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DUNHUANG BUDDHIST TEXTS IN TRANSITION: A NOTE ON
THE CHAN BUDDHIST MATERIAL IN P. 2104

HENRIK H. SØRENSEN

Abstract

In this short essay, a single composite manuscript from Dunhuang has been selected for closer scrutiny with the purpose of identifying and discussing the Chan material it contains, as well as to account for the textual context in which it is found. To this end P. 2104 has been chosen, not only for its representational value but also because it features a variety of individual materials of considerable interest. A review of the contents of P. 2104 reveals that although the manuscript lacks an overall structure and is without inner coherence and organisational logic, it primarily consists of material relating to Esoteric Buddhist (Chin. *mijiao* 密教) ritual practices as well as Chan Buddhist (Chin. *chanzong* 禪宗) verses and didactical songs. The Chan material reflects what may be referred to as late Tang (618–907, 唐) to Five Dynasties (906–978, 五代) developments, and as such provides us with information on how a special type of Chan texts appeared in the transition between the later developments under the Tang and the period of formalisation and standardisation that characterises Chan Buddhism during the Northern Song (960–1126, 北宋). Lastly, it shows the manner in which Chan texts of this kind were used by practitioners living in Dunhuang during the Guiyijun (851–1036?, 歸義軍, Return-to-Allegiance Army) period.

1. Introduction

There is a class of manuscripts found among the Chinese material from Dunhuang (敦煌) which have been termed ‘composite manuscripts’ due to the fact that they contain several originally disparate texts and, in some cases, even full scriptures.¹ This material poses in many cases difficulties to concerned scholars, not so much with regard to the individual texts themselves, but more as to the overall context in which they are found. While some of the composite manuscripts contain textual materials which are to some extent related, at least typologically, the intention behind many others is not always evident or clear. They appear simply to be a

¹ See Imre Galambos, *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture* (Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2020).



string of texts collected together within a given manuscript, lacking any internal order or unifying theme. Moreover, many manuscripts of this class were evidently copied or written by more than one scribe, which adds to the puzzle and makes their underlying logic more opaque. Are they simply examples of writing/copying exercises, could they be personal records of texts of interest, or something else entirely?

My focus will be on one such composite manuscript, namely P. 2104, a manuscript which has elicited some degree of interest previously but never been properly studied.² It is not my aim to study the manuscript in its entirety, as such an endeavour would necessitate a more comprehensive and detailed analysis than I intend here because, although P. 2104 consists solely of Buddhist texts and excerpts, these texts are fairly complex and typologically at variance with each other. Our focus here, therefore, will be to single out and identify the group of texts and excerpts which reflect on Chan Buddhism (Chin. *chanzong* 禪宗) as it existed in Dunhuang during the late medieval period, i.e., from the late Tang (618–907, 唐) and up to the beginning of the Northern Song (960–1126, 北宋). In what follows, I shall try to account for the place of this material in the history of Chan Buddhism in more broad terms, how they may (or may not) relate to each other, and try to understand their place in the manuscript itself. However, before doing so, let us begin by coming to terms with P. 2104 and its contents, and in this process hopefully arrive at a better and more comprehensive reading of the manuscript as a whole.³

2. The Contents of P. 2104

As a composite manuscript consisting of multiple texts representing a variety of typologies, P. 2104 may be considered a prototype of this particular class. An overview of its contents reveals, as we shall presently see, that although the manuscript is largely devoid of an over-all structure, certain segments may in some cases be understood as constituting a sort

² Cf. *Catalogue des manuscrits chinois de Touen-Houang. Fonds Pelliot chinois de la Bibliothèque Nationale, vol. I* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1970), 70. Hereafter CMCT.

³ The French catalogue lists one text on the recto of the manuscript, and thirteen on the verso, a total of fourteen different texts and excerpts. Cf. CMCT 1, 68–70. In my reading of P. 2104 I identify as many as twenty-three separate texts and textual parts. Moreover, I show a typological and thematic interrelatedness between a number of them.

of ‘relational entity’. In spite of the lack of organisational coherence in the manuscript, the contents converge on three primary forms of Buddhist texts, namely; doctrinal commentary, ritual material, mostly belonging to mature Esoteric Buddhism (Chin. *mijiao* 密教), and songs and verses belonging to Chan Buddhism.⁴ The rationale behind the stringing together of diverse texts without a seeming order is as yet unclear, but it may be that they represent so-called ‘private copying’, i.e., preliminary texts or textual notes for personal use. As discussed by Imre Galambos, the composite nature of the manuscript he was studying related not only to its stringing together of diverse texts, but also to the fact that more than one scribe/copyist was involved in its production.⁵

Recto:

- (1) *Shidi yishu* 十地義疏 [Commentary on the Meaning of the *Daśabhūmika*], 3rd roll (T. 2799.85).⁶

Verso:

- (1) A listing of *sūtra* titles and various scribbles. The listing refers to the *Samyuktāgamasūtra* (T. 99.2), the *Suvarṇaprabhāsaśūtra* (T. 665.16), the *Foming jing* 佛名經 [Buddhanāma Sūtra] (T. 441.14), the *Da fangbian fo bao'en jing* 大方便佛報恩經 [Scripture on the Great Upāya of Buddha’s Repaying of

⁴ It should be noted that since the descriptive text of P. 2104 in the French catalogue is both superficial and incomplete, the sequential numbering of the individual texts has been altered in order to match new findings.

⁵ Imre Galambos, “Composite Manuscripts in Medieval China: The Case of Scroll P. 3720 from Dunhuang,” in *One-Volume Libraries: Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts*, ed. Michael Friedrich and Cosima Schwarke (Berlin, Munich, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 355–378.

⁶ This is part of fascicle 3 of a commentary, probably by Fashang (495–580, 法上), with a date mentioned in it corresponding to 565. Fascicle 1 of the same commentary can be found in S. 2741. Both fascicles are incomplete because the manuscript has broken off, but T. 2799.85: 782b has a cyclical date that might be equivalent to 980. It also indicates that the fascicle was made up of 35 sheets (pasted together?). It looks like it was copied with the sponsorship of a local Dunhuang family such as the Zhai (翟), who intermarried in this period with the ruling Cao clan. This is just conjecture, but if S. 2741 is in the same hand, it may be that the recto of P. 2104 was written out in a local scriptorium, and was part of a lengthy work, and that then the verso was written on by someone who did not value the detailed and complex commentary that is the *Shidi yishu*. Thanks to John Jorgensen for providing this information.



Kindness] (T. 156.3), and the *Da bian xiezheng jing* 大便邪正經 [Scripture on the Great Distinction between Falsehood and What is Correct] (T. 2893.85). Some of the titles are replicated indicating the listing was evidently meant as a sort of copying exercise.

- (2) Unidentified liturgy on Buddhist scriptural transmission.
- (3) *Da foding zunsheng chu zi xin zhou* 大佛頂尊勝出字心咒 [Heart Spell Taken from the Letters of the *Sarvatathāgatabuddhoṣṇīṣa* (-*dhāraṇīsūtra*)]. The section includes additional *mantras*.
- (4) *Zhaiwan wen xu* 齋琬文序 [Preface to the *Text of the Jade of Meagre Feasts*].⁷ This is the preface to a handbook or manual for commemorative rituals, which blends Buddhist belief with Confucian-style ancestor worship. The manner in which the text appears indicates that it is an excerpt.
- (5) *Xiu duo jing zhong pusa shidi guan fangbian guanxiang famen* 修多經中菩薩十地觀方便觀相法門 [Contemplative Effective Methods of Visualisation of the Bodhisattva's Ten Grounds According to Many Scriptures]. This constitutes a series of practices of making offerings in temples and at *stūpas*, as well as performing various visualisations meant to liberate sentient beings. At the end of the section these methods are referred to as 'the eighteen kinds of *upāyas* extensively spoken of in the scriptures' (Chin. *shiba zhong fangbian yu jing da shuo* 十八種方便於經大說).
- (6) Visualisation Chart I. In it each syllable of the *mantra hūṃ om om hūṃ svāhā* is provided with an explanatory text describing a visualisation procedure focusing on the Bodhisattva Vajragarbha.
- (7) Visualisation Chart II. This chart features the *Jiejie zhou* 結界咒 [Spells for Securing the Ritual Space], and an explanatory text.

⁷ For a study of this interesting text, see Wang Sanqing 王三慶, "Zhaiwan wen yijuan de zai yanjiu yu bu xiao 齋琬文一卷的再研究與補校 [Further Study of the *Zhaiwan wen* and Its Amendment]," *Dunhuang xue* 敦煌學 [Dunhuang Studies] 29 (2012): 1–16. For some reason he has overlooked the version in P. 2104, and is to a high degree relying on fragmented Dunhuang manuscripts from St. Petersburg. See also Arami Hiroshi, 荒見泰史, "Dunhuang ben *Zhaiwan wen* deng zhu zhai yuanwen xieben de yanbian—yi qi yu changdao wenxue de guanxi wei zhu 敦煌本 齋琬文 等諸齋願文寫本的演變 — 以其與唱導文學的關係為主 [The Evolution of Manuscripts on all Prayer Texts such as the Dunhuang Version of the *Zhaiwan wen*, etc.,—Based on Their Relationship with Literature on Singing]," *Dunhuang xue* 敦煌學 [Dunhuang Studies] (2012): 119–145.

- (8) *Jingangzang pusa shuzhu zhenyan* 金剛藏菩薩數珠真言 [Vajragarbha Bodhisattva's Mantra for Counting Beads]. An Esoteric Buddhist text on how to use prayer beads (Skt. *māla*). It also includes a sort of diagram with an explanatory guide to a visualisation for each letter in the spell.
- (9) *Chanmen biyao jue* 禪門秘要訣 [Secret Essentials of Chan Buddhism]. This is an alternative name for the more common, *Yongjia zhengdao ge* 永嘉證道歌 [Yongjia's Song on Attaining the Way] (T. 2014.48).
- (10) An abbreviated version of the celebrated *Xinxin ming* 信心銘 [Inscription on Faith in the Mind] attributed to Sengcan (510–606?, 僧璨), the reputed Third Patriarch of Chinese Chan (T. 2076.51: 457ab).⁸
- (11) Untitled Chan verse.
- (12) Untitled Chan verse.
- (13) *Zhuanjing hou huixiang wen* 轉經後迴向文 [Text for Transferring Merit after having 'Turned the Scriptures'].⁹ This is a short liturgical text to be used in connection with a ritual involving the recitation of *sūtras*, a popular practice which was often performed on demand, whether in temples or at private homes.
- (14) *Chanyue dashi zannian Fahua jing seng* 禪月大師贊念法華經僧 [Great Master Chanyue's Praise on Thinking About a Lotus Sūtra Monk]. This is a poetic impression of praise, the full title of which is *Xian nian fahua jing seng* 讚念法華經僧 [In Praise of a Monk who Recites the Lotus Sūtra] by the important, late Tang literati-monk Chanyue Guanxiu (832–912, 禪月貫休).¹⁰

⁸ This is an abbreviated version of the celebrated *Xinxin ming* 信心銘 [Inscription on Faith in the Mind]. For a discussion of this song and its place in the Dunhuang manuscripts, see Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū* 敦煌禪宗文獻の研究 [Studies in the Dunhuang Documents Pertaining to Chan Buddhism] (Tokyo: Daito shupansha, 1983), 293–302. Tanaka shows awareness of the version of P. 2104 and the related P. 2105.

⁹ See also P. 2105, where the text can be found in almost the same sequence.

¹⁰ For a brief biographical note, see *Shishi tongjian* 釋氏通鑑 [Comprehensive Mirror of the Buddhists] (ZZ 1516.76: 125bc). Guanxiu's poems and other writings are collected in the *Chanyue ji* 禪月集 [Collected Works of Chanyue]. See Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成 [Complete Collection of Books], 2 vols (Changsha: Shangwu yinshu guan faxing, 1937).



- (15) *Chen yiqie buwei shuo rushi zhou* 除一切布畏說如是咒 [When Wishing to Remove all Fears Utter this Spell]. This spell as well as the succeeding text derive from the introductory chapter of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (T. 375.12: 609c).
- (16) *Zuochan ming* 座¹¹禪銘 [Inscription on Sitting in Meditation]. A poetic impression written as an admonition to practitioners of meditation. To all purposes and intents it is complete.
- (17) Untitled and unidentified *gāthā*. This is a Chinese Buddhist composition, seven characters per stanza in which impermanence is the primary theme. The brevity of human existence is referred to and compared with the beauty of a flower in bloom and the speed of an arrow. Finally the *hun* (魂) soul leaves the body to dwell in the Yellow Springs, while the bones of the deceased are scattered east and west. In conclusion, the path of the bodhisattva is praised together with the invocation of Buddha Amitābha and the aspiration for rebirth in his Pure Land.¹²
- (18) Untitled verse. This is also Chinese Buddhist composition, six character per stanza talking about the dual *bo* (魄) and *hun* souls of a deceased person, the benefits of the Buddhist teaching to alleviate disaster, and the eventual rebirth in the ninth grade of rebirths in the Pure Land with the wish that all involved will be reborn together in the assembly of the Wheel-Turning King (Skt. *cakravartin*, Chin. *zhuanlun wang* 轉輪王) (i.e., the future Buddha Maitreya). Like the previous verse it would seem to be a liturgical piece chanted or invoked at a funerary event.¹³
- (19) A long section of miscellaneous spells, some of which are concerned with liberating the hungry ghosts (Skt. *preta*) from the hells.
- (20) *Sanshen guangxiang* 三身觀想 [Trikāya Visualisation]. This constitutes an Esoteric Buddhist meditation text in its own right, and is not just part of a random series of spells as wrongly noted in the French catalogue.¹⁴

¹¹ Should read *zuo* 坐, not *zuo* 座.

¹² For a modern annotated version, see Wang Xiumei 王秀梅 and Chai Jianhong 柴劍虹 ed., *Dunhuang shiji canjuan ji kao* 敦煌詩集殘卷輯考 [An Investigation of Dunhuang's Collected Poems on Fragmented Rolls] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 19.

¹³ For a modern annotated version, see *Dunhuang shiji canjuan ji kao*, 19–20.

¹⁴ Cf. CMCT 1, 70.

- (21) Untitled collection of spells. The spells in this section appear in many cases with the text of the spell in question only, but in some cases additional ritual instructions are provided. It is clear that the spells are not a random selection, but that they—or at least many of them—form part of a larger ritual context. This is not only evident with regard to the first several spells, which are concerned with escaping or avoiding rebirth in the hells, but also with a number of the others, such as those meant to empower the offerings to be used in ritual procedures.¹⁵
- (22) *Fu yu xiuxing* 夫欲修行 [For Those Who Wish to Practise]. This also appears as a complete Esoteric Buddhist text for meditation and includes a set of various *mantras*, some of which are written in a slightly odd type of transcription.
- (23) *Wenshu pusa guangxiang* 文殊菩薩觀想 [Visualising Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva]. This section also constitutes an Esoteric Buddhist ritual cum meditation text in its own right. As such it focuses on the visualisation of the bodhisattva as well as that of Avalokiteśvara. It provides the texts of three accompanying *mantras*.

3. *The Chan Material in P. 2104*

As stated above, the focus of this study will be the texts in P. 2104 which relate directly to Chinese Chan Buddhism.¹⁶ This means that we will begin our investigation with the *Secret Essential Proceedings of Chan Buddhism*, more commonly known as the aforementioned *Yongjia's Song on Attaining the Way*, (9) from the list above. This is an alternative title for the otherwise well-known Southern Chan song, *Yongjia zhengdao ge* (T. 2014.48/T. 2076.51: 460a–461b) attributed to Yongjia Zhenjue (665–

¹⁵ Many of these spells are found in other ritual texts from Dunhuang including P. 2105, etc. Cf. Henrik H. Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhist Liturgy and Spells in Dunhuang: A Study of the Manuscript P. 2322 and Its Implications.” *BuddhistRoad Paper* 2.6 (forthcoming).

¹⁶ For much of this material, see also Christoph Anderl’s edited Chan texts in his database at Ghent University, https://www.database-of-medieval-chinese-texts.be/views/texts/mcgbd_project/showText.php.



713, 永嘉真覺) a contemporary of Huineng (638–713, 慧能).¹⁷ A vertical note in red above the title reads: ‘*Zhaojue dashi yi sujue* 招覺大師, 一宿覺,’ lit., ‘The Great Master Enlightened Guest’ or ‘The One Night Enlightened One,’ both alternative appellations of Zhenjue in accordance with the Chan tradition of the late Tang. The text is complete but appears to be a slightly different version than that found in the more ‘polished’ *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 [Records of the Transmission of the Lamp from the Jingde (Reign-period); hereafter *Record of the Transmission*], (T. 2076.51) (see appendix I). Much has been said about this text previously and there is no need to repeat it here.¹⁸ What is important, however, is to discuss this text in relation to Buddhism in Dunhuang. As far as we can tell, manuscripts featuring the *Secret Essentials of Chan Buddhism* are not many in number, only about six all told.¹⁹ Moreover, it appears that the text did not arrive in the Hexi (河西) region until relatively late. In any case, all the examples we have from Dunhuang are 10th century copies when Dunhuang was under local Guiyijun rule which means that they can be grouped together with the majority of the extant Chan texts deriving from the later developments of Southern Chan, i.e., the lineages descending from Huineng’s successors.

After this follows a series of three different verse-sections without indication of authorship, as stated above. The first of these can be identified as an abbreviated version of the *Xinxing ming* 信心銘 [Inscription on the Mind of Faith],²⁰ the celebrated Chan panegyric ascribed to Sengcan, the so-called Third Patriarch of Chan. This is succeeded by a *gāthā* on the realisation of the Way, which runs as follows:

Seeing the Way impedes the cultivation of the Way,

¹⁷ For a study of the manuscripts of this text as found at Dunhuang, see Ren Bantang 任半塘 ed., *Dunhuang geci zongbian* 敦煌歌辭總篇 [Collated Songs from Dunhuang], vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 782–986. See also Huang Jingbing 黃青萍, “Dunhuang chan ji de faxian dui Zhongguo chanzong shi yanjiu de yingxiang 敦煌禪籍的發現對中國禪宗史研究的影響 [The Discovery of Dunhuang Manuscripts that Affected the History of Chinese Chan Buddhism],” *Chengda zongjiao yu wenhua xuebao* 成大宗教與文化學報 [Journal of Religion and Literature of the Chengda] 8 (2007): 67–96.

¹⁸ See the lengthy discussion in Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, 303–307. See also John Jorgensen, “The Songs of Realisation of the Way in Koryō Korea: Changes in Sōn Buddhism Glimpsed through Two Koryō Commentaries,” *International Review of Korean Studies* vol. 6:1 (2009): 77–112.

¹⁹ P. 2104, P. 2105, S. 4037, S. 5692, S. 2165, and S. 6000.

²⁰ Cf. Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, 293–301.

[Hence] if one does not behold it, what is there further to cultivate?

As the nature of the Way is like empty space,
in empty space what is there to cultivate?

Everywhere those who contemplate and cultivate the Way
try to poke the fire in order to extract bubbles.

Simply observe the play act of the puppet,
which, when the cotton string is cut, stops immediately.²¹

At this point in the text, it is clear that the diction in the *gāthā* shifts from that of five-character lines to the format of seven characters per stanza, indicating that we now have a new text on our hands. This second part reads:

When dreaming know that the dream is hollow,
upon awakening he comes to realise that what he experienced in the
dream has come to nothing.

When under illusion it is just like something (seen) in a dream,
Yet, having awakened it is still the same guy rising from his sleep.²²

Although not stated directly, this verse of course represents a Chan Buddhist spin on the celebrated *Butterfly Dream* from the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 [Book of Zhuangzi], and as such provides us with yet another example of the indebtedness of Chan Buddhism to the Lao-Zhuang (老莊) tradition.²³ However, the author of the verse extends its meaning to include a more everyday scene, one in which the duality between enlightenment and living under illusion is being resolved.

²¹ P. 2104 (11a):

見道妨修道，不見復何修？
道性如虛空，虛空何所修？
遍觀修道者，撥火覓浮漚。
但看弄傀儡，線斷一時休。

²² P. 2104 (11b):

在夢那知夢是虛，覺來方覺夢中無。
迷時恰[是]，夢中事，悟了還同睡起夫。

²³ baike.baidu.hk, “Zhuangzi 2. (Qiwu lun 齊物論 [On the Equality of Things]),” <https://baike.baidu.hk/item/蝶夢/9988279> (last accessed November 1, 2021). ctext.org, “Zhuangzi,” <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi/zh> (last accessed November 1, 2021). For another example of the use of the Lao-Zhuang texts in Chan, see Henrik H. Sørensen, “On the Presence and Influence of Daoism in the Buddhist Material from Dunhuang,” *Buddhism in Central Asia III – Doctrines, Exchanges with Non-Buddhist Traditions*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Yukiyo Kasai, and Henrik H. Sørensen. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2022/23.



Having established that these two parts do not belong to the same text, how do we come to terms with the fact that they are put together in our manuscript? First of all we need to understand their respective origins. It so happens that the first part, i.e., that with the five-character verse lines, comes from a *gāthā* associated with the Chan master Sikong Benjing (667–761, 司空本淨),²⁴ another disciple of Huineng. As such it is very close to the version preserved in the third roll (*juan*) of the *Zutang ji/Chodang chip* 祖堂集 [Collection from the Patriarchs' Halls],²⁵ dated 952, where it occurs with minor variations.²⁶ (See Appendix I for a comparison between P. 2104 (11a), and the examples in the *Collection from the Patriarchs' Halls* and the *Record of the Transmission*.)

The second part of the *gāthā* is slightly trickier. However, a successful search in the primary Chan sources reveals that it is actually part of a much longer text (?), namely the *Longya heshang Judun song* 龍牙和尚居遁頌 [Hymn by Ven. Longya Judun] in eighteen stanzas as found in the *Record of the Transmission* (T. 2076.51: 452c–453a). It was written by the Chan

²⁴ For a study of this Chan master, see Huang Kai 黄凯, “Sikong Benjing chanshi shengping ji qi dui Nanchan beishang de gongxian 司空本淨禅师生平及其对南禅北上的贡献 [On the Life of the Chan Master Sikong Benjing and His Contribution to the Northward Expansion of Southern Chan],” *Wenhua xuekan* 文化学刊 [Culture Journal] 2 (2016): 234–237. While Huang’s study does offer some useful data, he relies overwhelmingly on post-Tang sources, which means that one should be cautious with regard to the over-all historical reliability of his discourse.

²⁵ Sun Changwu 孫昌武 ed., *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 [Collection from the Patriarchs' Halls], 2 vols (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007). Originally based on the Japanese edition by Kinugawa Kenji 衣川賢次 and Nishiguchi Yoshio 西口芳男. Because of its extensive annotation and manner of organisation this edition is in all ways superior to earlier versions of the text, including the facsimile of the printed original from Haein Temple (海印寺) published by Yanagida Seizan (1922–2006, 柳田聖山).

²⁶ *Zutang ji*, 181. The date 952 is that of the earliest, and shortest version of the *Zutang ji*. It was probably expanded in the course of the Northern Song, and substantially supplemented and rearranged in Korea around 1245. The *Sōnmun yōmsong sōrhwa* 禪門拈頌說話 [Explanations of Selected Songs of the Chan Tradition] collated by the Korean Sōn master Chin’gak Hyesim (1178–1234, 真覺慧謙) and his disciple Kag’un (1213–1259, 覺雲), refers thrice to an ‘old *Zutang*’ (HPC 5: 436a, 673c, 701b). However, it is difficult to determine which parts of the extant *Zutang ji* actually belonged to this ‘old version’. Therefore the date 952 may only apply to the material in the earliest version of the text. Thanks to John Jorgensen for pointing this out.

master Longya Judun (835–923, 龍牙居遁), a prominent successor to Dongshan Liangjie (807–869, 洞山良价).²⁷

The third unidentified Chan verse we encounter, i.e. P. 2104 (12), is actually also from Longya's hand. As with the previous verse, it can be found in the same group of eighteen stanzas in the *Record of the Transmission*. In contrast to the previous verse or verse-part, however, these two versions turn out to be virtually identical. P. 2104 (12) reads:

In order to attain buddhahood, people widely recite the name of Amitābha Buddha a lot. Reciting for as long as the coming year and a *kalpa* [however], they [only] attain demonhood.

Whereas the gentlemen who now seek to attain buddhahood for themselves,

with their minds of no-thought are incomparable.²⁸

Given Longya's dates, in historical terms the text must belong to the youngest strata of Chan manuscripts found at Dunhuang. Furthermore, it is obvious that the text could not have arrived there much earlier than the middle of the 10th century. On the other hand, it is possible that Longya's verses were not originally part of the set of eighteen stanzas seen in the *Record of the Transmission*, but could very well have been circulating as individual verses. At least the entry on Longya in the *Collection from the Patriarchs' Halls* would seem to indicate so.

When comparing the excerpts of Longya's verses in P. 2104 (11b–12) with those of the *Record of the Transmission*, we not only see certain variations between them, indicating that different versions were circulating in China during the middle of the 10th century, but we also find that they appear in rather different textual constellations (appendices II & III). On the basis of the excerpts we have from the Dunhuang material, it would appear that either Longya's full text was not available in Dunhuang at that time, or that someone there was excerpting it. In any case, it must be remembered that much Chan material was still 'floating' around in various versions prior to the Northern Song unification of China in 960, and the processes which eventually brought much of the material

²⁷ See also Carmen Meinert, "Gestückelte Schriften: Überlieferungsgeschichten der dem Meditationsmeister Wolun zugeschriebenen Dunhuang-Manuskripte," *Oriens Extremus* 47 (2008): 215–245.

²⁸ P. 2104 (12):

成佛人希念佛多,念來年久却成魔。
君今欲得自成佛,無念之心不校多。



together in a more structured and fixed manner are still not entirely clear. This becomes very evident when the entries of individual masters in the *Collection from the Patriarchs' Halls* are compared with those of the *Record of the Transmission*.

A comparison of the various extant recensions of the Chan songs attributed to Longya reveals that already by the first half of the 10th century many variations and redactions had occurred. The evident popularity of his songs resulted in the circulation of copies and recensions which in some cases display considerable differences. The Dunhuang material is important for being historically representative of the fluctuating phase of these songs and verses prior to them being codified and appearing in printed form. From this perspective, the *Collection from the Patriarchs' Halls* represents a stage in which a certain standardisation can be seen to have taken place, while the final, authoritative formulation—if one likes—can be seen in the recensions contained in the *Record of the Transmission* that appeared some fifty years later. This means that in the mere twenty-nine years between Longya's death in 923 and the compilation of the early version of the *Collection from the Patriarchs' Halls* had been completed in 952, his verses had undergone a number of changes. These changes undoubtedly occurred because they were transmitted in manuscript form, circulated and copied throughout China, eventually reaching Dunhuang some time before the middle of the 10th century, and surely prior to the compilation of the *Collected from the Patriarchs' Halls*.²⁹ If we extend this observation to the several other Chan songs in circulation during the 10th century, many of which can be found in that compilation, we should be able to trace their textual developments to a certain degree with the help of the Dunhuang material. This might enable us not only to appreciate the manner in which this particular genre of Chan Buddhist literature came about, but also to reach a better understanding of how specific teachings and attitudes were conveyed, and perhaps even begin to identify the styles of individual masters.

The final Chan-related text we find in P. 2104 is one entitled, *Zuochan ming* 坐禪銘 [Engraving Inscription on Sitting in Meditation] (P. 2104

²⁹ In the later compilation, *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong* 禪門諸祖師偈頌 [Hymns and Songs of All the Patriarchs and Masters of the Chan School], compiled by Zisheng 子昇 (d.u.) and Ruyou 如祐 (d.u.) during the Song Dynasty (960–1279, 宋), Longya's songs and verses have been collated into a single text (ZZ 1298.66: 726c–729a).

(16)). It is also in the form of a verse or *gāthā*. Contrary to its title, the *Engraving Inscription on Sitting in Meditation* is not a text on Chan Buddhist instruction *per se*, but rather an exhortation to practitioners regarding attitude to practice. It appears to be a relatively rare piece of Chan literature, although it has been found in a few other Dunhuang manuscripts.³⁰ Previously the authorship of this ‘meditation verse’ has been wrongly ascribed to the monk Huisi (515–577, 慧思), the purported founder of the Tiantai school (Chin. *Tiantai zong*) of Chinese Buddhism, due to a mix-up of names.³¹ However a recent study of the text has shown that it was in fact written by Jingju Xingsi (671–738³²/alt. 671–740, 靖居行思), one of the two main lineage holders of Southern Chan descending from Huineng.³³

As far as the format of the *Inscription on Sitting in Meditation* goes, it appears truncated (abbreviated?). This is not because it does not make sense in the form we have it, but because Chan compositions bearing ‘inscription’ or ‘inscribed’ (Chin. *ming* 銘) in their titles are normally longer compositions in which an entire line of argument is being expressed at length (similar to the *Inscription on Faith in the Mind* attributed to Sengcan referred to above). In the present case, the *Inscription on Sitting in Meditation* is a single verse in *gāthā* form, and relatively short in comparison. It reads:

One should consider patient endurance, and keeping one’s mouth shut.
Get rid of inner entanglements, as well as outer conditions.
When the mind desires to cling, utter no words.

³⁰ The verse can also be found in P. 2105 (7a), and in S. 2165V° (1). All three versions are by and large identical with the largest number of variations to be seen in the Stein manuscript. It can be found edited in Wang, *Dunhuang shiji canjuan ji kao*, 543–544.

³¹ Cf. Paul Magnin, *La vie et l’œuvre de Huisi: 515–577: les origines de la secte bouddhique chinoise du Tiantai* (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 1979). Although Huisi achieved fame as a master of meditation, there are no indications that he composed a text such as the *Zuochan ming*, which bears the hallmark of a later Chan Buddhist composition.

³² *Zutang ji* 3, 156.

³³ See Xi Ganghua 刁罡华 and Wang Xiaoyun 王晓云, “Dunhuang xenxian S. 2165 hao Si dashi heshang zuochan ming lunheng 敦煌文献 S.2165 号 思大和尚坐禅铭 论衡 [A Comprehensive Discussion of Dunhuang Document S. 2165 *Si dashi heshang zuochan ming*],” *Shijie zongjiao wenhua* 世界宗教文化 [Religious Culture of the World] 4 (2018): 110–116. More recently a revision has appeared in Xi Ganghua 刁罡华, *Chan zong qizu Qingyuan Xingsi yanjiu* 禅宗七祖青原行思研究 [A Study of the Seventh Patriarch Qingyuan Xingsi of the Chan School] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2020), 120–138.



When thoughts seek to explain, one should not speak.
Get rid of statements and abandon disputation, and [instead] sit in purity
in your private quarter.

Then the attainment of buddhahood will not take long.³⁴

While this version of the *Inscription on Sitting in Meditation* appears to have been preserved in Dunhuang only, a closely related verse/poem of considerable age has been preserved in Japan dating from the Nara period (646–794, 奈良).³⁵ It reads:

Carefully consider patient endurance, be mindful of the words in your mouth,
stop evil inside, and put an end to outer conditions.³⁶

The similarities between the *Zuochan ming* and the Nara poem are self-evident, wherefore the latter may safely be taken as an early version, or perhaps better direct inspiration. Actually, it may even predate the rise of sectarian Chan Buddhism. At some point in time, probably during the mid-Tang period it would appear to have become part of the growing collection of songs and verses characteristic of the Southern Chan tradition, and was eventually transmitted to Dunhuang. The similarity with the Nara poem

³⁴ P. 2104V° (16):

的思忍, 秘口言,
除內結, 息外緣。
心欲攀, 口莫語,
意願詮, 口莫言。
除稱棄門, 密室淨坐,
成佛不久。

The full text has been edited in Xu Junzuan 徐俊纂, *Dunhuang shiji canjuan jikao* 敦煌詩集殘卷輯考 [A Comprehensive Collection of Fragmented Scrolls of Poems from Dunhuang] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 543–544. See also S. 2165. For a research note on this verse, see Li Xiaorong 李小榮, “Dunhuang fojiao geci zuo zhe kaopian er ti 敦煌佛教歌辭作者考辨二題 [Examining Two Questions Relating to the Buddhist Song Texts from Dunhuang],” *Xinguo xue* 新國學 [New National Studies] 7 (2008): 128–135.

³⁵ A manuscript in the collection of the Shōsō-in (正倉院) in Nara dated 731 contains a version of the *Zuochan ming* which to a large extent reflects on the first half of P. 2104 (16), etc. It neither bears Xingsi’s name nor the title. In addition to documenting that the *Zuochan ming*, or at least its textual origin is of considerable age, this information also indicates that Xingsi was indeed a historical person, as the Shōsō-in manuscript is dated at a time when he was still alive. Thereby it serves to cement his position within the early Southern Chan tradition.

³⁶ Wang, *Dunhuang shiji canjuan ji kao*, 543–544:

諦思忍, 慎口言。
止內惡, 外息錄。

underlines the fact that Chan writings during the Tang often made use of a variety of external sources, i.e. freely making use of available textual material for its own compositions.

In addition to the rich material from Dunhuang, we find at least one other Chan text from the Tang bearing the title of *Inscription on Sitting in Meditation*, namely one attributed to E'hu Dayi (745–818, 鵝湖大義),³⁷ a successor of Mazu Daoyi (709–788, 馬祖道一).³⁸ In contrast to P. 2104 (16), this is a much longer composition more closely resembling works like the *Inscription on the Mind of Faith* and the *Yongjia's Song on Attaining the Way*.³⁹

4. Conclusion

What can be learned from the Chan material in P. 2104 and its context? First we may note that in spite of its being inserted into what appears as an over-all ritual and liturgical group of texts dominated by the chanting of spells and visualisation practices as is common to Esoteric Buddhism, the Chan material is in a way somewhat textually disjointed and conceptually displaced. Moreover, the manuscript suffers from the same uninhibited almost disrespectful textual pirating that can be observed elsewhere in the late Dunhuang material, where a liberal cut-and-paste technique would seem to have been the order of the day.⁴⁰ In this case one may observe how certain texts, including those belonging to the Chan Buddhist tradition, have undergone redaction, and in a certain way reconstructed, to fit whatever agenda the copyist may have had. In several cases no concern has been given to titles or authors' names.

³⁷ His stele inscription has been preserved in the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 [Complete Texts of the Tang Dynasty], 5 vols, compiled by Dong Gao 董誥 et al. (Taipei: Dahua shuju, 1987), 715ac.

³⁸ Cf. *Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訓 [Admonitions to the Dark Robed Ones], T. 2023.48: 1048b.

³⁹ For an extensive collection of such material, including verses and songs, see the *Chanmen zhu zushi jisong* 禪門諸祖師偈頌 [Verses and Songs by all Patriarchs and Masters of the Chan Tradition] (ZZ 1298.66) compiled by the Song monks Zisheng (d.u., 子昇) and Wufeng Ruyou (d.u., 五峯如祐) from Mt. Wutai (Chin. Wutai shan 五臺山). In this compilation we find *zuochan ming* as constituting a category of its own.

⁴⁰ This issue has been addressed many years ago in Henrik H. Sørensen, "Some Observations on the Chan Manuscripts from Dunhuang," *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 2 (1989): 111–39.



Having seen the over-all contents of P. 2104 and the Chan material discussed above, it would appear that a possible key to the texts and excerpts of which the manuscript consists could very well be ritual performance. In other words, a possible unifying rationale for this particular compilation could be that all the texts relate to ritual practices in some way or other. Of course a category such as this is rather broad and imprecise, but it cannot be ruled out since the material does represent a collection of liturgical texts. In that case, P. 2104 may be envisaged as a compilation of material to be used in various ritual performances by local practitioners in the Dunhuang region, even if all the collated texts and excerpts may not necessarily have served such purpose.

It can be argued that to divorce the Chan material in P. 2104 from the rest of the texts in the manuscript is in a way to de-contextualise it, thereby attributing to it a discrete and separate meaning that it might not have had to whoever made the compilation. While such an argument does make sense on the level of the over-all contents of the manuscript as a totality, a focus on the Chan texts in P. 2104 is actually worthwhile, as I hope to have shown above, in that it serves to throw light on the manner in which Chan Buddhism was conceived in Dunhuang during the late medieval period, including the range of textual sources that informed it. Thus, it is quite meaningful and important to come to terms with the type of Chan material that was in current use locally during the period in question.

Appendix I

P. 2104 (11a)

Zutang ji

*JCL (T. 2076.51:
(modern ed.: 181)
452c–453a)*

見道妨修道, 不見復何修? 道性如虛空, 虛空何所修? 遍觀修道者, 撥火覓浮漚。 但看弄傀儡, 線斷一時休。	見道方修道, 不見復何修。 道性如虛空, 虛空何處修。 徧觀修道者, 撥火覓浮漚。 但看弄傀儡, 線斷一時休。	見道方修道, 不見如何修。 道性如虛空, 虛空何所修。 徧觀修道者, 撥火覓浮漚。 但看弄傀儡, 綫斷一齊休。
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Appendix II

P. 2104 (11b)

*JCL (T. 2076.51: 452c–453a).**

在夢那知夢是虛, 覺來方覺夢中無。 迷時恰是夢中事, 悟後還同睡起夫。	在夢那知夢是虛, 覺來方覺夢中無。 迷時恰是夢中事, 悟後還同睡起夫。
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Appendix III

P. 2104 (12)

JCL (T. 2076.51:453a).

成佛人希念佛多, 念來年久却成魔。 君今欲得自成佛, 無念之心不較多。	成佛人希念佛多, 念來歲久却成魔。 君今欲得自成佛, 無念之人不較多。
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* Note that the Dunhuang verses do not follow the sequence of the larger text in the JCL.



Abbreviations

CMCT	<i>Catalogue des manuscrits chinois de Touen-Houang</i> . Fonds Pelliot chinois de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Vols I–V. Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 1970–1995.
HPC	<i>Han’guk pulgyo chônso</i> 韓國佛教全書 5 [Complete Books of Korean Buddhism]. Ed. Tongguk taehakkyo Han’guk pulgyo chônso p’yônch’an wiwôn 東國大學校韓國佛教全書編纂委員. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch’ulpanbu, 1983.
JCL	<i>Jingde chuandeng lu</i> 景德傳燈錄 [Records of the Transmission of the Lamp from the Jingde (Reign-period)], T. 2076.51.
P.	Pelliot Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque National in Paris.
S.	Stein Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London.
T.	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i> 大正新脩大藏經 [Taishō <i>tripitaka</i>], edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高順次郎 et. al. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1935.
ZZ	<i>Dainihōn zōkuzōkyō</i> 大日本續藏經 [Extension to the <i>tripitaka</i> [Compiled] in Japan], 90 vols, edited by Kawamura Kōshō 河村孝照 et. al. Tokyo: Kokusho Kanyōkai, 1980–1988.

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Chodang chip 祖堂集. See *Zutang ji*.
Da foding sheng chu zi xin zhou 大佛頂尊勝出字心呪. P. 2104V° (3).
Foming jing 佛名經. T. 441.14.
Fu yu xiuxing 夫欲修行. P. 2104V° (22).
Jiejie zhou 結界咒. P. 2104V° (7).
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