings can be gleaned from *The Recorded Sayings of the Chan Master Yanxi Guangwen* (*Yanxi Guangwen Chanshi yulu*), 2 *juan,* in *Shinsan Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō,* ed. Kawamura Kōshō (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1986), vol. 69, pp. 726–754.

37. Apparition paintings make up a sizable proportion of dated Song paintings. For reference, see Max Loehr, "Chinese Paintings with Sung Dated Inscriptions," *Ars Orientalis* 4 (1961):219–284.

38. Yanxi's religious activities are documented in his recorded sayings, *Yanxi Guangwen Chanshi yulu* (see note 36). His friendship with Lin Xiyi, who authored his tomb epitaph, is especially suggestive. Lin, whose dates are unknown but who received a *jinshi* degree in 1235, authored numerous writings that demonstrate an interest in integrating proto-Daoist philosophical texts, such as the *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi* with Chan philosophy. One of his most remarkable texts, *Oral Significance of the Zhuangzi* (C: *Zhuangzi kouyi*), dating to 1261, consisted of annotation to the *Zhuangzi* in the form of poetic verse drawn from classical poems of the Tang and Song periods. Its purpose was apparently to provide clear, compact interpretations of the classic that could be employed in the oral portion of civil service examinations. Lin's range of acquaintances included several other prominent Chan monks of the period and suggests a rich intellectual context for Chan painting eulogies that has yet to be explored. For a wide-ranging introduction to his writings, see Araki Kengo, "Rin Kiitsu no tachiba," *Kyūshū daigaku Chūgoku tetsugaku ronshū* 7 (1981):48–61.

temples through which the Southern Song imperium governed the Chan monastic community as a whole. Established during the reign of Ningzong (1194–1224) under the guidance of the Chief Councilor Shi Miyuan (1164–1233), the Five Mountain monasteries consisted of 1) Wanshou si on the outskirts of Lin'an, 2) Jinci si and 3) Lingyin si on the bank of West Lake, and 4) Tiantong si and 5) Ayuwang si near Siming.[39] These campuses were the beneficiaries of lavish imperial support, and their abbots were chosen by the imperial bureaucracy and regularly rotated throughout the monastic circuit. Yanxi himself was thus appointed and circulated. Lingyin si, where Yanxi resided as abbot during the mid 1250s, was particularly important to the history of apparition painting. Situated on the slopes of Wulin Mountain on the shores of West Lake, it was founded in the fourth century and became a leading Chan institution during the Song. Lingyin si was especially famous for its close proximity to the mountain's renowned peak, Feilai feng, and the neighboring Shang Tianzhu si or Upper Tianzhu Monastery, one of the two leading sites for Guanyin worship in China, as well as for the many legends about its "monkey disciples."[40] Its lineage of abbots and resident monks included many of the most influential Chan practitioners of the Song.[41] Not only did Zhirong himself undertake his initial Chan training there, but Beijian Jujian, who played an important role in curating the memory of the earlier monk's inkwork, later assumed its abbacy.[42] Beijian was well positioned to fill this role; he was the leading Chan commentator of his time on the brush arts and appears to have closely studied the writings of Lou Yue.[43]

Another space for the transmission of Zhirong's practice was Wanshou si, which was institutionally preeminent among Five Mountains monasteries. Located approximately seventy kilometers west of Lin'an near the Tianmu mountain range, Wanshou si, also referred to simply as Jingshan or "Mt. Jing," was founded in the eighth century but achieved centripetal status with the residency of the influential monk Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163) in 1137, when its monastic community allegedly grew from 300 to around 1,700 monks.[44] Its institutional life peaked under the headship of Wuzhun Shifan, who served as abbot for an extraordinary seventeen years (1232–1249).[45] Like Yanxi and Beijian,

39. The establishment of the Five Mountains system during the thirteenth century is examined in Ishii Shūdō, "Chūgoku no Gozan jissatsu seido no kisoteki kenkyū," parts 1 through 4, *Komazawa daigaku bukkyōgakubu ronshū* 13 (1982):89–132; 14 (1983):82–122; 15 (1984):61–129; and 16 (1985):30–82; and Nishio Kenryū, *Chūsei no Nitchū kūryū to Zenshū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999), pp. 157–184. For a recent authoritative study of the vagaries of the Five Mountains institution during the Yuan period, see Noguchi Yoshitaka, *Gendai Zenshūshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Zen Bunka Kenkyūjo, 2005), pp. 261–283. For the establishment of a similar Five Mountains system in Kamakura and Kyoto, see Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1981).

40. For an extended discussion of Lingyin si, see T. Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp. 147–219. From the eleventh century onward, both local Hangzhou elites and national officials took a special interest in the abbacy appointments of Lingyin si, as discussed in Chi-chiang Huang, "Elite and Clergy in Northern Sung Hang-chou," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), pp. 295–339, esp. pp. 317–320.

The hero of the novel *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji*), Sun Wukong, is said to have been imagined according to the monkey lore of Lingyin si. For a detailed discussion, see Meir Shahar, "The Lingyin Si Monkey Disciples and the Origins of Sun Wukong," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no. 1 (June 1992):193–224.

Lingyin si was sometimes paired in the cultural and religious imaginary with Shang Tianzhu si monastery. For a discussion of Shang Tianzhu si and Guanyin worship, see Shih-Shan Susan Huang, "Tianzhu Lingqian: Divination Prints from a Buddhist Temple in Song Hangzhou," *Artibus Asiae* 67, no. 2 (2007):243–291. The sculptural reliefs of the Feilai feng site are examined in Richard Edwards, "Pu-tai-Maitreya and a Reintroduction to Hanzhou's Fei-lai-feng," *Ars orientalis* 14 (1984):5–50.

41. Of special note in this regard is Dachuan Puji (1179–1253), the thirty-seventh abbot of Lingyin si. Dachuan authored a highly influential text titled *Original Assembly of the Five Lamps* (*Wudeng huiyuan*; 1253), which compiled the biographies of famous layman practitioners of Chan Buddhism, a kind of secular equivalent of earlier transmission records. Dachuan also recorded a eulogy on a work by the Academy painter Liang Kai (discussion to follow) that represents one of the most important biographical sources on the painter. For further discussion, see *Ryōkai*, ed. Bijutsu Kenkyūjo (Tokyo: Bijutsu Kenkyūjo, 1957).

42. Beijian was one of a coterie of monks active in the capital who hailed from the far western province of Shu, which was characterized by a diverse religious culture and its own rich tradition in the brush arts. For a discussion of the importance of Shu to Southern Song Chan culture, see Dōtsu Ayano, "Hokkan Kyokan no bunkateki soji" (note 17).

43. For Beijian's relationship to Lou Yue, see Dōtsu, "'Hokkanshū' ni mirareru Rō Yaku" (see note 10). One good example of Beijian's literati companionship is the official Qian Dedai (dates unknown). Both *Beijian's Collected Writings* (*Beijian wenji*) and *Beijian's Collected Poems* (*Beijian shiji*) record a number of portraits of or works owned by Qian that are inscribed by Beijian. See the discussion in Dōtsu, "Hokkan Kyokan" (ibid.), pp. 243–244.

44. The official name of the monastery underwent several changes during the Song period but eventually settled on Xingsheng Wanshouchan si. It was founded by the monk Fa Qin during the Tianbao era (742–756).

45. For more on the origin and development of the Chan Five Mountains system, see Noguchi Yoshitaka, *Gendai Zenshūshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Zen Bunka Kenkyūjo, 2005), pp. 261–283.

Wuzhun was imperially recognized and well connected with officialdom; but his institutional stature is reflected in the prodigious number of monks that claimed descent from his dharma lineage.[46] It is likely that many Chan pictorial practices were transmitted to Japan under the auspices of Wuzhun's presence at Wanshou si, including and especially apparition painting.

The association of apparition painting with specific sites may explain why surviving works tend to be confined to the thirteenth century and associated with specific religious masters at the leading Lin'an Chan monasteries. The fourteenth century witnessed a general shift in the major centers of Chan learning to which Japanese pilgrim-monks congregated. In contrast to the Southern Song, during which the Five Mountains monasteries of Lin'an and Siming teemed with overseas acolytes, the Yuan period saw the emergence of more remote Chan communities overseen by highly charismatic monks whose independence from imperial oversight was a key component of their appeal. The most famous such figures were Zhongfeng Mingben (1263–1323) and Gulin Qingmao (1262–1329).[47] Dozens of disciples ensured the continuation of their dharma lineages in Japanese monastic centers. By contrast, the abbot Yuansou Xingtan, despite his many decades of residency at Wanshousi, the premier Chinese Chan institution, could not claim a single dharma heir in Japan.[48] Because Yuansou's colophon, discussed earlier, is the last recorded account of apparition painting, it could be that this mode was still current within, but confined to, Mt. Jing and other Chan communities of the capital region. At the same time, however, the complete lack of any mention of Zhirong's name or lineage from this time forward, along with the stylistic drift of surviving works, suggests otherwise. Chan figure painting of the fourteenth century demonstrates that the practices of monk-painters were undergoing continual transformation during the Yuan period. The demise of apparition painting may ultimately be attributable to the emergence of new paradigms for the pictorial expression of awakenedness. This phenomenon is better understood through a more thorough accounting of thirteenth-century modes of Chan figure painting.

Apparition painting has been ambiguously situated within the larger history of monochrome ink figure painting in Song-period China. At one point or another practically all such painting has been labeled apparitional. This over-generous use of the term, however, ignores important differences of artistic figuration among them. During the early to mid-thirteenth century, even within Chan contexts—for that matter, even within the circles of the same Chan abbots—at least three other types of monochrome ink figure painting were in circulation.[49] The first, "untrammeled" type is characterized by methodical brushwork for the face and exposed body parts, contrasted with rough brushwork for the clothing. A number of early thirteenth-century works in Japanese collections, such as *The Monk Fenggan* (fig. 6), demonstrate this division of labor between flesh and cloth.[50] Its broad, scratchy, black brushwork generates a sense of movement and agitation that highlights the calm

46. Muqi, the famous monk-painter, was one of them. Two more disciples, Wu'an Punin (d. 1276) and Wuxue Zuyuan (1226–1286), were invited to Japan, where they took up abbacies at major Kamakura Zen monasteries and oversaw a crucial moment in the Zenning of the archipelago. Among Japanese pilgrim monks who sought out Wuzhun's supervision, Enni Ben'en (1202–1280), the founder of Tōfukuji monastery in Kyoto, is the most celebrated, although many others could be named. For more on Sino-Japanese dharma lineages, see Tamamura Takeji, "Nihon Zensō no tokai sangaku kankei o hyōji suru shūha zu," in *Nihon zenshūshi ronshū ge no ni* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1981), pp. 151–172, and more recently Satō Hidetaka, "Zensha no Nitchū kōryū—Sōdai Zenshū to Nihon Zenrin," in *Sōdai Zenrin no shakaiteki eikyō* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2002). On networks of Wuzhun disciples in particular, see Suyama Nagahiro, "Sōmatsu in okeru Zensō tachi no kōryū—Bujun Shiban no deshi tachi," *Shūgaku kenkyū* 44 (March 2002):229–234, and Satō Hidetaka, "Shūichi-ha no nissō, nyūgensō ni tsuite—Enni no Tōfukuji sōdan to Sōgen no zenshū," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 53, no. 2 (March 2005):592–597.

47. Zhongfeng has attracted a sizable literature, most recently summarized in Noguchi, *Gendai Zenshūshi* (see note 45), pp. 89–168. Ide Seinosuke discusses Zhongfeng's cultural activity and association with Japanese monks in "Chūhō Minpon jisanzō o megutte," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 343 (1989):99–116. See also Chün-fang Yü, "Chung-feng Ming-pen and Ch'an Buddhism in the Yüan," in *Yüan Thought: Chinese Thought and Religion Under the Mongols,* ed. Hok-lam Chan and Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1982), pp. 419–477. By contrast, Gulin has been understudied, even though he was arguably just as significant a presence in the religious landscape of his time. For an introduction, see Tamamura Takeji, "Kurin Seimu jū Honeiji goroku kankō no shūhen," *Nihon zenshūshi ronshū ge no ichi* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1981), pp. 299–318.

48. Several Japanese monks are known to have met with Yuansou, including Jakushitsu Genkō (1290–1367), Kaō Sōnen (d. 1345), Sūzan Kyochū (1277–1345), and Sesson Yūbai (1290–1346), but these figures consulted many other religious masters as well. For an extended discussion see Noguchi, *Gendai Zenshūshi* (see note 45), pp. 79–80.

49. The following section is indebted to Toda Teisuke, "Sōgen Zensō gaka no kaiga—shu to shite Zenyo kaigafū ni tsuite—," in *Geijutsu,* vol. 7 of *Chūgoku bunka sōsho,* ed. Machida Kōichi and Suzuki Kei (Tokyo: Daishūkan Shoten, 1971), pp. 125–138.

50. See Itakura Masaaki's entry in *Nansō kaiga* (see note 8), p. 158.

and sense of purpose of the subject. Many commentators associate this pictorial mode with a tradition of spontaneous and vigorous (untrammeled, or *yipin*) depiction dating back to the Tang period (618–907).[51]

A second type sometimes grouped with apparition painting is the agitated figure style of the Imperial Academy painter Liang Kai (active in the early thirteenth century). His oeuvre is difficult to assess because of its dizzying technical and stylistic range, which spans both the sophisticated descriptive modes of the Song Painting Academy and the abbreviated monochrome modes prevalent in the Chan community. In later biographies, this bipolar oeuvre was explained according to a spurious anecdote that Liang Kai, upon receiving the prestigious Golden Girdle from the emperor, hung his prize up on the Academy walls and left to join a Buddhist monastery.[52] *The Sixth Patriarch Chopping Bamboo* (fig. 7), in the Tokyo National Museum, offers one example of his "abbreviated brush" method (*jianbi*). *The Sixth Patriarch* pictorializes a legendary anecdote about Huineng in which he achieves awakening at the sound of his cutting instrument striking the hollow bamboo. Relying more on linear than tonal variation to make its case, the entire composition bristles with a high-paced, staccato-like congregation of strokes that is also highly abbreviated but nevertheless decidedly unapparitional.

Yet a third figural mode prevalent in thirteenth-century Chan circles is closely associated with the monk-painter

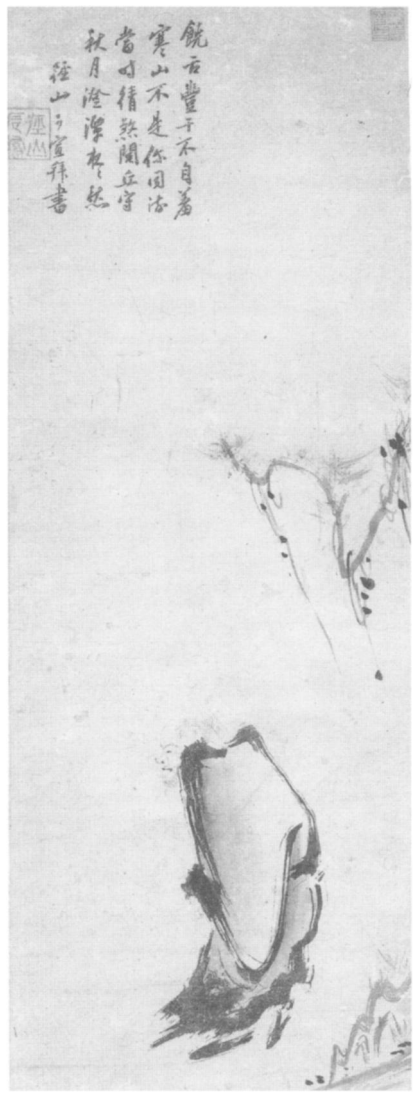

Figure 6. Painter unknown, *The Monk Fenggan,* early thirteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 90.5 x 32.0 cm. Private Collection, Tokyo.

Muqi. Emerging somewhat later than other modes, closer to mid century, this approach depicts its subject with an unambiguous sense of corporeal volume, in contrast to the Zhirong tradition. No work demonstrates its features more skillfully than *The Shrimp Eater* (fig. 8), Muqi's only dated work to have survived. Muqi's work, which bears the painter's seal in the upper left, captures its iconoclastic subject—the monk Xianzi, who was known to flout the Buddhist prohibition against the hunting and eating of sentient things—in a moment of feckless glee as he holds his recently ensnared prey up for a face-

51. See Shimada Shūjirō, "Ippin gafū ni tsuite," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 161 (March 1951):20–46, reprinted in *Chūgoku kaigashi kenkyū* (see note 5), pp. 3–44, translated by James Cahill in "Concerning the I-p'in Style of Painting," part I in *Oriental Art* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1961):66–74; part II in *Oriental Art* 8, no. 3 (Autumn 1962):130–37; and part III in *Oriental Art* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1964):19–26. A useful discussion is also found in Toda Teisuke, "Niso chōshin zu saikō," in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū,* ed. Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki kinenkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 199–216. The *yipin* tradition was originally associated with artists who used unorthodox techniques (smearing with hair and hands, throwing rags) to produce extremely abbreviated landscapes. Ebine Toshio has suggested that later on it came to be associated with religious figure painting, and with muralists who painted without relying on methodical underdrawings, thus practicing a more spontaneous and vigorous approach to their craft. See Ebine, "Suiboku jinbutsu ga—kyū o megutte," in *Nansō, Kin,* vol. 6 of *Sekai bijutsu daizenshū,* ed. Nakazawa Fujio and Shimada Hidemasa (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2000), pp. 141–148.

52. The emergence and evolution of this anecdote is traced in Kawakami Kei, "Ryōkai Indara josetsu," in *Ryōkai, Indara,* vol. 4 of *Suiboku bijutsu taikei,* eds. Ebine Toshio et al (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1973), pp. 39–50; and Lin Xiuwei, "Ryōkai kenkyū josetsu—'Ri Haku ginkō zu' kara *Zue hōkan* no Ryōkai denki made—," *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 117 (1992):235–272.

Figure 7. Liang Kai, (act. early thirteenth century), *The Sixth Patriarch Chopping Bamboo,* early thirteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 72.7 x 31.5 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 8. Muqi (act. mid- to late thirteenth century), *The Shrimp Eater,* ca. 1254–1256. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 84.7 x 31.4 cm. Private Collection, Tokyo.

to-face encounter. Although its void background and subject matter correspond to the general profile of other works inscribed by Yanxi, *The Shrimp Eater* employs a far greater number of strokes to describe its protagonist. Again focusing on the robe of the upper torso, these strokes tend to consist of short, curvilinear lines that altogether project a corporeal presence underneath. The wet, planar application of ink on the skirt suggests that it is drenched from wading in water. The tendency to mass short, curving, undulating lines to a common point to depict subjects "in the round" lends itself well to the convincing depiction of figures-in-landscapes, as evident in Muqi's *Luohan* (Seikadō Library Museum, Tokyo) and *White-Robed Guanyin* (Daitokuji Monastery, Kyoto).[53]

53. These works are usually considered to postdate *The Shrimp Eater;* Muqi is recorded as being active during the Zhiyuan era (1264–1294), and *The Shrimp Eater* is therefore likely an early work by the monk-painter. For a discussion of his biography, see Ebine Toshio, "Mokkei no shōgai," in *Mokkei—shōkei no suibokuga* (Tokyo: The Gotoh Museum, 1996), pp. 88–90. For a useful discussion of Muqi's stylistic development, see Toda Teisuke, "Mokkei ni okeru

When situated amid these widely divergent approaches, the specific qualities of apparition painting come into higher relief. In contrast to the drama of untrammeled brushwork, the frenetic linearity of Liang Kai's patriarchs, and the massing of Muqi's eccentrics, the Zhirong mode emphasizes above all else the ethereality and weightlessness of representation. Background motifs are eschewed, and brushwork conveys the distinct impression of wanness and ontological ambiguity. The most significant feature in this regard is the faintness of ink, which contributes to an overall feintness of subject. In particular, apparition painting is unique in its strictly *linear* use of pale ink to achieve the intended ghostly effect. During this era, tonal gradation at such a minimal register was more common in certain types of landscape painting that, in striving for effects of "blandness" or "ink play," were characterized by a planar application of ink through tonally expansive washes, best exemplified in works such as *Dream Journey on the Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (fig. 9).[54] In the Zhirong mode, by contrast, undersaturated lines appear to reflect different priorities and introduce a difficulty into the viewing process that is relieved only by the black touches in the eyelids, pupils, nostrils, inner ear, and select accoutrements. Such marks not only render the figure more legible, but also more convincingly inhabited.

The etiology of this approach to ink figuration is difficult to map because of a dearth of surviving works. It can generally be assumed, however, that apparition painting represents one of several vectors of development in Chan communities of a highly refined mode of linear painting, referred to as *baimiao* (literally "white drawing"). Closely associated with Li Gonglin, *baimiao,* Li's signature technique, was an archaizing and unadorned pictorial mode that typically eschewed color and relied almost exclusively on thin, barely inflected ink lines to convey forms and build up compositions.[55] Although modeling effects were occasionally introduced into these ink-line compositions, such as in *The Classic of Filial Piety* (fig. 10), one of Li's most representative surviving works, for the most part they were defined by a focus on crisp linearity. Because Li was deeply involved in Chan Buddhist practice and pictorialized a number of complex sectarian subjects, his works became important models for Buddhist subject matter during the Southern Song period.[56] Indeed, the legacy of Li Gonglin among Buddhist monk-painters during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is a sorely neglected topic. Not only did a number of monks directly learn their craft from him, many others followed his example or treated his works as iconographic and compositional standards. *Sixteen Luohans* (fig. 11), a mid-twelfth-century work in the Freer Gallery of Art, exemplifies the continued application of his "white drawing" to Buddhist subject matter during the early Southern Song period. This work is of special interest in relation to apparition painting because of its pale, barely audible tonality. The wiry silhouettes of its figures, however, clearly recall Li Gonglin's *baimiao,* and the work is tellingly attributed to the monk-painter Fanlong (active in the twelfth century), a recorded disciple of the Northern Song painting master.[57]

The kinship of apparition painting and the Li Gonglin manner is uniquely suggested in *The Pilgrim Boy Sudhana* (fig. 12), a recently rediscovered work inscribed by Beijian Jujian.[58] The work depicts Sudhana, the most famous youthful salvation seeker in Buddhist lore, at the penultimate encounter of a pilgrimage to fifty-three wise beings as described in the *Flower Garland Sutra* (S. *Avatamsaka sutra,* C. *Huayan jing*).[59] After experiencing the glorious surroundings of the Bodhisattva Maitreya's Palace, Sudhana prays for a final meeting with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who miraculously extends his hand from the vast distance of "one hundred and ten *yojanas*" to stroke the boy's head.[60] The Beijian-inscribed work depicts just this moment of haptic encounter

Sō to Gen—Rōshi zu o megutte—" *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 117 (1992):215–234.

54. This work, which dates to the late twelfth century, is the subject of Valérie Malenfer Ortiz, *Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape: The Power of Illusion in Chinese Painting* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

55. There is an extensive literature on Li Gonglin in English. See especially *Li Kung-lin's Classic of Filial Piety,* ed. Richard Barnhart (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993); and Robert E. Harrist, Jr., *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-Century China: Mountain Villa by Li Gonglin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

56. Li Gonglin's involvement with Chan Buddhism is discussed in An-yi Pan, *Li Gonglin and Northern Song Buddhist Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

57. For more on this work, see Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington, D.C.: The Freer Gallery of Art, 1973), pp. 98–101.

58. This work is introduced in Itakura Masa'aki, "Hokkan" (see note 17).

59. For more on artistic representations of the Sudhana pilgrimage, see Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: A study of Gandavyūha illustrations in China, Japan and Java* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton & Co., 1967). A useful survey of Sudhana-related art in the context of *The Flower Garland Sutra* iconography is Ishida Hisatoyo, *Kegonkyō-e,* vol. 270 of *Nihon no bijutsu* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1988).

60. It was Mañjuśrī who first instructed Sudhana to embark on his pilgrimage. After encountering the bodhisattva's hand, Sudhana then proceeds to his final destination, the residence of Samantabhadra.

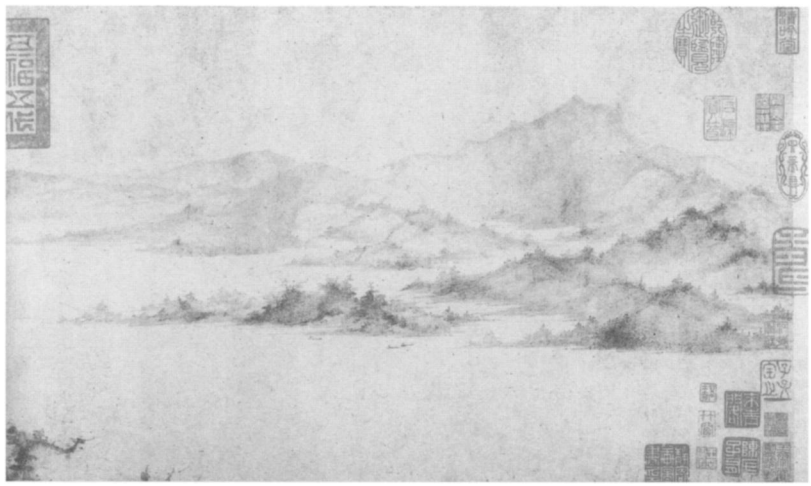

Figure 9. Master Li of Shucheng (act. late twelfth century), *Dream Journey on the Xiao and Xiang Rivers,* ca. 1170, detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 30.3 x 400.4 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 10. Li Gonglin (1049–1106), *The Classic of Filial Piety,* detail, late eleventh century. Handscroll, ink on silk, 21.9 x 475.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 11. Attributed to Fanlong (act. ca. twelfth century), *Sixteen Luohans,* detail, mid-twelfth century. Handscroll, ink on paper, 30.5 x 106.3 cm. The Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Purchase, F1960.1 detail.

(fig. 13). Sudhana, facing to the left with his hands pressed together in prayer, has turned around right as Mañjuśrī's hand reaches out to him. The iconography of the moment calls for the remainder of the bodhisattva's body to remain invisible, rendering the miracle all the more pictorially dramatic. The silvery, chimeric tones of ink and extraordinary faintness of the floating hand—which has led at least one commentator to speculate that the deity's body was possibly cut out from the scroll—suggest a thematic of (in)visibility proximate to that of apparition painting, a mode with which Beijian was as intimate as any member of the Chan clergy.[61] But the rendering of Sudhana's costume is carried out in a languid, stylized variation of Li Gonglin's ink-line method, far removed from the sartorial abbreviation characteristic of Zhirong and his followers.[62] Li was known to have painted this same subject within the larger context of Sudhana's complete pilgrimage circuit, and his renditions were considered exemplary during the Southern Song period. Beijian himself left inscriptions on several of Li's treatments of the theme, raising the possibility that *The Pilgrim Boy Sudhana* was modeled on a work by the scholar-painter.[63] *The Pilgrim Boy Sudhana* thus points to the indebtedness of Chan monk-painters to the *baimiao* approach to figure painting, and may mark a middle ground between the brush habits associated with both Li Gonglin and Zhirong.

As argued, the relationship between apparition painting and scholar painting in the Southern Song period is more proximate than realized. A larger context for this interrelationship has been established by recent scholarship on Song-period Chan Buddhism, which is mapping out with ever greater precision the close kinship of Chan communities to officialdom in

61. See the brief entry on this painting in James Cahill, *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings: T'ang, Sung, and Yüan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 226.

62. The mannered fluttering of the figure's scarf ends, caught in a gust of cosmic wind, recall the "fluttering orchid leaf" strokes associated with the twelfth-century Academy painter Ma Hezhi, an observation made by Itakura in "Hokkan" (see note 17), p. 19. For more on Ma Hezhi's linear habits, see Julia K. Murray, *Ma Hezhi and the Illustration of the Book of Odes* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

63. The importance of Li Gonglin to the iconography of Sudhana was raised in Umezu Jirō, "Tōdaiji-bon Zenzai dōji emaki shikō," *Yamato bunka* 29 (1958):11–26, reprinted in Umezu Jirō, *Emakimono sōkō* (Tokyo: Chūōkōron Bijutsu Shuppan), pp. 62–79. Beijian's inscriptions on Li's works are listed in Itakura, "Hokkan" (see note 17), p. 20, note 18.

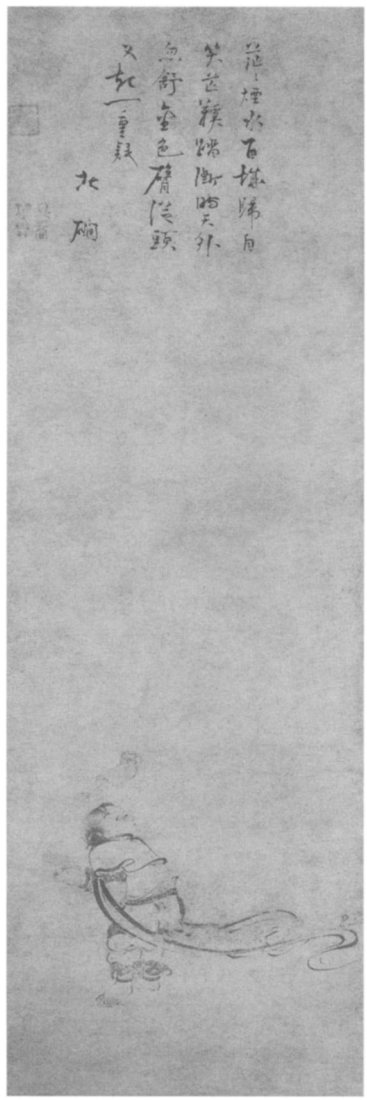

Figure 12. Painter unknown, *The Pilgrim Boy Sudhana,* early to mid-thirteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 89.8 x 29.4 cm. Private Collection, Hyōgo Prefecture.

Figure 13. *The Pilgrim Boy Sudhana,* detail of figure 12.

both personal and institutional terms.[64] Chan monks relied upon the support of scholar-bureaucrats for imperial patronage, monastic land grants, and abbacy appointments. Unsurprisingly, they took on numerous lay patrons from this demography and often entered into close camaraderie with its members. Scholar-officials prized such relationships for the spiritual tutelage and prestigious associations they offered. Accordingly, throughout the Song period Chan monks not only adopted but also took a leading role in refining norms of gentlemanly companionship based upon the exchange of poetry and the brush arts. More than a few became renowned as prominent painters and calligraphers themselves, and Chan monks played a crucial role in developing certain painting subjects that would later on be closely associated with the literati painting canon, most famously Huaguang Zhongren's (d. 1123) invention of the ink plum (C. *momei*) genre.[65]

64. Numerous works could be cited here, beginning with a classic article by T. Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China,* ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp. 147–208. A recent study that summarizes larger trends in the institutional rise of Chan during the tenth and eleventh centuries is Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). For a discussion of the formation of the Chan figure pantheon in the context of this rise, see Yukio Lippit, "Awakenings: The Development of the Zen Figural Pantheon," in *Awakenings: Zen Figure Painting in Medieval Japan,* ed. Gregory Levine and Yukio Lippit (New York: Japan Society, 2007), pp. 34–51.

65. For a full discussion, see Maggie Bickford, *Ink Plum: The Making of a Chinese Scholar-Painting Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 115–130. Prominent painters and calligraphers from the Chan corps during the Song period are discussed in Hasegawa Masahiro, "Sōdai ni okeru geijutsusō ni tsuite," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 47, no. 1 (Dec 1998):19–23. Along with well-known culturally active monks such as Juefan Huihong (1071–1128), Hasegawa identifies some eleven monk-calligraphers and thirteen monk-painters whose profiles are recorded only in specialized histories of the Song and Yuan periods.

The artistry of Chan monks, however, was more than an expression of erudition or a refined mode of epistolary exchange. It was also reflective of a larger ideological agenda driven by the need of Chan institutions to distinguish themselves from other Buddhist sects vying for attention. Chan promoted the idea that its members represented a unique and unbroken transmission of the Dharma, or Buddha's wisdom, throughout the ages. This "special transmission" was presented as intuitive—that is to say, not acquired through scriptural study, as with other Buddhist communities, but "mind to mind," through meditation and other somatic practices, or private instruction with a religious master. The Chan assertion of a special transmission, however, was a construct of the Song period, one that was directed at both members of the *sangha* and the official bureaucracy.[66] It developed into a powerful rhetoric that suffused the prolific literature generated by monks during the Song period and beyond. The antitextualism and iconoclasm of Chan monks was highlighted in the "lamp histories," official genealogies of the Chan special transmission that were presented approximately once every generation to the Song imperial court. It was also promulgated in sermons, eulogies, and *gong'an* (J. *kōan*) or "case studies," inscrutable exchanges between historic figures that presented riddles of language and logic for spiritual cultivation. Transmission became such an important theme that it has prompted one commentator to refer to Chan religious practice as "fundamentally genealogical."[67] While the extent to which day-to-day Chan monastic activity actually deviated from that of other Buddhist sects requires further scrutiny, the rhetoric of a special transmission clearly played a crucial role in Chan's rise to institutional preeminence during the Song.

Chan figure painting effectively enabled the communal imagination of the Chan transmission by pictorializing its most auratic and pictogenic members. Its dramatis personae consisted of (mostly legendary) exemplars of Chan awakening, including the Bodhidharma (fig. 4) and the first six patriarchs of Chinese Chan, and the "scattered saints" (*sansheng*) such as Budai, Xianzi the Shrimp Eater, and Hanshan and Shide, whose deviant behavior was understood to be the exception that proved the rule of Chan's special transmission.[68] Subjects of more mainstream Buddhist iconography were also pictorialized in Chan communities, but oftentimes with a wrinkle that highlighted the special status of Chan commentary. The most prominent example of its oblique approach to Buddhas and bodhisattvas is "Sakyamuni's Descent from the Mountain," a painting subject that transforms a minor, transitional episode in the Historical Buddha's life into one of its most epiphanic.

Figure painting was by no means the only genre practiced in the circles of Chan abbots. Other subjects that lent themselves readily to Chan allegory—such as oxen, Zhirong's specialty—were also popular, and monk-painters often forayed into the iconography of scholarly virtue, painting ink bamboo and plum with a mastery that is difficult to appreciate because of their nonsurvival. But it was figure painting that most directly advanced the idea of the special transmission, and apparition painting represented one particularly distilled method of conveying the sanctity of the Chan pantheon. Apparition painting has often been regarded as somehow uniquely Zen, but its qualities may be better assessed within the larger context of scholar-official expectations and aesthetics. Those features of apparition painting now so closely associated with Chan spontaneity and intuition—the abbreviation of brushwork and the hallucinatory paleness of ink tone, punctuated by black accents—can be equally well understood as growing out of scholar-official habits of painterly expression and as intended to recruit the sympathies of this same audience. The reception of Li Gonglin's *baimiao* mode among Southern Song Chan monks has already been observed, and the sparing use of ink was already being championed as an integral characteristic of scholar's painting in the eleventh century. Moreover, Zhirong himself, as a doctor with entrée to the court, bore a profile similar to that of the scholar-official for the majority of his life.

The close kinship of Zhirong's mode to scholar painting is suggested by *The Poet Li Bai* (fig. 14), a work by Liang Kai in the Tokyo National Museum. Here the famous Tang-period versifier Li Bai (701–762)

66. Brief Chan lineages had been in circulation well before the Song period in texts such as *Record of the Transmission of the Darma Jewel* (*Chuan Fabao ji*) and *Record of the Dharma Jewel in Every Age* (*Lidai Fabao ji*), but only began to be fully elaborated into transmission records connected to contemporary practitioners with *The Patriarch's Hall Anthology* (*Zutang ji*, compiled 952) and the lamp histories of the Song period. See Welter (note 64), pp. 59–114.

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

68. I have discussed the latter figures as essentially objects of local cult worship that were appropriated into the Chan pantheon in order to render it more appealing and more convincing to a broader constituency. See Lippit, "Awakenings" (note 64), pp. 39–43.

is depicted in a different manifestation of Liang Kai's abbreviated brush mode. The high-minded poet is captured in monochrome ink against a void background. Apparently walking outdoors and looking upward, possibly at the moon, while appearing to recite a poem, Li Bai could easily pass for a Chan exemplar drawn up by a follower of Zhirong. The begrudging use of ink evident in the robes, the dark tones reserved for facial features, hair, and shoes, and the overall economy of brushstrokes share much in common with apparition painting.[69] *Budai* (fig. 15), a surviving work by the monk Li Que, pays further testimony to this close relationship. Inscribed during the mid 1250s by Yanxi Guangweng and thus emerging from the same environment as works by Zhiweng and other previously mentioned monk-painters, *Budai* demonstrates apparitional handiwork. Its author, however, was a disciple of Liang Kai, and his parsimonious use of ink cannot be attributed entirely to a Chan milieu or disposition.

Apparition painting's kinship to scholar painting offers a different way of accounting for its abbreviation of brushwork, because this quality directly reflected naturalness and amateurity, both highly appreciated in literati aesthetics. Although the unpolished nature of Chan-related figure painting is taken as a matter of course, apparition painting appears to rely largely on deskilling, the purposeful undercrafting that strained to achieve whatever the opposite of professionalism looked like in the monochrome ink medium. And the same observation holds for the restrained, undernourished tonality of its figures, reflective of a continuous effort to achieve ever-whiter shades of pale.

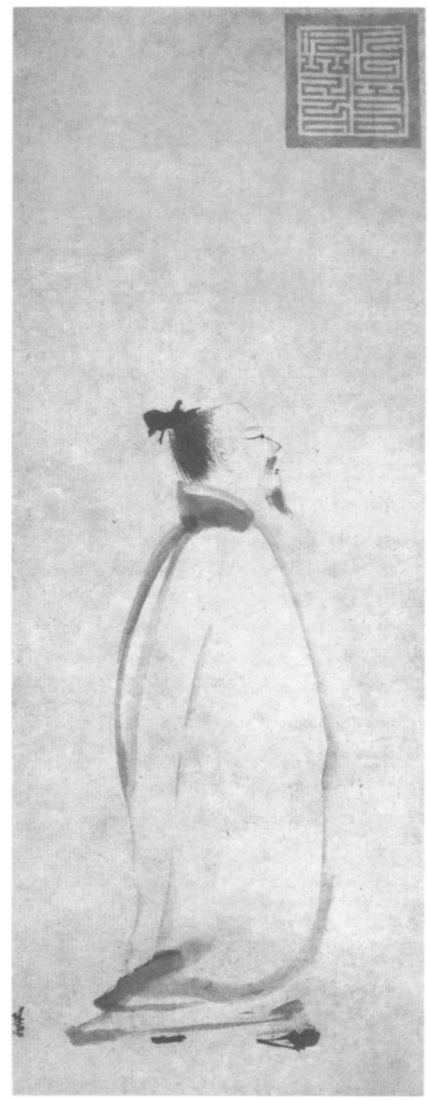

Figure 14. Liang Kai (act. early thirteenth century), *The Poet Li Bai,* early thirteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 81.1 x 30.5 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Chan's pantheon of awakened exemplars, then, provided colorful pretexts for demonstrations of dharma possession. Such acts were the unofficial mandate of the Chan master, who communicated incessantly his embodiment of Chan essence—otherwise ineffable and undefinable—to an array of constituencies and onlookers. Most often this was done by invoking, through word and deed, the unorthodoxy and iconoclasm fundamental to the Chan rhetoric of separate transmission. In this regard, literary genres unique to Chan Buddhism such as the transmission records or "lamp histories" (*denglu*) and recorded sayings, provided thousands of examples of Chan monks performing their awakened status in bizarre and inscrutable ways. As

69. However, a major difference in Liang Kai's work, aside from its subject matter, lies in the treatment of the body. Careful examination shows that the poet is crafted in such a way as to convey his mass and a convincing sense of movement through space. His backside is depicted by a cluster of overlapping lines that hint of spatial depth, and the single brushstroke forming his front side is blurred on its outward-facing edge, an effect that, as several commentators have observed, implies a figure bathed in moonlight. See Lin, "Ryōkai kenkyū" (note 52), pp. 236–247. The painting is also discussed in Kumatani Nobuo, "Ryōkai hitsu Ri Haku ginkō zu," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 161 (March 1951):47–49; Hasumi Shigeyasu, "Ryōkai hitsu 'Ri Haku ginkō zu' no Pasupa moji 'Daishito-in' to Anika ni tsuite," *Tōhōgaku* 35 (1966):83–97; and Kunigō Hideaki, "Ri Haku ginkō zu," in *Suibokuga no seiritsu,* vol. 1 of *Nihon suibokuga meihin zufu* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun, 1993).

Figure 15. Li Que (act. mid-thirteenth century), *Budai,* ca. 1254–1256. Hanging scroll, part of a triptych, ink on paper, 104.8 x 32.1 cm. Myōshinji Monastery, Kyoto.

Albert Welter notes, this literature, which proliferated during the Song period, cast the Chan master as a "latter-day Zhuangzi," a Daoist sage whose wisdom was characterized by impish skepticism, nonsensical counter-querying, and *touchés* of startling but illustrative anecdote.[70] This model of the irascible, probing wise man came to be performed continuously by Chan monks through lectures, sermons, personal interaction with disciples and lay patrons, versification, public outings, and, most pertinent here, the inscription of paintings. As the Song period progressed, the manner in which Chan monks demonstrated their awakened credentials tended to gravitate towards commentary on the words and deeds of earlier exemplars of Chan awakening. Painting, because of its objecthood and uniquely visual means of persuasion, provided that much more effective an arena for self-authenticating commentary.

Figure painting offered a uniquely effective inscriptive ground for Chan performance. Records of monks' inscriptions show that it began to proliferate over the course of the twelfth century, reaching its zenith in the institutionally prominent abbots of the mid- to late-thirteenth century.[71] The verse-eulogies they inscribed above pictures of awakened exemplars most often assumed a contrarian rhetorical tone that queried their subjects' actions and motives, attempting in the process to extract further insight from their antinomian behavior. More importantly, however, the heterodoxy thus portrayed gave versifying abbots a potent platform from which to further sermonize on the many mysteries of their own separate version of Buddhahood.[72] Of

70. See Welter (note 64), p. 214.

71. The rise of painting inscriptions in Chan practice parallels the rise of painting inscriptions in general as a distinctive literary category (*tihua shiwen*) during the Song period. As Aoki Masaru has demonstrated, although painting inscriptions in China have a long history that extends back to the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.E.), they only began to be compiled as a separate category of literary production during the late eleventh century. See Aoki, "Daiga bungaku no hatten," *Shinagaku* 9, no. 1 (1937):1–24. A survey of monks' inscriptions during the Southern Song shows a steady increase. For a discussion of painting inscriptions for and by Chan monks, see Hasegawa Masahiro, "Daibatsu yori mitaru Sōdai Zen," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 44, no. 2 (March 1996):128–136, and Dōtsu Ayano, "Nansōdai no Rinzaisō ni yoru kaiga kaishaku ni tsuite," *Zen bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 23 (June 1997):203–221.

72. In this regard, the importance of the use of vernacular Chinese in Chan inscriptions and Chan literature in general cannot be underestimated. The consistent deployment of colloquial Chinese in Chan transmission records, *kōan* dialogues, verses, and inscriptions not only distinguished Chan as a more colorful and charismatic regime of language, but also conveyed more legitimacy to the voices of contemporary monks, allowing them to speak with the same functional authority as earlier patriarchs, and even Sakyamuni himself. The use of the vernacular led to the direct mode of address common to the inscriptions of Yanxi and his contemporaries, and was even adopted by Confucian scholars during the Song. For extended discussion, see Daniel Gardner, "Modes of Thinking and Modes of Discourse in the Song: Some Thoughts on the Yulu ('Recorded Conversations') Texts," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 3 (1991):574–603, and Robert Hymes, "Getting the Words Right: Speech, Vernacular Language, and Classical Language in Song Neo-Confucian 'Records of Words'," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 36 (2006):25–56. Among Japanese scholars, Iriya Yoshitaka (1910–1998) spent much of his career exploring the colloquialisms of early Chan texts. For a representative sampling of his

all of the different pictorial dispositions available to Chan figure painting, the Zhirong mode was perhaps the most effective in framing the soliloquies of its signatories. Its gossamer tones and airy bearings formed visual quandaries that enabled a special kind of Channish rumination, and were inherently suggestive of possibilities for further revelation.

Budai (fig. 16), yet another work bearing the ink traces of Yanxi Guangwen during his abbacy at Wanshou si (1256–1263), highlights the suitability of apparition painting for Chan demagoguery.[73] The scroll, now in the Fukuoka City Museum, portrays the familiar mendicant with his body facing rightward but apparently stopped in its tracks, and his head turning to look backward, to the viewer's left. His staff is raised in his left arm, and the tail end of the ever-present sack, the rest of which is hidden by his rotund body, blows lightly in the wind along with his robe. The compositional dynamic of two counterbalancing forces, one the astral wind that blows rightward in the direction of Budai's perambulation, and the other the dead weight of the protagonist's body and his own deliberate look backward, imbue the figure with visual interest, heightened by a particularly dramatic tonal range, even when judged by the attenuated standards of apparition painting. A wide array of platinum lines and tones sets the Fukuoka version apart as one of the most masterful renditions of a Chan exemplar. Three or four sweeping pewter-colored strokes render the wind-swept robes in a particularly abstract manner. Highly inflected, these strokes contrast with both the fine, tensile lines of the torso and the light, stylized strokes of the sack end, which flutters ribbon-like in the air. The dark ink of the walking stick relieves the otherwise unrelenting ashenness of Budai, along with the dabs of deeply dark pigment applied to the pupils, nostrils, and teeth. Damage around the face obscures these details and the fact that Budai laughs leerily, perhaps addressing someone out of view (fig. 17). Further erosion of the paper surface beneath the robes obscures the eccentric's feet in equally wispy ink lines, the right foot facing outward at a ninety-degree angle from the left to further indicate Budai's turn backward (fig. 18). Overall, the painting conveys the impression of an afterglow, of a visual trace or memory of a figure that was once there. Few images capture with greater evocation than this one the penumbral quality of the pictorial mode associated with Zhirong.

Yanxi's seven-character quatrain inscribed above frames its subject's incandescence:

> In the bustling city, act as you will
> But speak not of dreams in front of the foolish
> You turn your head, but does anyone know whom you really are?
> The pole on your shoulder is as heavy as a mountain.[74]

Here Yanxi directly addresses the legendary itinerant, and his first two lines invoke standard components of Budai's biography that described him as wandering the towns and villages of the Jiangnan region, playing with children, bursting out in laughter, and muttering incomprehensibly. Budai's open mouth suggests that he is captured at a moment of engagement in such nonsensical banter, while speaking of "dreams in front of the foolish." The first half of the verse thus establishes the protagonist as an eccentric who transcends norms of social behavior. This prepares the final two lines to serve as a demonstration of Yanxi's insight that this tomfoolery is a manifestation of enlightenment. Noting his burlesque face, Yanxi asks rhetorically if there is anyone of sufficient spiritual acumen to recognize this jester. Here the inscription appears closely attuned to the painting; by observing the turned head, it calls attention to Budai's *contrapposto* and the full view of his face it affords the onlooker. Yanxi's querying of Budai's true identity is disingenuous, for it was commonly believed that the exemplar was a manifestation of the Buddha Maitreya, a fact that clinched Budai's sanctity and made him that much more appealing to associate with Chan's special transmission.[75] Yanxi's inscriptions on other Budai paintings, listed in his recorded sayings, are more explicit about the relationship between the Chan exemplar and Maitreya.[76] With regard to the Fukuoka City Museum painting, however, while the inscription

writings on this subject, see *Kyūdō to etsuraku—Chūgoku no Zen to shi*—(Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983).

73. See Itakura Masa'aki, "Enkei Kōmon san 'Hotei zu'—Nansō jidai no ichizensō no shūhen ni okeru sakuga—," *Tōyō bijutsu sennen no kiseki* (Nara: Yamato Bunkakan, 1997), pp. 124–129.

74. This translation modifies an earlier English version rendered by Xiaojin Wu in *Awakenings,* ed. Levine and Lippit (see note 64), p. 94. I have consulted Iriya Yoshitaka's interpretation of colloquial usage in "Ko Chokufu Hotei zu," *Gyobutsu shūsei Higashiyama gyobutsu* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1972), p. 82.

75. Concerning the various meanings associated with Budai/Hotei, see Ōnishi Kaoru, "Hotei zu kō—Kanō Masanobu hitsu 'Ganka Hotei zu' shūhen ge," *Shūkyō bijutsu kenkyū* 7 (2000): 65–98.

76. Two other painting inscriptions are found in his *yulu.* One, inscribed for the monk Miaofeng, refers to the moment and spectacle of Maitreya's descent, while the other, whose recipient is unknown, invokes Maitreya's palace in Tusita Heaven. See *The Recorded Sayings of the Chan Master Yanxi Guangwen* (note 36), pp. 748b and 750a.

Figure 16. Attributed to Hu Zhifu (act. thirteenth century), *Budai,* ca. 1256–1263. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 70.7 x 29.3 cm. Fukuoka City Museum.

is indirect, its third line presents its author as the bearer of privileged knowledge, as one who recognizes the true identity of Budai and by extension penetrates appearances to an understanding of the essence of things. Yanxi's own demonstration of this in the final line is cryptic, stating simply "the pole on your shoulder is as heavy as a mountain." To be sure, such a passage reflects the thespian dimension of Chan inscriptive practice, the assumption of the voice of the wise man. At the same time, however, it refers to the weight of the mundane

Figure 17. *Budai* (see fig. 16), detail.

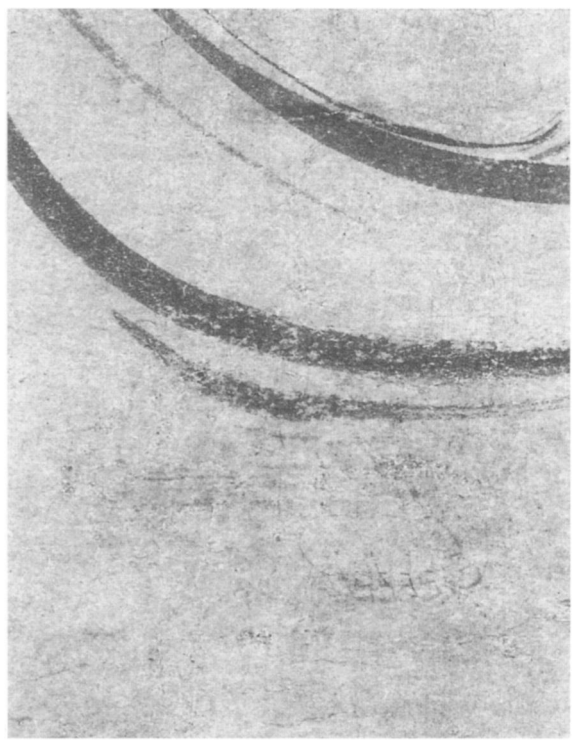

Figure 18. *Budai* (see fig. 16), detail.

world, the ephemerality of Budai's own personhood, and even to Maitreya's burden. A common belief in Budai lore was that his bag actually contained the Tusita Heaven in which Maitreya was imagined to reside.[77]

Pictorial qualities of *Budai* provide eloquent accompaniment to Yanxi's performative eulogy high above it. The composition presents its subject in a manner that encapsulates his mythic image, that of the itinerant and mirthful stooge, staging him in mid-journey—strongly implied by the directional gust of air—and in the midst of some kind of good-humored exclamation. Budai's subjection to the spectral tones of apparition painting, however, calibrates the figure's appearance more closely to Yanxi's oratory. His gentle grisaille suggests such transience that the body itself, like the visual sediment of something that was once more palpable, practically radiates the question of Budai's identity. This vestigial quality is reinforced by the charcoal accents of his harlequin face, which emit a half-life that further complicates the question of the exemplar's true nature by generating its own unique version of chiaroscuro, a tonal contrast suggesting deposits of an inner answer. In this regard, the pole on his shoulder is a determinative stroke, the *coup de grâce* of the painting, its darkness legible as heaviness, a foil that emphasizes all the more the argentine incorporeality of its owner. This is Budai in the wake of himself.

Yanxi Guangwen comes through as the bearer of special wisdom in his verse-eulogies. The Fukuoka *Budai* frames him as an oracle who recognizes that there is a surplus meaning behind the wiseacre demeanor. His other inscriptions follow a similar pattern. To the Tokugawa Museum *Budai* (fig. 3) he thus states: "I can forgive your rebirth in this world with a different face, but not your destruction of the homes of men and women."[78] As with the Fukuoka *Budai* inscription, the admonition here refers not only to Budai's legendary bluster, but also to the contrarian idea—at least to religious orthodoxy—that Buddhist proselytizing in general is destructive of the social fabric. In this regard, Maitreya, the ultimate addressee, is tarred as the ultimate representative of mainstream Buddhist teachings. Similarly, to both the Budai by Zhiweng (fig. 5) and by Li Que (fig. 15), Yanxi asks: "After Sudhana has left the jeweled palace, will he know how to return to greener pastures?" Here again Budai is addressed in his more primal identity as the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the deity responsible for encouraging the boy Sudhana to embark on a spiritual pilgrimage to fifty-three enlightened beings. As described in the *Flower Garland Sutra,* Sudhana encounters Maitreya in front of his palace at the beginning and towards the end of his journey. Yanxi's statement can be interpreted in several ways, but at its core appears to question whether or not Sudhana will be able achieve ideal reclusiveness, or a state of grace, or find inner Buddhahood upon concluding his quest. It is precisely this mode of sophistry that gets featured in Chan inscriptions: Yanxi may not know the answer, but he gets to pose the question. The purpose of the painting is to create the conditions under which this is done to best advantage.

Whether or not a more properly doctrinal framework can be articulated for the leading questions of Chan monks is unclear. Other Chan exemplars recruited from the ranks of folk belief and local cult worship were also imagined as incarnations of more mainstream Buddhist deities, such as Hanshan (Manjusri) and Shide (Samantabhadra). More generally, this type of layered identity could be positioned within the long-standing concept of the "three bodies of the Buddha" theory. According to this idea, the Buddha body manifested itself in three different ways based on the status of the onlooker—the manifested body (S. *nirmanakāya*), represented by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni, the reward body (S. *sambhogakāya*), acquired as a result of unselfish acts of compassion, and finally the true or dharma body (S. *dharmakāya*). Perception of these three states depended upon the state of spiritual awareness of the beholder, with the Buddha's dharma body only accessible to those who had achieved awakening. In Chan discourse, the Buddha's three bodies may be understood as transposed onto other members of the genealogy of special transmission. In this regard, Chan exemplars are imposter deities whose concealed sanctity was discernible only to the spiritually attuned X-ray vision of the most sage practitioners. Although the "Three Buddha Bodies" maps neatly onto this idea, it may ultimately serve as an officious way of understanding a more general rhetoric of Chan pictorial commentary, which presupposes a sliding scale of accessibility to the truth of appearances.

Even when a Chan painting subject does not camouflage a more intrinsic identity, the monks who versified on it suggest a more essential interiority or insight recessed from vision. And while other monochrome ink figure modes could serve as arenas for this discourse of disambiguation, apparition painting, with its weathered hues and expiring sheens,

77. Ōnishi, "Hotei zu kō" (see note 75).

78. See the loose modern Japanese translation of Iriya Yoshitaka in "Ko Chokufu Hotei zu" (note 74), p. 34.

is particularly effective in enabling it. The mirage of the mundane is pantomimed by its poses and incarnate in its incorporeality. Most importantly, the Zhirong mode intimates that there is something just beyond the image, an ontology just beyond accessibility. Rather than communicate nihility, its huelessness insinuates some kind of latent subtext. Transparency of tone generates an opacity of meaning, but nevertheless always with the (faint) possibility of revelation. In apparition painting, the precise nature of this revelation is less important than the intimation, by painterly means, that its disclosure is possible but not necessarily imminent. It is a "structure of almost," in which the not quite unfathomable truth is implied by the not quite invisible representation.

Apparition painting does not seem to have long survived the Song-Yuan transition. The surviving corpus of Chan figure painting trends in a different direction. These tendencies are best represented by two monk-painters believed to be active in the Jiangnan region from the early to mid-fourteenth century, both of non-Chinese origin. The first, Mokuan Rei'en (d. 1345), was a Japanese pilgrim-monk whose few surviving works portray Chan eccentrics in the more volumetric figural mode of Muqi. As witnessed in *The Four Sleepers* (fig. 19), Mokuan's subjects are depicted with a massing of short, swelling, and undulating strokes that generate an appreciably different effect from the wraithlike figures of apparition painting.[79] The second, Yintuoluo (active in the fourteenth century), was apparently of Indian origin whose works were characterized by extreme simplicity of form and a light grotesquerie (fig. 20). His figures develop to an extreme the impish, mischievous quality that was often lurking in paintings of Chan eccentrics in the previous century.[80] Neither would be recognized as a follower of Zhirong.

The reasons for the demise of apparition painting are obscure and will likely remain so. One reason that has been posited is the ongoing professionalization of monk-painters in Chan milieus, a phenomenon that placed pressure on amateurizing modes in general.[81]

Figure 19. Mokuan Rei'en (d. 1345), *The Four Sleepers,* early to mid-fourteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 104.0 x 32.4 cm, Maeda Ikutokukai, Tokyo.

The paradigm for the professional Chan monk-painter is Muqi, who was active in the mid- to late-thirteenth century and whose repertoire included tonally sophisticated landscapes, technically accomplished dragons and tigers, and bodhisattvas on silk. Associated with prominent abbots such as Wuzhun and Yanxi, Muqi went on to establish a standard for excellence in

79. See Yoshiaki Shimizu, "Problems of Moku'an Rei'en (?1323–1345)" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1974).

80. Yintuoluo's painting is thoroughly explored in Yoshiaki Shimizu, "Six Narrative Paintings by Yin T'o-lo: Their Symbolic Content," *Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980):6–37.

81. For this idea of professionalization, see Toda Teisuke, "Sōgen Zensō" (note 49); Toda Teisuke, "Mokkei josetsu," in *Mokkei Gyokkan,* vol. 3 of *Suiboku bijutsu taikei,* ed. Toda Teisuke (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1975), pp. 39–66; and Ebine Toshio, *Gendai Dōshaku jinbutsuga* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1977), esp. pp. 40–76. For a recent reflection on developments in Yuan-period Chan figure painting see Shiga, "Mujūji hitsu Chōyō Taigetsu zu" (note 7).

Figure 20. Yintuoluo (act. fourteenth century), *Hanshan and Shide,* fourteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 35.2 x 49.7 cm, Tokyo National Museum.

monochrome ink painting that reverberated in Chan circles well into the fourteenth century. It is also possible that apparition painting was absorbed by other historical modes into indistinction. These other modes may have included not only Chan figure styles, but scholar painting as well, as the association of Gong Kai with Zhirong suggests.

Whatever the case may be, apparition painting appears to represent a brief chapter in the history of Chinese figural painting. Confined to the circles of several Chan monks in the leading Chan monasteries of Lin'an and Siming during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the life of apparition painting was as fleeting as its appearance. Despite this brevity, it has come to be closely associated with the idea of "Chan painting" itself. The degree to which there is a doctrinal or stylistic basis for something called Chan or Zen painting has been the subject of much debate and cannot be fully addressed here.[82] At the very least, however, apparition painting enabled the development of a Chan/Zen subject position during the Song period. Among other ways, this subject position expressed itself through commentary on the brush arts, and was most clearly manifest in paintings of figures closely associated with the Chan dharma transmission. Yet in theory any subject could be addressed. No matter what the theme, the Chan

82. See, for example, the essays by Dietrich Seckel and Yoshiaki Shimizu in *Zen in China, Japan, East Asia,* vol. 8 in Swiss Asian Studies, ed. Helmut Brinker et al. (Berne: Peter Lang, 1985).

voice could be sure to particularize itself within the larger field of scholarly commentary by drawing upon the sizable Chan literature of lamp histories, *kōan,* and recorded sayings that accumulated during the course of the Song. Thus widely circulating painting subjects such as oxen, monkeys, and bamboo were framed with reference to their metaphorization in Chan texts. If not through specific reference, however, the Chan subject position could be performed through surprising twists of expression or other rhetorical acts that disclosed the awakened credentials of the brush wielder. Whatever its manifestation, this subject is only knowable to us as an inscriptive practice or literary device. But this does not mean it had no visual component. On the contrary, the calligraphic mannerisms developed by many prominent Chan monks surely played a considerable role in how their brush traces were experienced.[83] And among pictorial complements, apparition painting most masterfully facilitated the exceptionalism that was associated with this voice. In this regard, the proximity of the Zhirong mode to scholar painting and the Li Gonglin tradition is revealing. Apparition painting enabled the Chan/Zen subject position by borrowing from established painterly conventions, but managed to defamiliarize them through the introduction of new wrinkles and inflections. In doing so, its own alterity became a source of inscrutability and enchantment to the initiated and uninitiated alike.

83. For the calligraphy of Song- and Yuan-period Chan monks, see Uta Lauer, *A Master of His Own: The Calligraphy of the Chan Abbot Zhongfeng Mingben (1262–1322)* (Stuttgart: Fritz Steiner, 2002).