

**Evidence of Enlightenment,
The Imagery of Realization in Early Chan Poetry**

Charles Chace

If things could be expressed like this with ink and paper,
what would be the purpose of Zen?

Huang Bo¹

Chan Buddhism is famously wary of literary expositions on enlightenment. Its sentiment of “no dependence on language and texts” is believed to have originated directly with its founder, Bodhidharma (d. 536), and it has become a touchstone of the tradition.² The thrust of this perspective, however, is not so much against words and texts themselves as it is an encouragement to penetrate beyond them to the experience they are trying to convey.

Despite its anti-literary appearance, Chan Buddhism has always made creative use of words and literature in an effort to evoke a direct experience of enlightenment. The use of language and letters was so entrenched in Chan practice that at least since the time of the sixth patriarch, Huineng Dajian (慧能大鉴,³ 638-713) and up through the middle of the Song period, confirmation of a student’s enlightenment often rested on a poem submitted to one’s teacher as evidence of one’s realization. Such verses are the classic poems of realization in the Chan literature. Though rarely the final arbiter of one’s accomplishment, they were a nevertheless a primary means of spiritual assessment in Chan lore. Metered verses known as ghasas routinely appear in the Chan literature as capping or finishing verses to an exchange between a student and his master, or between

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two masters. Such poems of awakening or realization (开悟诗) are meant to convey a direct experience of enlightenment and as such, they have been studied by subsequent generations of Chan practitioners down to the present.

All Buddhist poetry seeks to convey its ideals of stillness, emptiness, mindfulness, and compassion in an effective and aesthetically pleasing context, however, not all Chan poems are actually poems of awakening. Poems written by Chan practitioners invariably express Chan sensibilities to one extent or another. They may simply have a Chan feel, or they may explicitly espouse some aspect of Buddhist doctrine. Poems of awakening, however, constitute their own subgenre of the Buddhist literature. These may be understood as the quintessential expression of Buddhist poetry. Perhaps more than any other style of Buddhist literature these poems endeavor to use words to point to the direct and complete experience of enlightenment.

This paper will investigate some of the essential characteristics of Chan realization poetry, focusing on the kinds of poetic imagery that most vividly captures the experience of the enlightened state. It will pay particular attention to primordial nature imagery as an evocative expression of original mind.

One venerable method of discussing the ineffable is by describing what it is not and this is a fitting way of beginning to understand the scope of Chan realization poetry. The poetry of Wang Wei (王维, 701-761) is infused with Chan sensibilities, even those that do not expressly deal with Buddhist themes. Six of his poems appear in one modern anthology of the two hundred most important Chan poems.⁴ Yet even among his poems that deal directly with Chan concerns, most are not poems of enlightenment. The

following, one of the six poems just mentioned, expresses a strong Chan sensibility but is by no means an expression of final realization.

過香積寺 Traveling to Teeming Fragrance Temple

不知香積寺， Can't find Teeming Fragrance Temple,

數裏入雲峰。 So many miles into the clouded peaks.

古木無人徑， Among the ancient trees with no human path,

深山何處鐘。 And so deep in the mountains, where' the bell?⁵

泉聲咽危石， The sound of the spring swallowed by the dangerous rocks,

日色冷青松。 The sun's color chills the green pines.

薄暮空潭曲， And at dusk, at the bend of an empty pool,

安禪制毒龍。⁶ Calm contemplation controls the poisonous dragons.

Although unquestionably an elegant and insightful poem, had Wang submitted this poem to his Dharma master as evidence of his awakening, it would almost certainly have been rejected. Wang is lost in the woods, and his evocation of rugged mountain stillness is not a reflection of his tranquil state of mind, but the source of some apparent fear, anxiety and frustration. That he needs to meditate to control his poisonous mental dragons is evidence that he is far from completely realized.

Of greater importance for us is that the direction of Wang's attention in this poem is also inconsistent with that of a poem of realization. His attention is outwardly directed to reflect on his external environment. For all practical purposes, the state of Wang's mind is just one more aesthetic element in the poem; it is not primary topic of interest. The essential purpose of an enlightenment poem, by contrast, is to illuminate the

awakened state of consciousness of its composer. Imagery drawn from the external environment, when used at all, is a mirror that reflects back on the awakened mind. In this sense, Chan poems of realization are often less than subtle. They must say “Here! This is the nature of my mind” and that must unequivocally be Buddha-nature.

One of the most famous of all Chan awakening poems was composed by the sixth patriarch Huineng. The story associated with the poem illustrates some of the salient characteristics of such verse. When Huineng was a novice monk at a monastery in Huangmei, its abbot the fifth patriarch Jianfu Hongbian (荐福弘辩, 602-675), encouraged his charges to write a poem on the temple wall that expressed their understanding of enlightenment. The head monk, Beizong Shenxiu (北宗神秀, d.706) wrote the following.

身是菩提樹, The body is a Bodhi Tree;
 如明鏡台. The mind is a bright mirror on a stand.
 時時動拂拭, Over and Over again, act to wipe it clean;
 勿使惹塵埃!⁷ Do not let it become tainted by dust.

Huineng responded,

菩提本無樹, Bodhi is fundamentally not a tree
 明鏡亦非台. and that bright mirror also has no stand.
 佛性常清淨, Buddha nature is invariably pure and tranquil
 何處有塵埃! What place is there for dust!⁸

Huineng's understanding is that there is nothing substantive or corporeal about Bodhi, or the awakened mind. He takes issue with the notion that Dharmakaya can be *likened* to anything at all, and consequently asks "what's all this about dust?" "Shu" (樹) here may also be read as a verb in the sense of something planted or cultivated. Huineng is very much associated with the notion that the active cultivation of enlightenment is actually antithetical to realization. He asserts that the mirror of the mind similarly needs no support, and since the awakened state is fundamentally untainted it could never be obscured by the dust of delusional thought.

Shenxiu presented his fellow monks with an expression of mind and practice in the relative sense of the duality inherent in one's existence in the day to day world. Huineng responded with a statement of the Absolute. Both are true and instructive in their own context, but Huineng's poem claims the philosophical high ground in acknowledging that the primordial mind transcends all distinctions. Such one-upmanship is a common characteristic of Chan discourse.

Huineng's writings in both prose and verse attempt to directly evoke the awakened mind without recourse to external imagery. Of course, his strategy of telling us what universal mind is not, is made much easier by Shenxiu's set up. As such, Huineng's poem has all the immediacy of the sudden awakening that he espoused in his subsequent teaching. It reflects the original mind in its capacity to evoke that quality of perception prior to our process of conceptualization known today as "beginner's mind."⁹

The enlightenment poems of dharma masters from the same lineage often share common traits, themes and characteristics. They become part of an ongoing dialogue between students and teacher that may take a variety of forms and span the course of

generations. Many poems of enlightenment stand on their own as expressions of the awakened mind, however, it is difficult to appreciate the nuances expressed in these poems without understanding the larger context of the spiritual conversation in which they occur.¹⁰

A direct student of Huineng, Sikong Benjing's (司空本净, 667-761) poems of awakening reflect some of the same themes covered by his master, most notably the uncultivated and unadorned nature of the original mind..

见道方修道， When one sees of the way, then one cultivates the way,

不见复何修。 but when one doesn't see it, what can be cultivated?

道性如虚空， The nature of the way is empty and void,

虚空何所修。 and if empty and void, what is there to cultivate?

遍观修道者， These who would observe the cultivation of the way everywhere,

拨火觅浮沤。 are grasping at fire and groping at froth.

但看弄傀儡， And yet when you consider a puppet,

线断一时休。 if you break the threads, in an instant, it rests

To “practice cultivation (修行)” is generally understood as a positive attribute in Buddhist scripture, but that is not the case here. Benjing sculpts his description of the Way by stripping away any conceptualization we might have of it. The Buddhist classic images of insubstantiality, fire and froth appear only as examples of what Dharmakaya is not; they are fundamentally empty and one cannot hold on to them. Benjing contrasts the intangibility of fire and foam with the wooden substantiality of a puppet that has the appearance of aliveness but becomes inanimate as soon as its strings are cut.

In Benjing's poem, the word xiu (修) also conveys the sense of decoration or adornment. The way is uncultivated in that it is unadorned, unembellished. This sense of the word comes to the forefront of the first couplet of a similar poem by Benjing. In both of these poems he takes Huineng's idea a step farther. Not only is the awakened state untainted, any attempt to add to it will only obscure its essential reality.

道体本无修，不修自合道。

The embodiment of the Way is fundamentally unadorned

In not adorning it, my self merges with the way.¹¹

Or is it "By not adorning it, you yourself will merge with the way?" Both meanings are possible.

These poems are much more than clever expositions of Chan doctrine. They are expressions of poems of realization in their capacity to successfully communicate an ongoing trait of a transformed mind. Realization was never sufficient in and of itself for a student to receive the mantle of authority from his or her teacher. Dharma transmission, becoming an heir to a lineage, required that a person actually be able to say something about their discovery that might be meaningful to others. They had to be able to effectively pass on the lamp of enlightenment. It is no accident that the most influential Chan masters were also scholars.¹² Huineng's first poetic effort succeeds both as a poem and as an unembellished reflection of the awakened mind, however, other poets of the time were often less skillful in their own efforts to teach and communicate their experience.¹³

From the Buddhist perspective, consciousness is an integral part of the fabric of the universe. Indeed, the original mind is synonymous with it, as Teacher of the Law Zhao's (肇法師) couplet illustrates

天地与我同根， The cosmos and I are fundamentally the same,
万物与我一体。 The universe and I are of a single body.¹⁴

Nature imagery is part of the essential vocabulary of nearly all sacred poetry, and it is indelibly imprinted upon Chan poetry in particular, yet it is in the elemental, the primal, that the primordial mind finds its initial and most immediate expression. This is an immediacy that Michael Fuller describes in Chan-like terms as “unmediated: what comes directly before the mind.”¹⁵

Many of the most powerful Chan poems of realization make skillful use of imagery that evokes nature at its most primordial. Realization rarely comes like the caress of a gentle breeze against one's cheek as one plays the flute amidst the bamboo. In Chan the mind is most often awakened not with a hug but with a stick. The unadorned austerity of the primordial wipes away any hint of sentimental notions regarding the nature of realization.

Beyond its place as a mainstay of poetic nature imagery in general, the moon is an icon of the primordial. It is an embodiment of primal yin, cool, still, feminine and nurturing, and yet inconceivably distant and strange. One approach to the poetic evocation of Buddha nature is to simply describe a single aspect of it. Han Shan's famous sidekick Shi De (拾得)¹⁶ manages to combine two well-worn tropes of Buddhist poetry, the moon and the pearl of wisdom, to describe the transcendent and eternal aspects of the enlightened mind.

若見月光明, You observe the moon's bright radiance

照燭四天下. It's shine illuminating all under heaven.¹⁷

圓暉掛太虛, A disk shining, hung in the great void,

瑩淨能蕭灑. lustrous and clear, in this way unrestrained.¹⁸

人道有虧盈, The way of humanity has gains and losses,

我見無衰謝. But I see no declining, or withering.

狀似摩尼, Such a state of affairs is akin to the precious pearl,

光明無晝夜.¹⁹ Its luminous radiance knows no day or night.

Shi De is not preaching, lecturing or philosophizing, he's simply stating an essential truth regarding the nature of reality. The awakened mind is often described not only as still, clear, and empty, but also luminous. Here we begin to see more directly, the enlightened mind shining through poetic imagery to reflect back upon itself. The moon is an image of an eternal pearl of wisdom that shines day and night, whether we see it or not. Where Shi De's awakened mind as moon illuminates day or night, Huangbo Xiyun's (黃檗希运) (720-814) mind as void expresses its opposite attribute. In its fundamental completeness, that there is nothing that can lighten or darken its perfection.

犹如虚空无杂无坏. 如大日轮照四天下。日升之时明遍天下。虚空不曾明。

日没之时暗遍天下。虚空不曾暗。明暗之境自相陵夺。虚空之性廓然不变。

佛及众生心亦如此。²⁰

[The mind] is like the void, undifferentiated, and unspoiled, as when the wheel of a great sun shines on the four directions. When this sun rises it illuminates all under heaven, yet the void is never illuminated. When this sun sets, it dims all

under heavem, yet the void is undimmed. The bounds of illumination and dimness, may themselves parry with one another, but the nature of the void remains free and unchanged.

Jiao Ran's poem Moon on the Water, (水月) equates the waxing of the moon to the maturation of the enlightened mind.

夜夜池上觀 Night after night, on a pond, in contemplation,
 禪身坐月邊. an embodiment of Chan sitting beside the moon.²¹
 虛無色可取, Empty, without any form that can be discerned,²²
 皎潔意難傳。 bright and clear, its import hard to convey.
 若向空心了, But if you try to empty your mind and awaken,
 長如影正圓²³ it will mature, like the reflection of that perfect disk.²⁴.

The moon as perceived by Shi De and Jiao Ran is not a sentimental moon shining on a far away lover on a warm summer night. It is a luminous reflection “hung in the great void,” shining as brightly and clearly (皎) just as the mind of Jiao Ran himself. In Buddhism the awakened mind is commonly likened to a mirror in its essential capacity to perfectly reflect reality. The moon is itself a mirror in that the light it casts is only a reflection, just like the moonlight reflected in the pond. The progressive clarity that comes from meditation practice is equated to the waxing of the moon.

When comparing this poem to Wang Wei's, Traveling to Teeming Fragrance Temple, it becomes clear why Jiao Ran's poem is a poem of realization and Wang's is not. Both Wang and Jiao find themselves sitting meditation in a natural setting. But where Wang's meditation is an antidote to the virulent dragons produced by his mind and

his environment, Jiao's contemplation is precisely a reflection of it. The moon and Jiao's mind are simply reflections of one another.

In another of his poems, *Hearing the Bell* (聞鐘), Jiao ran again places himself under the moon in an empty sky. Here, the convergence of his mind and his environment is even more complete.

古寺寒山上, In an ancient temple on a cold mountain,
 遠鐘揚好風. a distant chime spreads on a fair wind.
 聲餘月樹動, What's left of its ringing stirs the moon and trees,
 響盡霜天空. its sound exhausted in the frosty empty sky.
 永夜一禪子, Through the long night, a lone contemplative,
 泠然心境中.²⁵ in a crisp-chilled frame of mind.

Jiaoran's mind is no more or less than the last echoes of the temple bell and the frosty empty sky. The shivering cold and frosty sky *is* the teaching, more vivid than any sutra. His message is that after we have realized the nature of our mind and that cold mountain has once again become a mountain, reality is the icicle dripping off of our nose.

Tian Zhu Chonghui's (天柱崇慧) (fl. During the qianyuan 乾元 reign of the Tang period 758) oft-cited couplet marks another image of the primordial in Chan poems of awakening.

萬古長空 An eternity of endless space:
 一朝風月 A day of wind and moon.²⁶

The metaphor of the awakened mind as infinite space or clear blue sky is an integral part of the vocabulary of Mahayana Buddhism that originated in India and was

subsequently adopted by early Chan and Tiandtai teachers in China. This imagery appears in an early Chan gatha from India by the Seventh Mahayana Patriarch, Vasumitra, (婆須蜜) (131-124 BCE). It is the first gatha in the Chan tradition to equate the mind to the sky and undoubtedly influenced many later generations of Chinese poets.²⁷

心同虛空界，The mind is none other than empty space,

示等虛空法。Its expression is the dharmakaya,²⁸

證得虛空時，When one attains the experience of emptiness,²⁹

無是無非法。³⁰ There is neither a dharma of being, nor of nonbeing.

Huang Bo describes a central characteristic of the Absolute empty sky as “Outwardly, it is like the empty sky which cannot be obstructed and cannot be hindered.”³¹ Similarly, in Nengren Shaowu’s (能仁紹悟) (dates unknown) gatha- koan, he uses the image of clouds parting to reveal an empty sky to describe the process of realization.

一重山尽一重山, One range of mountains after the other

坐断孤峰仔细看。Sitting resolutely on a solitary peak, looking carefully.³²

雾卷云收山岳静, The roiling fog and gathered clouds around the lofty peak have cleared.

楚天空阔一轮寒。³³ Clear sky, vast, and empty, in the cold moonlight.³⁴

When Layman Liao (李翱居士), (772-841) asked Weiyao (惟儼) (751-834) to teach him the Dharma, the master simply pointed his finger up at the sky and then down at the earth. When Liao did not understand his teacher said, “Clouds in the blue sky,

water in a bottle” at which point Li Ao spontaneously realized and recited the following ghata

练得身形似鹤形。千株松下两函经。

我来问道无余说。云在青天水在瓶。³⁵

With tempering, one may attain a physique as that of a crane.

Under a forest of a thousand pines, you have two caskets of scripture.

But when I come and you ask about the way, but there are no words left.

Clouds in the blue sky, water in a bottle.

In the opening line, Liao equates his master’s internal refinement to the outer appearance of a crane, a symbol of longevity, freedom and elegance³⁶ But for all of Liao’s knowledge of scripture, there are no words to express reality, only clouds in the blue sky, and water in a bottle, an image both simple and profound. The clouds are contained in the blue sky just as water in a bottle, a common image in Chan. Clouds and water have different forms, but their substance is fundamentally the same. Similarly, the way can be divided and yet remains indivisible; it lacks existence and yet it also lacks nonexistence.³⁷ The primary focus of the final line is certainly on the clouds and water as a simultaneous expression of both the dual and the non-dual understandings of reality. The sky, however, is the ground of the Absolute that transcends even these distinctions.

Buddhist teaching is often referred to as the “Thunder of dharma (法雷).” It is the “Lightning of truth (法電)” that awakens us from our dreamlike delusions. Layman Zhaobian (赵抃居士, dates Unknown) writes:

默坐公堂虚隐几，Sitting-still in the ancestral hall, empty, leaning on my desk.

心源不动湛如水。Mind-source unmoving, clear like water.³⁸

一声霹雳顶门开， One sound, a thunderclap, and my crown split open,
 唤起従前自家底。³⁹ Arising from this, I bow.

Wumen Huikai's (無門慧開) (1183-1260) moment of awakening starts with a bang in broad daylight without a cloud in the sky.

青天白日一聲雷。 Under blue sky, in bright sun, the sound of thunder.

大地群生眼豁開。 And the eyes of all on earth are awakened in that instant.

萬象森羅齊稽首。 Then all in the universe, together bows.⁴⁰

Where Zhaobian bows as an individual in acknowledgment of his realization, Wumen, a true bodhisattva, experiences the original mind on behalf of all sentient beings. It is not just he that bows in obeisance to the tathagata but the entire universe. The verse is pared to a bare minimum. Wumen completes the second couplet with silence. When he presented this poem to his master a day later, his master simply shouted at him as if to say “Thunder is it? Here’s thunder!” Wumen shouted back. The master yelled again and Wu Men replied in kind. Only then was his teacher sure that Wumen’s testament to his thunderous Mahayana awakening was more than a pretty verse and was indeed genuine.

Consider the contrast between the gradual clearing and maturation of Jiao Ran’s mind under the moon and Wumen’s thunderbolt awakening. The theoretical distinctions between sudden and gradual enlightenment are blurred Chan practice, but both approaches are expressed with equal vividness in the poetry of awakening.

Dawei muzhe(大沕慕喆, dates unknown), takes the imagery a step farther.

昨夜三更， 风雷忽作。 Last night during the third watch, sudden wind and thunder.

云散长空，前溪月落。⁴¹ Clouds parted on an empty sky, and the moon sank before the stream.⁴²

Awakening strikes like a thunderbolt, and then there is nothing left to do but bow in acknowledgement. In the aftermath of the thunderclap, stillness reigns. There is nothing left but empty sky. Muzhe's realization is so complete that it transcends all reflection as the even the moon wanes away.

Changqing Huileng's (长庆慧稜) (854-932) first awakening poem was rejected as a mere product of his ordinary mind. Later that same evening, he presented the following verse to his teachers and the assembly of monks at the monastery.

万象之中独露身。Within all phenomena, there is only one discernable form
唯人自肯乃方亲。And only when confirmed within oneself, is one then intimate
with it.

昔时谬向途中觅，In former times, I falsely searched along middling paths
今日看如火里冰。⁴³ But today, I see that there's fire within the ice.⁴⁴

Changqing's poem opens with an acknowledgment that the Absolute both encompasses and transcends the distinctions of unity and the duality. He then makes it clear that it is only when all doubt has been erased within ones self that one truly embodies the Way. The erasure of doubt is a common thread in enlightenment poetry. Those who have realized the nature of their mind are not wishy-washy about it. Huineng's first poem expresses no doubt, and in it he doesn't hesitate to give his own mentor a lesson. In Changqing's first attempt at an enlightenment poem he seems somehow threatened that anyone would question his discovery.

有人问我解何宗，Should anyone ask what it is I've discovered

拈起拂子劈口打 I'll smash his mouth with a whisk!⁴⁵

Changqing's second poem demonstrates that he needs no further validation from anyone, even his Dharma teacher. As Lucian Stryk translates the second line, "once confirmed, mastery is yours."⁴⁶ Changqing clearly believes himself to have been "suddenly" awakened to the extent that he considers all of his previous efforts to have been at best irrelevant, and at worst a distraction. In the final line of his poem Changqing is informing his teachers that the fire of realization has finally thawed his inherent Buddha wisdom; but in the view of his mentors, perhaps not quite.⁴⁷

Even this second verse was initially rejected by his teacher, Xuefeng Yicun (雪峰義存) (822-908), but when Xuefeng was unable to better demonstrate the insight he was looking for, Changqing simply bowed and left the hall. Yet, the day after walking out of the hall he appeared again before Xue Feng, his master said "what is it," to which Changqing replied, "On this day the weather is fine and clear, a good time for the sangha (今日天晴好普请)," and his realization was confirmed.

Xuefeng was not simply asking Changqing why he had presented himself at his door, he was saying "what is the nature of your mind?" In his reply, Changqing used the word *puqing* (普请), a Buddhist term that refers to monks working together to in farming and agriculture, and by extension, the entire assembly of dharma practitioners.⁴⁸ He was not simply saying that it was a nice day for him and his brethren to be working in the fields. Changqing's realization was had finally confirmed because he understood that although it needed no external validation, the truly enlightened mind of a Bodhisattva is ultimately directed outward in the service of the sangha and toward the salvation of all

sentient beings. His final realization was complete, like a clear day, and like Wumen's, dedicated to the service of all.

The elemental imagery of fire, thunder, stone, moon and sky provide a visceral vocabulary of simplicity and immediacy to the daunting task of describing the experience of awakening. It also allows the poets like Changqing to express a little of the fire in their bellies, to demonstrate that the realized mind is not free of emotion, only attachment.⁴⁹ Yet the emotion they convey is not a sentimental perception of liberation from suffering so much as a clear-eyed vision of unadorned reality.

OTHER FAVORITES

¹ John Blofeld, *The Zen teaching of Huang Po on the transmission of mind; being the teaching of the Zen master Huang Po as recorded by the scholar P'ei Hsiu of the T'ang dynasty*, (New York, Grove Press [1959, c1958]), 22.

² Dale S Wright, *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism* (New York, , Cambridge University Press, 1998, 25.

³ Some sources place a Chan master's posthumous title after his dharma name and some place it first. I have presented names here as they appear in my primary source, the Song period compilation, the *Wu deng hui yuan* 五燈會元. Puji zhuan, 普濟撰, *Wu deng hui yuan*, 五燈會元, (Taibei Shi 臺北市: Xin wen feng chu ban gong si, minguo 新文豐出版公司, 民國, 1995), hereafter referred to as *WDHY*.

Du Songbo 杜松柏, *Chan men kai wu shi erbai shou* 禪門開悟詩二百首, (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, Beijing 北京, 1993), 23-95.

⁴ Duan Xiaohua 段曉華, *Chan shi erbai shou* 禪詩二百首, (Nanchang 南昌, Jiangxi renmin chubanshe 江西人民出版社, 1995), 32-36.

⁵ The monastery bell will guide him to the monastery, and by extension, to liberation.

⁶ *Quan Tang shi* / [Peng Dingqiu deng feng chi bian] 全唐詩 / [彭定求等奉敕編], (Beijing, 北京, Zhonghua shu ju, 中華書局, 1960), vol. 2, *juan* 126, 1273. Hereafter referred to as *QTS*

⁷ *WDHY*, *juan* 1, 30.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ On the basis of this poem, Huineng, who was among the least senior monks at the temple, received dharma transmission from Hongbian, becoming the sixth patriarch. As the story goes, this was not only Huineng's first attempt at composing an enlightenment poem; it was his first attempt at composing anything. At the time, he couldn't even read, much less write, and he relied on a fellow monk to scrawl his response on the wall for him. Here again, an anti-literary sentiment becomes the basis of a literary tradition. Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen mind, beginner's mind*, (New York: Weatherhill, 1970).

¹⁰ For an in depth discussion of lineages of poetic transmission in Chan see Du Songbo, 1993, and Du Songbo 杜松柏, *Chanxue yu Tang Song shixue*, 禪學與唐宋詩學, (Taipei 臺北, Liming wenhua shiye gongsi 黎明文化事業公司, 1976), 374-407.

¹¹ *WDHY* *juan* 2, 40.

¹² Wright, 20-40.

¹³ Many Buddhist poets, even skilled ones, are prone to poetic rhapsodizing about the philosophical ideal of enlightenment as opposed to simply evoking the experience itself. They simply mouth the words. One of the most humorous examples of this is an attempt at an enlightenment poem by Su Dongpo (蘇東坡) (1036-1101).

I bow my head to the heaven within heaven

Hairline rays illuminating the universe

The eight winds cannot move me

Sitting still upon the purple golden lotus

Su was proclaiming that he had transcended the eight winds of "eight winds" of praise, ridicule, honor, disgrace, gain, loss, pleasure and misery. So proud was he of his poem that he had a servant deliver it to his friend, a local dharma master who wrote the word "fart" on the manuscript and sent

the document back to him. When Su himself went to see the monk to demand an apology for the insult Su found the following verse tacked to the master's door.

The eight winds cannot move me
But one fart blows me across the river.

¹⁴ *WDYH, juan 3*, 53. The identity of Teacher of the Law Zhao is unknown.

¹⁵ Michael A. Fuller, *Pursuing the Complete Bamboo in the Breast: Reflections on a Classical Chinese Image for Immediacy*. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1, (1993), 6.

¹⁶ Although traditionally considered a Tang period poet, Pulleyblank suggests that Shide may have lived as late as the Northern Song. (960-1127). E.G. Pulleyblank, Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Han-shan, in *Studies in Chinese Poetry and Poetics*, I, ed. Miao, (San Francisco Chinese Materials Center, 1978), 163-74.

¹⁷ 照燭 means “to shine or illuminate 照耀.” Duan, 47.

¹⁸ 能 means “like this 如此.” 瀟灑 means “without obstruction 清麗.” Duan, 47.

¹⁹ The pearl referred to here is the pure pearl, the Buddha-truth 珠 大寶摩尼. Duan, 17-18. *QTS, juan 807*, 9107.

²⁰ Huangbo Xiyun (黃檗希运), *Huangbo shan duanqi chanshi chuan xin fa yao*, 黃檗山斷際禪師傳心法要, is found in *Da zang jing / bian ji zhe Da zang jing kan xing hui*, 大藏經/編輯者大藏經刊行會, (Taibei 臺北: Xin wen feng chu ban gong si ying yin, 新文豐出版公司影印, [1983]), No. 2012A, T48, p0380a. (hereafter *DZ*). An electronic version of this may be found at www.cbeta.org/index.htm.

²¹ 禪身 is a life of meditation; an incarnation.

²² The moon is empty of “color 色” in that it is white. It is empty of “form 色” in that it is only its reflection in the pool that Jiao Ran is perceiving.

²³ *QTS, vol.12, juan 820*, 7254.

²⁴ Jiao Ran's poem is an endorsement of gradual enlightenment that matures into perfection just as the moon waxes. The reflecting capacity of both only develops over time.

²⁵ *QTS*, vol.12, juan 820, 7247.

²⁶ *DZ*, *Xu chuan deng lu*, No. 2077 續傳燈錄 (卷 33) T51, p0696c. This translation is by John Wu, and I cannot improve upon it. Wu, John, C. *The Golden Age of Zen, Zen Masters of the Tang Dynasty*, Bloomington Indiana, World Wisdom, 246.

²⁷ The gathas attributed to the six previous Mahayana patriarchs of india that were transmitted into Chinese do not use any imagery at all per se. Vasumitra's metaphor of mind as space may actually be the earliest image of any sort associated with the mind in the Chan tradition. The use of sky imagery in Buddhism is primordial in many senses of the word.

²⁸ Soothill explains that 虛空法 is the fifth of the five kinds of a Buddha's dharmakāya (五種法身), the dharmakaya (虛空法身) of unlimited space. In a Hinayana context, 空法 may also mean to regard everything as unreal, i.e. the ego, things, the dynamic, the static, or may simply refer to nirvana. This reading is unlikely in this context. William Edward Soothill, and Lewis Hoodus, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, digital online, edition, <http://www.hm.tyg.jp/~acmuller/soothill/>.

²⁹ 證得 means "to realize, to attain truth by personal experience." Ibid.

³⁰ *WDHY*, juan 1, 8.

³¹ *DZ*, *Huangbo shan duan ji chanshi chuan xin fayao* No. 2012A, T48, p0380a.

³² The version of the poem that appears in *San Dong Yan Zhi* (三洞岩志) contains the line, 仰目孤峰仔细观, I raise my eyes on a solitary peak and look carefully." Digital online edition, <http://www.fofofo.net/show.aspx?id=263&cid=13>.

³³ *WDHY*, juan 20, 499.

³⁴ A wheel is a metaphor for the moon.

³⁵ *WDHY*, *juan* 15, 358.

³⁶ Duan, 62.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ The association of the mind with water imagery, another primordial force, is so large a topic that it is beyond the scope of this paper.

³⁹ *WDHY*, *juan* 16, 397.

⁴⁰ This poem appears in, in the *Wan xin zuanxu zang jing* 卍新纂續藏經, in the the *Duan deng lu* 繼燈錄 Vol. 86, No. 1605, http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/X81/1568_022.htm.

⁴¹ *WDHY*, *juan* 12, 287.

⁴² The rhyme occurs in the last words of each couplet.

⁴³ *WDHY*, *juan* 7, 156-157.

⁴⁴ Lucian Stryk's translation, while fanciful, is just too good to ignore. It captures the thrust of the poem beautifully and as a poetic translation it is hard to improve upon.

All's harmony yet everything's separate,

Once confirmed, mastery is yours.

Long have I hovered on the middle way,

But today the very ice shoots flame.

Lucian Stryk, and Takashi Ikemoto, *Zen Poems of China and Japan, The Crane's Bill*, (New York, Grove Press. 1973), 6.

⁴⁵ *WDHY*, *juan* 7, 156.

⁴⁶ Stryk, 6.

⁴⁷ Changqing's posthumous title appears in the *Xin wen feng chu ban gong si*, *minguo* edition of the *Wu deng hui yuan* as *Huileng* 慧稜. In other editions of the *Wudeng hui yuan*, and in the *Chuanfu Denglu*, he is referred to as *Huiping* 慧冰, meaning "adamantine or icy wisdom" This latter title is probably alludes to this final line of his enlightenment poem. *Wu deng hui yuan*, digital online edition,

http://www.guoxue.com/fxyj/wudeng/wud_007.htm, and *Chuan fu deng lu*, digital online edition, <http://cbeta.org/result/T51/T51n2076.htm>.

⁴⁸ *Hanyu da cidian*, 漢語大詞典, CD-Rom, Traditional Chinese Version 2.0, (Hong Kong 香港, Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 2002).

⁴⁹ For an interesting discussion of the essential role of the emotions in Buddhist poetry see Ronald C. Egan, *Word, image, and deed in the life of Su Shi*, (Cambridge (Mass.) : Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University : Harvard-Yenching Institute : Distributed by the Harvard University Press, 1994), 197.