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The Poetic Practices of Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157): Gong’an Commentarial Verses on Old Cases and Verses for Lay Literati

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Publication Date
2018

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The Poetic Practices of Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157):

Gong’an Commentarial Verses on Old Cases and Verses for Lay Literati

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Yu-Chen Tsui

2018
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Poetic Practices of Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157):

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by

Yu-Chen Tsui

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures
University of California, Los Angeles, 2018
Professor Natasha L. Heller, Chair

This dissertation examines the textual production and doctrinal import of the gong’an commentarial verses of Hongzhi Zhengjue in the context of Chan literary traditions as well as his usage of secular literature. During the Song period (960–1279) revival of the Caodong lineage, Hongzhi was an influential figure, who promoted Silent Illumination Chan (mozhao chan). Hongzhi was talented in writing in a variety of genres, including verses, portrait poetry, and commentaries on gong’an (public cases). My study examines Hongzhi’s gong’an texts and uses them as a window to understand Chan literary traditions of the Song period. In addition to situating Hongzhi’s gong’an writings within Chan contexts, my dissertation places his gong’an commentarial verses within contemporary secular literary culture. My study considers how Hongzhi participated in mainstream literary culture by engaging in gong’an commentarial verses and poetry for literati.
My dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 considers the context and Hongzhi’s life. Chapter 2 explores Hongzhi’s gong’an writings from the perspective of textual production. I examine fundamental forms of gong’an commentarial practice and critical statements about the function of various forms of gong’an commentaries. Next, through digital network analysis, I demonstrate the intertextual relationships between Hongzhi’s gong’an writing and other major gong’an collections to explore textual sources for Hongzhi’s gong’an writings. Lastly, by comparing Hongzhi’s gong’an verses with those in other important gong’an commentaries, I analyze their different commentarial strategies in composing their gong’an poetry. Chapter 3 explores Hongzhi’s doctrinal position in his gong’an commentarial verses. It examines how Hongzhi created a Caodong identity through metaphors referring to the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena in his gong’an verses as well as in his sermons responding to criticism on the Caodong Chan, namely Silent Illumination Chan. Chapter 4 explores how Hongzhi participated in literati culture by engaging in two types of poetic practices: gong’an commentarial verses and poetry for literati. I show how Hongzhi elucidated crucial points of cases by using abundant allusions from secular texts in his gong’an verses. I also examine Hongzhi’s verses for literati to explore intersecting pedagogical, social, and economic functions.
The dissertation of Yu-Chen Tsui is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2018
Dedicated to my Shifu 師父

Master Sheng Yen (1930–2009) 聖嚴法師，

with inexpressible gratitude
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During my doctoral research, I have benefited from the advice, help, and support of numerous people. My deep thanks goes to my advisor, Natasha Heller. Throughout my coursework and during the writing of my dissertation, Professor Heller has patiently and generously trained me as a scholar and equipped me with research skills. Her knowledge has broadened my perspectives in approaching religious studies. Her sharp insights have stimulated me to deepen my own understanding. She has guided me in shaping my scattered ideas into well-founded arguments. I have benefited from her keen sensibility and intellectual rigor, as she has continually pushed me to re-think my arguments and to revise my analyses.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my dissertation committee members. Professor William Bodiford’s incisive comments and attention to details are greatly appreciated. I also benefited from Professor Robert Buswell’s expert advice to look at questions from a bigger picture. In their seminars, Professor Bodiford and Professor Buswell imparted crucial skills for studying Buddhism. Professor Richard von Glahn, offered invaluable comments on my dissertation, from the perspective of history. I also would like to extend my thanks to my advisor at Columbia University, Chün-fang Yü. Professor Yü kindly guided me when I first began my study in the United States and continued to encourage me throughout the process of my master’s study.

I would like to thank the organizations that have provided generous funding for my doctoral research. Without grant from Sheng Yen Education Foundation, I could not have finished my doctoral study. A dissertation fellowship from Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies (CHIBS) allowed me to conduct my research in Tokyo.
During my research in Tokyo, I am grateful to many people for their help and support. Professor Ishii Shūdō encouraged me and offered me valuable sources. Su Huei Yuan and Yin-Ching Liu assisted me to settle down in Tokyo and explore Buddhist temples in Japan. Chun-Chun Wang not only spent time discussing Japanese articles and the hexagrams in *Yijing* but also provided me with information related to my study from Kyoto University. Ishikawa Mai and her family kindly hosted me at her home when I could not find a place to stay. She also helped me copy materials and translated texts. Without Venerable Zhaoxuan’s help, I would not have been able to smoothly access some important materials in the library of Komazawa University.

My good friends at UCLA have supported me in many ways. My roommate Hsiao-Chun Wu has been supportive and available to discuss a range of issues related to my study. Oh Mee Lee has patiently listened to my thinking, given me feedback, and corrected my writing. Conversations with Lance Crisler have stimulated my thought on many different topics. Yunshuang Zhang has answered my many questions about Chinese literature. Lujing Ma has always been supportive—even when she was not in L.A.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Dharma Drum Mountain monastic and lay community members in Taiwan, New York, Los Angeles, and Vancouver. From them, I had received the greatest support; otherwise I wouldn’t be able to complete my PhD studies and this dissertation.

I also would like to express my profound gratitude to my kalyāṇa-mitra: Venerable Chang Chao, Anny Sun, Rose Ramsay, Wendy Gaudin, Jen-ni Kuo, and Mao-Pei Tsui, who have supported me in many ways and have been the source of great encouragements through my long academic mārga.
Above all, I am most deeply grateful to my Shifu, Master Sheng Yen (1930–2009). He initiated me into the world of Chan and shaped my intellectual interest about Chan Master Hongzhi Zhenjue. His teachings and spiritual presence has always supported and inspired me whenever I encountered difficulties. I humbly dedicate this dissertation to Master Sheng Yen, with inexpressible gratitude.
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Introduction

This dissertation examines the textual production and doctrinal import of the gong’an commentarial verses of Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 (1091–1157) in the context of Chan literary traditions, as well as his usage of secular literature. During the Song period (960–1279) revival of the Caodong 曹洞 lineage, Hongzhi was an active and influential figure, who promoted Silent Illumination Chan (mozhao chan 默照禪). Ishii Shūdo 石井修道 and Morten Schlütter view Silent Illumination Chan of the Caodong lineage and Gong’an Introspection Chan (kanhua chan 看話禅) promoted by Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) of the Linji 臨濟 lineage as the two representative approaches to the mainstream currents of Chan teachings during the Song period. As a prominent representative of the revived Caodong Chan lineage, Hongzhi produced an enormous corpus of “recorded sayings” or yulu 語錄; indeed, it is one of the largest extant collections of yulu. Hongzhi was talented in writing a variety of genres, including verses, portrait poetry, and commentaries on gong’an (public cases) in verse and prose. Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses and prose contributed to the creation of two masterpieces of gong’an literature, Congrong lu 從容錄 (The Record of Serenity) and Qingyi lu 請益錄 (The Record of Further Inquiries). Both of these were compiled by Wansong Xingxiu 萬松行秀 (1166–1246), who was an influential Caodong monk during the Jin dynasty (1115–1234).¹ Congrong lu, in particular, was circulated widely in both China and Japan.

¹ For Wansong Xingxiu, see Shi Qingru 釋清如, Wansong Xingxiu sixiang yanjiu 萬松行秀禪學思想研究 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2010).
In Chinese Chan literature, the practice of commenting on gong’an, which are sayings selected from the records of ancient Chan masters, first began in the middle of the tenth century.\(^2\) After the latter half of the eleventh century there were separate sections entitled “raising old cases” (jugu 舉古), “comments on old cases” (niangu 拈古), and “commentarial verses on old cases” (songgu 頌古) compiled with the recorded sayings of individual Chan masters.\(^3\) From that time onward, Chan masters devoted themselves to commenting on old cases in different literary forms, producing a plethora of gong’an commentaries. Among these works, *Sijia songgu 四家頌古* (The Commentarial Verses on Old cases of the Four Houses) was first published in 1342.\(^4\) This work contains four gong’an collections in the following sequence: *Tiantong Hongzhi Jue heshang songgu ji 天童宏智覺和尚頌古集* (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Monk Hongzhi Jue at Tiantong), *Xuedou Mingjue heshang songgu ji 雪竇明覺和尚頌古集* (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Monk Xuedou Mingjue), *Touzi Shan Qing heshang songgu ji 投子山青和尚頌古集* (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Monk Touzi at Touzi Mount), and *Danxia Chun Chanshi songgu ji 丹霞淳禪師頌古集* (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Chan Master Danxia Chun). The fact that Hongzhi was placed first in the collection indicates that during the Yuan (1206–1368)

\(^2\) According to Morten Schlütter, “It is not clear exactly when the practice of commenting on old [gong’an] cases started, but the earliest Chan master to have such commentaries included in his recorded sayings is the “founder” of the Yunmen tradition, Yunmen Wenyan [雲門文偃] (864–949).” See Morten Schlütter, “‘Before the Empty Eon’ versus ‘A Dog Has No Buddha-Nature’: Kung-an Use in the Ts’ao-tung Tradition and Ta-hui’s Kung-an Introspection Ch’an,” in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, ed. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 179.


and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties his writings on gong’an represented the mainstream textual tradition.  

My dissertation examines Hongzhi’s gong’an texts and uses them as a window to understand Chan literary traditions of the Song period. By analyzing Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses on public cases, my dissertation will contribute to scholarly understanding of gong’an literature from three perspectives. First, my study will show how Hongzhi employed cases drawn from five Chan lineages to express diverse Chan styles of practice. As was the case with masters of other Chan traditions such as Fenyang Shanzhao 汾陽善昭 (947–1024) of the Linji lineage and Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯 (980–1052) of the Yunmen 雲門 lineage, Hongzhi did this primarily as a teaching device to guide students with various faculties to gain insight into Chan experience. Second, through analyzing Hongzhi’s commentaries on Caodong masters, this research will demonstrate how Hongzhi used commentaries on the Caodong cases in his own tradition to convey the core Caodong teaching: the reversal of the adjunct and the proper (pianzheng huihu 偏正回互). This teaching originated from trigrams of the Yijing, which symbolizes the interfusion of phenomena with the principle. Hongzhi used this approach to create a Caodong identity through gong’an verses. Third, my dissertation will show how Hongzhi participated in secular literary culture, specifically poetic practices. Like other poets,

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5 A Ming monk, Qiongjue Laoren 橫絕老人 (d. 1508) commented on Hongzi songgu. This became Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhiyu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu 橫絕老人天奇直註天童覺和尚頌古 in X 67, no. 1306, 447b1–454a13. In addition, Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1603) commented on several of Hongzhi’s commentarial verses in the section of comments on old cases (niangu). Zibo zunzhe quanji 紫柏尊者全集, X 73, no. 1452, 283c6, 284a24.

6 According to Victor Hori, “Kōan has a family resemblance to the traditional Chinese commentarial practice in which scholars appended commentaries to a classical text, sometimes in the form of verse, sometimes in the form of prose essays, sometimes in the form of line-by-line annotations.” Victor Hori, Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Kōan Practice (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003), 41–42.
Hongzhi employed abundant allusions from the secular canon. Hongzhi had an unusual capacity to use such allusions to illustrate the Chan experience in his gong’an commentarial verses.

To address the first objective of this dissertation, my examination of influential gong’an commentaries will place Hongzhi’s writings within the context of contemporary gong’an literature in the larger Chan tradition. I will explore what the emergence of various forms tells us about the main function of gong’an commentaries. I will argue that a pedagogical objective is a major factor that contributed to the creation of different modes of commentarial practices as well as to textual productions of gong’an literature. Through different forms of commentaries, Chan masters elucidated the crucial meaning of old cases. In turn, students applied the meanings they learned in order to embark on meditation practice. In other words, students obtained guidance from masters through commentaries.

This dissertation also looks closely at intertextual relationships between Hongzhi’s gong’an works and other influential gong’an commentaries to explore possible sources in the formation of gong’an collections. These influential gong’an texts are: Fenyang Shanzhao’s Fenyang songgu 汾陽頌古 (Fenyang’s Commentarial Verses on Old Cases; 998–1022), which is the earliest extant songgu, and Xuedou Chongxian’s Xuedou songgu 雪竇頌古 (Xuedou’s Commentarial Verses on Old Cases; 1017–1021), which is the core text of Biyan lu 碧巖錄 (Blue Cliff Record; 1125), a masterpiece of gong’an literature. In my comparison of Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses with those of Fenyang and Xuedou, I will identify their distinctive approaches, including authorial tone, assertion of authority, and literary engagement.

For pedagogical purposes, in addition to raising the main points of old cases, Hongzhi also elucidated the doctrinal purport of the Caodong core teaching in his gong’an writings. I will examine how he illustrated the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena.
through metaphors. I will also examine how Hongzhi alluded to secular literature to create imagery to convey this teaching in his *gong’an* commentarial verses. In addition to Hongzhi’s *gong’an* commentaries, I will examine how Hongzhi explicated Caodong teaching in his sermons to address specific criticisms directed at the practice of Silent Illumination Chan.

Lastly, in addition to situating Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings within Chan contexts, my dissertation will also place his *gong’an* commentarial verses within contemporary secular literary culture. Hongzhi participated in mainstream literary culture by engaging in two types of poetic practices: *gong’an* commentarial verses and poetry written for literati. First, I will show how Hongzhi elucidated crucial points of cases by using abundant allusions drawn from a wide range of secular texts—a literary approach that he shared with literati. My dissertation will compare how Hongzhi employed allusions in a Chan context with the allusions in secular writings. Second, I will examine Hongzhi’s verses for literati to explore intersecting pedagogical, social, and economic functions.

**Review of the Field**

The literature review will situate my project alongside two fields of scholarship. First, I will discuss studies on *gong’an* literature, including the creation of *gong’an* texts, sectarianism, and pedagogy. Next, I will review the scholarship on the doctrine of the Caodong tradition. The resulting review will present scholarly approaches to both the teachings of Hongzhi and Caodong.

**Gong’an literature in Chan Buddhism**

In the study of *gong’an* literature, scholars have explored the formation of *gong’an*, and how *gong’an* were deployed for sectarian promotion and pedagogical practice. First, regarding the
formation of *gong’an* literature, scholars have studied the importance of orality in encounter dialogues, and the sources of *gong’an* collections. Investigating the origin of *gong’an*, John R. McRae has argued that by employing literary techniques, transcriptions of encounter dialogues engender the sense of oral spontaneity; however, this literary effect fails to represent journalistic accuracy.\(^7\) McRae further points out that the crucial characteristic of orality that captures the spontaneity through usage of vernacular language in *gong’an* texts, while transcriptions of encounter dialogues do not reflect reality. In considering the role of lamplight records (*denglu* 燈錄) in the formation of *gong’an* literature, Ishii examines a lamplight text, *Zongmen tongyao ji* 宗門統要集 (1093) to explore its influence in the formation of *gong’an* collections. He argues that this work is an essential source for many *gong’an* anthologies, including the *Blue Cliff Record* and *Wumen guan 無門關* (*Wumen’s Barriers*) while many Japanese scholars have focused on other transmission texts, such as *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (*Jingde Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*; 1004) and overlook the importance of *Zongmen tongyao ji*.\(^8\) My dissertation will also explore textual sources in the creation of *gong’an* collections. Previous scholarship, such as that of Robert H. Sharf tends to focus on lamp texts or collections of recorded sayings; however, I will look at not only these texts but also *gong’an* commentaries to study possible sources.\(^9\) In addition, in this regard of formation of *gong’an* texts, my dissertation will explore diverse forms of *gong’an* commentaries that contribute textual production of

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gong’an texts. I will also delve into the imperative behind the emergence of different modes of commentarial practices.

In the respect to scholarship on sectarianism of gong’an, scholars have explored how gong’an was employed for bolstering sectarian identity among different lineages of the Chan tradition. Comparing Hongzhi songgu with Xuedou songgu, Kurebayashi Kōdō 柝林皓堂 argues that Hongzhi created Hongzhi songgu in order to promote the Caodong tradition. He demonstrates that Hongzhi’s sectarian promotion can be seen in his selection of cases centering on Caodong masters, his emphasis on sitting meditation, and his de-emphasis on Chan functioning (chanji 禪機).10 In contrast, Ishii argues that Hongzhi did not center on his own Caodong tradition because Hongzhi culled cases from five lineages and equally treated cases of different traditions without sectarian promotion.11 These two scholars assess Hongzhi’s intent of sectarian promotion from his selection of original cases. In contrast to these scholars’ approach to investigating the different dharma lineages of the old cases, my dissertation will examine Hongzhi’s commentarial verses to explore how he portrayed a Caodong identity in his gong’an commentary.

Scholars also studied the pedagogical role of gong’an commentaries in leading people to gain Chan insight. In her examination of the Blue Cliff Record, Ding-hwa Hsieh explores Yuanwu’s motivation for producing this gong’an anthology. Hsieh argues that, in an attempt to oppose the literary Chan movement (wenzhi chan 文字禪), Yuanwu emphasized the pedagogical

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function of public cases rather than its literary value. She claims that through the Blue Cliff Record, Yuanwu taught that gong’an anthologies should not be read as collections of “dead words” that only have intellectual relevance; rather, they should be considered as “live words,” which can lead to true insight of the enlightened nature of the mind. In her article “Poetry and Chan ‘Gong’an’: From Xuedou Chongxian to Wumen Huikai,” Hsieh further explores the role of poetry in the development of the gong’an tradition. Comparing a portion of poetries in Xuedou’s songgu ji in the early Northern Song with those in Wumen Huikai’s 無門慧開 (1183–1260) Wumen’s Barriers in the late Southern Song, she points out a shift in emphasis on the role of gong’an texts. Hsieh argues that Xuedou used poetry as a vehicle to elucidate the Chan insight of enlightenment; in contrast, she argues that Wumen transformed poetry into a pedagogical device to guide practitioners in their Gong’an Introspection practice. Wumen’s pedagogical use of commentarial poetry was imbued with a sectarian promotion of the practice of contemplating crucial phrases. Similarly, my dissertation will explore how Hongzhi used commentarial verses as a vehicle to present his sectarian identity through imagery of the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena.

Aside from discussion of these three aspects, relatively little scholarship exists on the literary dimension of gong’an commentaries. In studying Hongzhi’s poetry, Christopher Byrne only touches on a few of Hongzhi’s commentarial verses to articulate his argument, non-duality.

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13 Ibid., 142.

between silence and literary expression. By examining Hongzhi’s usage of allusions from secular literature, my dissertation will demonstrate how Hongzhi’s gong’an poetry participated in literary culture. Expanding outward from Hongzhi’s gong’an verses, I will further explore how Hongzhi’s poetry for elite individuals engaged in literati culture. Additionally, I will demonstrate that there was doctrinal import in Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses. In the following section, I will turn to the discussion of his doctrinal intent.

**The teachings of Caodong in Song Buddhism**

Examining the doctrinal purpose of Hongzhi’s gong’an commentaries can contribute to providing an alternative view of the essential teachings of Hongzhi while avoiding an overtly sectarian perspective. Hongzhi’s doctrinal position can further serve as a lens through which scholars might understand the cardinal Caodong teachings he promoted in the Song period.

Contrary to the conventional view that gong’an was designed to “short-cut intellection” to cut off discursive thought, in order to attain enlightenment, Sharf has explored doctrinal claims in gong’an. Through researching the Chan case of Zhaozhou 趙州 about the dog’s Buddha nature,” Sharf argues that Chan teachings were disseminated as a rationalistic method—not as a collection of self-evident truths—and could be incorporated into a wide spectrum of doctrinal issues. They were composed in the form of encounter dialogues, rather than as part of expository writing; the plot of spontaneous dialogue freed the master from the need to clarify his own position. My dissertation will follow Sharf’s approach to explore the doctrinal aspect of gong’an literature. Rather than focusing on the original cases themselves, my research will

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15 Christopher Byrne, “Poetics of Silence: Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157) and the Practice of Poetry in Song Dynasty Chan Yulu” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2015), 134–146.

16 Sharf, “How to Think with Chan Gong’an,” 235.
examine the doctrinal import of Hongzhi’s commentarial verses. My dissertation will explore how Hongzhi employed gong’an commentaries as a vehicle to illuminate the essential teaching of Caodong: the interfusion of the phenomena and principle.

Scholars tend to study Hongzhi from two sectarian perspectives. Some scholars approach Hongzhi through studies of the teaching of Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253) or Sōtō Zen. Other scholars have explored Hongzhi’s Chan in light of Dahui’s criticism. Shinno Kōryō 新野光亮 has used Dōgen’s perspective to study Hongzhi and to explore his influence on Sōtō Zen. Because Japanese scholars regard “genjō” as a critical concept in Dōgen’s teachings, Shinno examines Hongzhi’s use of the term, “revealing and actualizing” or “present and completed” (Jp. genjō 現成) in his collection.¹⁷

As for scholars interested in Hongzhi’s Chan teachings, Ishii argues that although the influence of Hongzhi remains in Dōgen’s aspiration for realization and the structure of Dōgen’s Zen, there is a difference between Hongzhi’s Chan and Dōgen’s Zen.¹⁸ He claims that Dōgen’s teaching was not essentially different from Hongzhi’s as both held the same view about the non-duality of cultivation and realization. Nevertheless, Dōgen’s emphasis on wondrous cultivation distinguishes his approach from Hongzhi’s emphasis on “non-purposeful spontaneity.”¹⁹

Similarly, in his comparison of Hongzhi’s “Lancet of Seated Meditation” (zuochan zhen 坐禪箴)


¹⁹ Ibid., 162–163.
with Dōgen’s, Carl Bielefeldt argues that Dōgen taught Zen through the language and lore of Chinese Chan, but the structure of his religion displayed “the soteriological strategies of Japanese writers like Shinran [親鸞 (1173–1263)] and Nichiren [日蓮 (1222–1282)].” While I appreciate the contribution of these scholars, it is clear to me that looking at Hongzhi’s Chan theory strictly through Dōgen’s thinking results in an incomplete picture of Hongzhi’s teachings.

Some Japanese scholars have approached Hongzhi’s thinking through Dahui’s attack on Silent Illumination. For example, Takeda Tadashi 武田忠 has identified four targets of Dahui’s criticism: 1) the essential teaching of the Caodong tradition, such as Five Positions doctrine; 2) what Dahui learned under the Caodong master, Dongshan Daowei 洞山道微 (d.u.); 3) the entire Caodong tradition; and, 4) the tendency of placing emphasis on sitting meditation. Ishii has expanded on the two points of Dahui’s criticism about Silent Illumination to illustrate the characteristics of Hongzhi’s Silent Illumination approach. The first point is a de-emphasis on enlightenment; the second is an emphasis on sitting meditation. Taking a similar approach to these two Japanese scholars, Schlütter has demonstrated Hongzhi’s Silent Illumination teachings through the lens of Dahui’s critique. He identifies specific terms drawn from Dahui’s critique to prove that Hongzhi actually taught what Dahui attacked. Schlütter’s research on Hongzhi’s Silent Illumination is confined to the “Silent Illumination Inscription” (mozhao ming 默照銘).

According to Schlütter, throughout Caodong literature, this text is the only one case in which the

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20 Bielefeldt, Dōgen’s Manuals of Zen Meditation, 165.


term “silent illumination” was used prominently. Schlütter further argues that in this text, Hongzhi appears to depict exactly the type of meditation that Dahui attacked because it does not present a striving for breakthrough enlightenment, which was what Dahui criticized. Schlütter focuses on textual evidence, which in turn proves what Dahui criticized about Silent Illumination Chan. As such, his research does not explore other aspects of Hongzhi’s teaching, such as the interfusion of phenomena and principle. Moreover, Dahui’s attack only reveals one angle of Hongzhi’s teaching. This means that approaching Hongzhi through Dahui’s perspective leaves other aspects of Hongzhi’s Chan teachings unexplored.

To step away from these two dominant yet sectarian approaches when studying Hongzhi, my dissertation aims to demonstrate the essential teaching elucidated in his gong’an commentaries, namely, the doctrine of the interfusion of phenomena and principle that he incorporated into his teachings—specifically in his gong’an commentarial verses, his sermons, and poetry for literati.

Very little research has been done on the doctrine of the Caodong tradition. Through examining key texts and diagrams on the Five Positions doctrines in Caodong tradition, Whalen W. Lai has demonstrated how Caoshan Benji’s 窮山本寂 (840–901) “Diagram of the Five Positions” underwent a series of syntheses. Lai argues that originally Caoshan created the wuxiang 五相 circles that were independent not only from the philosophy of the Five Positions but also from the structure of the li 離 hexagram depicted in “Baojing sanme ge” 寶鏡三昧歌. However, to make a “perfect correlation” among Caoshan’s wuxiang circles, the li hexagram

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24 Ibid., 147.
diagrams in “Baojing sanme ge” and Five Positions philosophy were created at a later time. Lai demonstrates that in the beginning, there was no connection between the li hexagram and Caoshan’s explanatory verses on wuxiang circles. Moreover, he shows that wuxiang circles were very different from pictorial depictions of the Five Positions scheme based on the li hexagram in “Baojing sanme ge.” Nevertheless, in his verses Caoshan uses the word li, and this was later regarded as an allusion to the li trigram. Consequently, a complete correlation among the wuxiang circle, li hexagram diagrams, and Five Positions doctrine was established. Lai’s research is helpful to my study on Caodong metaphors associated with the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena.

Brook Ziporyn has also studied the doctrine of the Caodong tradition. In particular, he has examined the symbols of light and darkness as well as their correlations with the li hexagram in crucial Caodong texts on the doctrine of interfusion of the phenomena and the principle, Five Positions, and in the commentaries of “Baojing sanme ge” from a Qing master, Jieliu Xingce 截流行策 (1628–1682) and a contemporary master, Sheng Yen 圣嚴 (1930–2009). Ziporyn demonstrates how each of these scholars expressed a distinctive understanding of practice and enlightenment. He also considers their modern relevance. By examining two particularly influential Caodong texts, Shitou Xiqian’s 石頭希遷 (700–790) “Cantong qi” 参同契 (The concordance of the sameness and difference) and “Baojing sanmen ge,” Ziporyn provides a nuanced understanding of symbols pertaining to the doctrine of the interfusion of the phenomena.

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and principle, brightness and darkness (ming’an 明暗), as well as proper and adjunct (zhengpian 正偏)\textsuperscript{26}.

Following Ziporyn’s approach, my dissertation will examine crucial Caodong metaphors. In doing so, I will further explore how Hongzhi drew on symbols typically found in Caodong works and created metaphors in his gong’an commentarial verses and sermons as well as in his poetry for literati to express the Caodong core teaching of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena.

This dissertation will undoubtedly build on the accomplishments of these scholars, and it will bridge some of the gaps between different approaches. Rather than merely focusing on a doctrinal theme, namely, the teaching of the interfusion of phenomena and principle or Silent Illumination, my dissertation will fuse these major strands and will address the relationship between these two core Caodong teachings. To contribute to our understanding of the doctrines of the Caodong tradition that Hongzhi advocated in his day, I will also elucidate how Hongzhi promoted these two teachings and his reasons for doing so.

\textbf{Chapter Overview}

Chapter 1 provides the historical context within which Hongzhi composed his gong’an writings. It also examines the biographies of Hongzhi to understand Hongzhi’s life and his accomplishments.

Chapter 2 explores Hongzhi’s gong’an writings from the perspective of textual production. First, situating Hongzhi’s work within the literary context of gong’an writings, I will

\textsuperscript{26} The Caodong texts that Ziporyn examines include “Cantong qi,” “Baojing sanme ge,” and “Verses on Five Positions.” Brook Ziporyn, “The Use of Li Hexagram in Chan Buddhism and its This-Worldly Implications,” in \textit{Sheng Yen yanjiu 聖嚴研究} (Taipei: Fagu, 2010), 83–126.
present an overview of fundamental forms of *gong’an* commentarial practice, including substitute phrases (*daiyu* 代語), alternative phrases (*beiyu* 別語), comments on old cases (*niangu* 拈古), commentarial verses on old cases (*songgu* 頌古), capping phrases (*zhuyu* 著語), and prose commentaries (*pingchang* 評唱). I will also examine critical statements about the function of varied forms of *gong’an* commentarial practice to explore the main factors behind the emergence of different *gong’an* commentaries. Second, I will use a digital analysis to demonstrate the intertextual relationships between Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writing and other major *gong’an* collections. By doing so, I will delve into possible textual sources of old cases in the compilation of Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings. I will also show how Hongzhi’s use of original cases as sources reflects the approach of recycling old cases in the formation of *gong’an* texts. Lastly, by comparing Hongzhi’s *gong’an* commentarial verses with those of Fenyang and Xuedou, I will examine their different strategies in using and commenting on old cases. Although the three Chan masters took distinct approaches to comment on old cases, they shared the same pedagogical purpose of explicating the essential messages embedded in old cases.

Chan masters also used *gong’an* commentarial verses as a teaching device to convey doctrinal points. In light of this, Chapter 3 examines how Hongzhi created a Caodong identity through metaphors referring to the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena in his *gong’an* commentarial verses as well as in his sermons responding to criticism on the Caodong Chan. First, I will provide an overview of the larger and surrounding contexts around Hongzhi’s creation of a Caodong identity. Second, I will introduce key metaphors used in the exposition of the doctrine of the principle and phenomena in major Caodong texts. Third, I will demonstrate how Hongzhi shaped a Caodong image in his *gong’an* poetry through metaphors associated with a Caodong core teaching—the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. I will
also show how Hongzhi used not only typical Caodong imagery created by his Caodong predecessors but also innovated metaphors from secular literature to ingrain a Caodong identity into his *gong’an* commentarial verses. Lastly, I will show how Hongzhi’s creation of a Caodong identity also appears in his sermons in defense of attacks on Silent Illumination Chan.

Chapter 4 explores the literary dimension of Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings. It examines how Hongzhi’s *gong’an* commentarial poems intersected with literati culture. It also studies how Hongzhi employed poetic practice to engage in literati culture. Turning to Hongzhi’s commentarial verses, I will demonstrate how Hongzhi used abundant allusions from a wide range of secular literature to demonstrate his erudition—a facility he shared with literati. Turning to Hongzhi’s poetic practice, I will examine how Hongzhi participated in literati culture through his verses for secular elites to explore the intersecting pedagogical, social, and economic functions of his verses.
Chapter 1: Hongzhi’s Life and Accomplishments

This chapter provides the historical context in which Hongzhi composed his gong’an writings. It also examines the biographies of Hongzhi to understand Hongzhi’s life and his accomplishments.

**Historical Context**

This section will first provide an overview of Chan Buddhism under the Song court as a means of substantiating a context for Hongzhi’s perspective. Then, it will examine the Chan milieu that specifically shaped Hongzhi. Scholars have shown that the Song court’s promotion of literary culture and the establishment of public monasteries favored the growth of the Chan tradition.¹ Following a century-long period of disunity and chaos, the Song court strove to establish unified civil order by “valuing literary culture and deemphasizing military force” (zhongwen qinwu 重文輕武).² Therefore, the first three Song emperors—Taizu 太祖 (r. 960–975), Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–997), and Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 998–1022)—expanded the civil service examination system as a principal means of recruiting government officials.³ Early Song emperors also sponsored many large-scale printing projects. The printing of the Buddhist canon and translation of Buddhist

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² Hsieh, “Poetry and Gong’an: From Xuedou Chongxian to Wumen Huikai,” 47.

³ Ibid.
scriptures can be regarded as a part of Song civil policy. In addition, under imperial sanction, literati became involved in editing Chan texts. Most notably, transmission texts such as the *Jingde chuanteng lu* 景德傳燈錄 and the *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄 were edited in the Jingde and Tiansheng reigns, respectively. Thus, Chan texts were disseminated under imperial approval. Aside from transmission texts, echoing the literary and intellectual trends of promotion of literary culture, Chan monks developed and disseminated various forms of Chan literature, including *yulu* and *gong’an* texts. In addition to those under the auspices of the Song court, private printing facilities led to the publication of the Chan texts. Hence, Chan texts were widely circulated, and the great accessibility of Chan texts contributed to the increased interest in Chan Buddhism among literati, who highly valued Chan writings. Through studying Chan literature, literati learned Chan concepts and rhetoric, which deeply influenced the intellectual climate. Although literati in that period tended to be Confucianism-minded, they appeared to have culled Chan concepts, language and rhetoric to use in their writings, and they participated in discourses with Chan literature.

Later on, the Song court’s promotion of public monasteries also contributed to the institutionalization of Chan Buddhism. To control monastic institutions, the Song government encouraged the conversion of hereditary monasteries into public ones. The abbacies of public monasteries were selected by state or local authorities; in contrast, the abbots of hereditary

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5 Welter, *Monk, Rulers, and Literati*, 20. *Jingde chuanteng lu* 景德傳燈錄 [Record of the transmission of lamp from the Jingde era (1004–1008)], *Tiansheng guandeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄 [Expanded record of the transmission of the lamp from the Tiansheng era (1023–1032)], *Jianzhong jingguo xueden lu* 建中靖國續燈錄 [Continuation of the record of the transmission of the lamp from Jianzhong Jingguo era (1101–1102)], *Jiatai pudeng lu* 嘉泰普燈錄 [Comprehensive record of the transmission of the lamp from the Jiatai era (1201–1205)].
monasteries were decided by regulation of succession within tonsure family. In other words, as the selection of leadership of hereditary monasteries was limited to private tonsure families, the government preferred public monasteries. According to Schlütter, public monasteries identified themselves with a particular Buddhist tradition; therefore, their abbots were limited to lineage holder of that tradition. Most of public monasteries were designated as Chan. Thus, the system of public monasteries contributed to the institutionalization of the Chan tradition. Over time, this led to the production of Chan literature and the dissemination of the teachings—tactics that helped to consolidate its position. In terms of selecting public abbacies, different levels of the secular authority got involved in the appointments to the abbacies of public monasteries, while the imperial court may also have directly ordered the appointment of the abbacies of prominent public monasteries. Although prefectural authorities were in charge of public monasteries at local levels, influential literati would recommend suitable candidates for the abbacies in their local monasteries. This was particular the case beginning with the Southern Song (1127–1279). At this time, state policies became less favorable toward Buddhism, and the state began to withdraw from the local government. This gave rise to increasing engagement by local literati in local affairs; this, in turn, resulted in the elite’s deep involvement with monastic institutions. To put this another way, for the local literati, public monasteries were places to express their prestige as well as their power to influence the affairs of local institutions. As the local elite became powerful patrons, this further led to monastics having close connections with the elite. Under such circumstances, to interact with the elite, a monk needed to be a master of literary


7 Ibid., 45.

8 Ibid., 40.

9 Ibid., 55–78.
writing to participate in literati culture and in order to gain patronage or support. Many Chan masters’ collections of recorded sayings feature examples of writings that were addressed to the elite, such as verse and portrait poetry.

**Chan Milieu**

After the overview on the Chan tradition in the larger context, I now turn to examine the Chan milieu which shaped Hongzhi. In Hongzhi’s stupa inscription (1158), Zhou Kui 周葵 (1109–1174) concisely outlines the development of the Chan tradition of the day.\(^\text{10}\) By Hongzhi’s time, of the five lineages of the Chan tradition, Weiyang and Fayan lineages were already in decline. This left Linji, Yunmen and Caodong to dominate.\(^\text{11}\) I will discuss important figures in the Yunmen and Linji lineages who either had a strong influence on Hongzhi or had a close relationship with Hongzhi.

Although the Yunmen lineage had a number of prominent monks, Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯 (980–1052) can be perceived as a crucial figure for Hongzhi.\(^\text{12}\) In Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings, Hongzhi often remarked on Xuedou’s commentarial verses and proses on old cases. Xuedou’s disciples compiled seven texts containing Xuedou’s sermons, commentarial verses and proses on old cases. These texts are *Dongting yulu 洞庭語錄, Xuedou kaitang lu 雪竇開堂錄*.

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\(^{10}\) “Since the Way of Patriarchs had been transmitted from Dharma (Bodhidharma) for five generations, it was branched into the Southern Neng (Huineng 慧能, 638–713) and the Northern Xiu (Shengxiu 神秀, 606–706). Later, it further was branched into the traditions of Five Houses. Today two traditions, Weiyang and Fayan, have perished. Nevertheless, three houses, Linji, Yunmen, and Caodong have become the most prominent” 惟祖道自達磨五傳而離為南能北秀，其後益離而為五家宗派。今天惟溈仰、法眼二宗中絕，而臨濟、雲門、曹洞三家最盛. *Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu 明州天童景德禪寺宏智覺禪師語錄*, J 32, no. B272, 201a14–23 (juan 4).

\(^{11}\) *Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu*, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).

\(^{12}\) About the eminent monks in Yunmen lineage, see Huang Qijiang 黃啓江, *Bei Song fojiaoshi lungao 北宋佛教史論稿* (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1997), 247–263.
Among his texts, his commentarial verses had made a tremendous impact on Chan literature. Xinwen Tanben 心聞曇賁 (fl. 11th–12th c.) writes, “During the reign of Tianxi (1017–1021), Xuedou employed his eloquence and erudition; with good intentions, he changed and manipulated [the Chan tradition] to pursue something new and engage in refinement. He followed Fenyang in writing commentarial verses. He flattered and engaged with contemporary literati. Due to [Xuedou], the style of Chan changed” 天禧間雪竇以辯博之才，美意變弄求新琢巧。繼汾陽為頌古，籠絡當世學者，宗風由此一變矣. 14 Even though this remark is critical, Xinwen admits that Xuedou’s commentarial verses had a strong impact on the Chan tradition. Indeed, Xuedou’s gong’an texts influenced Hongzhi’s gong’an writings. I will further discuss this point in Chapter 2.

Xuedou’s gong’an writings had a strong impact on Yuanwu Keqin, who was Dahui Zonggao’s teacher and a monk in the Linji lineage. Yuanwu commented on Xuedou’s commentarial verses and prose on old cases. Eventually his comments became Biyan lu and Jijie lu 擊節錄, masterpieces of gong’an literature. 15 Yuanwu’s gong’an commentaries reveal the literary trend of the practice of commenting on old cases in the Chan tradition at that time. Although there is no reference to the influence of Yuanwu’s gong’an works on Hongzhi’s


15 For Yuanwu’s life and his gong’an commentaries, see Hsieh, “A Study of the Evolution of k’an-hua Ch’an in Sung China.”
gong’an compositions, Hongzhi had a relationship with Yuanwu. Hongzhi visited Yuanwu in Yunju Monastery when Yuanwu resided there.  

Furthermore, Yuanwu and Zhao Lingjin 趙令衿 (d.1158), a family member of royal family, urged Hongzhi to take up the abbacy in Changlu Monastery. Yuanwu himself attained enlightenment through contemplating gong’an. He also was famous for promoting the practice of contemplating on gong’an. Yuanwu employed this method to lead one of his students, Dahui, to attain full enlightenment.

Having surveyed the larger context of Chan tradition, I will now move to Hongzhi’s lineage, the Caodong school. All the biographers of Hongzhi only wrote about Hongzhi’s teacher, yet they did not discuss Hongzhi’s Dharma transmission lineage. Fu Zhirou 富直柔 (d.1156) in “The Preface on the Recorded Sayings of Monk Changlu Jue” (“Changlu Jue heshang yuluxu”長蘆覺和尚語錄序; 1131), writes about Hongzhi’s lineage, and he states that Hongzhi was a Dharma grandson of Furong Daokai 芙蓉道楷 (1043–1118) and a Dharma heir of Danxia Zichun 丹霞子淳 (1064–1117). To give a more complete context of Hongzhi, I will start with Daokai’s teacher, Touzi Yiqing 投子義青 (1032–1083). According to Schlütter, Touzi was crucial to Daokai because he was Daokai’s connection with Taiyang Jingxuan 大陽警玄 (942–1027). Taiyang was the last Caodong master recorded in the important Chan text, the

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16 Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).

17 Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.120a25 (juan 9). For biographical information of Zhao Lingjin, see Song shi 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 244.8683–8684

18 Yuanwu Foguo chanshi yulu 圓悟佛果禪師語錄, T 47, no. 1997, 775a22–24 (juan 13).

19 “Old Chan Master Changlu Jue is a [Dharma] grandson of Furong Kai [Furong Daokai (1043–1118)] and a [Dharma] heir of Dahong Chun (Danxia Zichun, 1064–1117)” 長蘆覺老禪師芙蓉楷師之嫡孫, 大洪淳公之嗣子. Hongzhi lu, 1.1a1. For Fu Zhirou’s biography, see Song shi, 375.11617–11619.

20 Special thanks to Professor William Bodiford for indicating the correct romanization of Dayang 大陽, where Dayang 大陽 should be romanized as Taiyang, as indicated by the Japanese pronunciation たいよう in Zengaku.
Jingde chuang eng lu, which was regarded as a legitimate lineage holder.\textsuperscript{21} After having studied with Taiyang for three years, Touzi attained enlightenment.\textsuperscript{22} Touzi was famous for his compilation of commentarial verses on old cases. From the extant sources about gong’an commentaries in the Caodong tradition, Touzi seems to establish this literary tradition in the Caodong tradition. Touzi’s student, Daokai studied Daoism during his childhood and later abandoned Daoism after he realized that Daoism was not the ultimate truth.\textsuperscript{23} In 1073, at the age of thirty-seven, he was tonsured. Afterwards, he travelled around to visit many teachers. Eventually he attained enlightenment under Touzi.\textsuperscript{24}

Touzi’s disciple, Danxia who was Hongzhi’s teacher was tonsured at the age of twenty-seven. He studied with various teachers, including Zhenjing Kewen 真淨克文 (1025–1102). Under Daokai’s guidance, Danxia attained enlightenment.\textsuperscript{25} Later, Danxia served as abbot of Qixia Monastery in Mount Danxia. This is where Hongzhi met him. Danxia devoted himself to reviving the monastery including restoring regulations, renovating buildings, expanding fields, 

daijiten, 818c. In the entry of 太陽寺 in Buddhist Studies Place Authority Databases, it indicates the alternative names of 太陽寺 are 太陽長慶禪寺 and 大陽寺, and this monastery is located in 太陽山. Accessed January 5, 2018, http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000027462. In addition, during the reign of 大中祥符 (1008–1016), the glyph 玄 became a taboo. Therefore, Jingxuan 警玄 became known as Jingyan 警延, according to the entry of Jingxuan 警玄 in Fuguang dacidian. Ciyi 慈怡, comp., Fuguang dacidian 佛光大辭典 (Gaoxiong: Fuguang chubanshe, 1989), 6816.

\textsuperscript{21} Schlütter, How Zen Became Zen, 87.

\textsuperscript{22} Ishii, Sōdai zenshū shi no kenkyū, 209.

\textsuperscript{23} For a biography of Furong Daokai 芙蓉道楷, see Chanlin Sennbao zhuan, X 79, 527a24 (juan 17), and his stupa inscription in 1127, in Hubei jinshi zhi 湖北金石志, 10.34b–36b, in Shike shiliao xinbian 石刻史料新編 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1979), ser. 1, 16.12139–12140. See also Schlütter, How Zen Became Zen, 82–84.

\textsuperscript{24} Chanlin Sennbao zhuan X 79, 527b03–06 (juan 17).

\textsuperscript{25} Daokai instructed him, “You are retreating one step back. There is no single loss among myriad [phenomena]. In the empty eon, undertake the experience before the Buddha was born” 退步就己、萬不失一、空劫承當、佛未出世時體會. Ishii, “Fuyō Dōkai to Tanka Shijun 芙蓉道楷と丹霞子淳,” Komazawa digaku bukkyō gakugu ronshū 駒澤大學佛教學部論集 3 (1972): 73.
and inviting monastics to administer monastic affairs; due to all these efforts, he appealed to many students.  

Regarding Danxia’s teaching, his poem entitled, “Our Own Tradition” (zizong 自宗) reveals his style. He writes:

空劫自己無依守， In the empty eon, the self has nothing to rely on.  
佛祖從來難啟口。 All along, it had been difficult for the Buddha and patriarchs to open their mouth.  
九年面壁太多端， Nine-years of wall gazing is too many variations.  
那堪更強分妍醜。 How can it bear to force one to distinguish beauty from ugliness?  

The phrase “in the empty eon, the self has nothing to rely on” seems to derive from his own enlightenment experience. “Empty eon” refers to the transitional period after the world decays and vanishes; “before the eon of formation” connotes the enlightenment state of non-duality. In the realm of the empty eon, there is nothing that one can depend on. “Nine-years of wall-gazing” refers to Bodhidharma’s sitting meditation in Shaolin Monastery. Danxia seems to use the phrase, “In the empty eon, the self has nothing to rely on” to portray the essential teachings of Caodong. Danxia employed the critical phrase, “yourself before the empty eon” to guide Hongzhi to attain enlightenment. In his stupa inscription, it states that he wrote that there were four juan of his recorded sayings, verses and commentarial verses. As noted earlier, his collection of commentarial verses was compiled in the Sijia songgu. In addition, Hongzhi wrote a preface for Danxia’s songgu, and Hongzhi’s preface was highly valued by Furong Daokai. On this note, Hongzhi’s gong’an writings might have inherited something from Danxia.

26 Ibid., 74.

27 Danxia Zichun chanshi yulu 丹霞子淳禅师语錄, X 71, no. 1425, 759b05–06 (juan 1).


29 The preface of the Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Chan Master Chun in Danxia Mount written by Hongzhi was preserved in The Record of Four Houses (Sijia lu 四家錄) in the collection of the Taiwan
After having reviewed the influential Chan figures in Hongzhi’s time, we now have a better understanding of the context of Chan tradition and Hongzhi’s Caodong lineage. In the larger Chan tradition, there was the trend of compiling gong’an commentaries. Hongzhi’s Caodong predecessors also had the history of composing gong’an texts. Perpetuating this legacy of gong’an commentaries, Hongzhi composed his gong’an works. Moving onto the next section, I will turn to discuss the life of Hongzhi and his accomplishments.

**Hongzhi’s Life and Accomplishments**

I will now introduce Hongzhi’s life and accomplishments to provide a context for understanding his gong’an works. There are several sources for the biography of Hongzhi. Two were composed one year after Hongzhi’s death. One is Hongzhi’s stupa inscription, “The Marvelous Light Stupa Inscription of Chan Master Hongzhi” (“Hongzhi chanshi Miaoguan taming” 宏智禪師妙光塔銘) written by Zhou Kui in the second month in 1158. The other is “The Preface on the Posterior Record of Chan Master Hongzhi” (“Chishi Hongzhi chanshi houluxu” 敕諡宏智禪師後錄序) authored by Zhao Lingjin 趙令衿 (d. 1158) in the fourth month in 1158. In addition to these two biographies, I will also reference Wang Boxiang’s 王伯庠 (1106–1173) “The Biography of Chan Master Hongzhi” (“Chishi Hongzhi chanshi xingyeji” 敕諡宏智禪師行業記) written in 1166, eight years after Hongzhi’s death. All three of these writers were literati.

When Zhou Kui wrote “The Stupa Inscription of Chan Master Hongzhi” in 1158, he was the Left Gentleman for the Court Audience (zuochao qinglang 左朝請郎), Supervisor of National Central Library 台灣國立中央圖書館. See also Ishii Shūdo, Wanshi roku 宏智録 vol. 1 (Tokyo: Meicho fukyūkai, 1984), 541b.
Education of Taiping Prefecture (*Taiping zhou junshi tiju xueshi* 太平州軍事提舉學事), and Agriculture Development Commissioner (*quannong yingtian shi* 勸農營田使). There are no references in historical records connecting Zhou to Buddhism. Zhou’s stupa inscription describes the entire life of Hongzhi; in particular, it focused on Hongzhi’s deeds and accomplishments. There is, however, no information about Zhou’s personal connection to Hongzhi.

Zhao Linjin went by the style name, Layman Chaoran (Chaoran *jushi* 超然居士). He was Taizu emperor’s (927–976) grandson. He was granted the titles of Commandery Prince of Anding (安定郡王) and Pacification Commissioner and Supervisor. In 1158, he wrote “The Preface on the Posterior Record of Chan Master Hongzhi.” While titled as a postscript, this writing can be regarded as a biography of Hongzhi. In addition to providing information about Hongzhi’s life, Zhao depicts his cordial relationship with Hongzhi.

Wang Boxiang attained *jinshi* 進士 in 1132. In 1138, while serving as an instructor in prefectural school, he visited Hongzhi. In 1166, seven years after Hongzhi had passed away, Wang was serving as the Left Grand Master for Court Service (*zuochao fengdifu* 左朝奉大夫) and Attendant Censor (*shiyushi* 侍御史). It was at this time that he wrote “The Biography of Chan Master Hongzhi” (“Chishi Hongzhi chanshi xingyeji”敕諡宏智禪師行業記). In contrast to the biographical information in Zhou’s biography inscription, Wang included many hagiographic accounts about Hongzhi.

Based on these compositions by these elite writers, Chan monks also compiled brief biographical accounts in the genre of lamp transmission.  

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30 For Zhou Kui’s biography, see *Song shi*, 385.11833–11836.

31 There is no Wang Boxiang’s biography in *Song shi*, but there is his biographical reference in the biography of Ye Yong 葉顒. *Song shi*, 384.11821
are the major sources, I will also refer to prefaces and postscripts composed by Hongzhi’s contemporary literati in Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings as supplemental sources. Through the analysis of these materials, I will demonstrate how literati represented Hongzhi.

After introducing Hongzhi’s family name, Li 李, and his hometown Xi 隰 prefecture (present-day Shanxi), all these authors point out his family’s Buddhist background. However, there are slight variations in their depictions. Zhou states that “For generations, Hongzhi’s grandfather Ji 寂 and father Zongdao 宗道 had studied prajñā 祖寂, 父宗道, 世學般若.” Zhao only indicates that “Hongzhi’s grandfather had long studied with Chan Master Fotuo 佛陀, and he was called Practitioner Li at that time” 其祖父久參佛陀禪師時號李行者.32 Wang writes that “For a long time, Hongzhi’s grandfather and father both had studied with Huanglong’s Dharma heir, Chan Master Fotuo” 祖寂父宗道久參積翠老南之子佛陀隱禪師.33 Master Fotuo (Huilin Dexun 慧林德遜, d. 1107 or 1110 was a Dharma heir of Huanglong Huinan 黃龍慧南; 1002–1069), who is regarded as the founder of the Huanglong line of the Linji tradition. Zhou indicates that Hongzhi’s grandfather and father engaged in scriptural studies focused on the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra; Zhao and Wang point out that Hongzhi’s grandfather and father were associated with the Chan tradition.34

Following Hongzhi’s family background, in keeping with a common trope about potent signs of pregnancy and birth in eminent monks’ biographies, all of the biographers describe


33 Hongzhi lu, 4.316b1–2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119c07 (juan 9).

34 In Hongzhi’s stupa inscription, Zhou writes, “[Hongzhi’s] His grandfather was called Ji and his father was called Zongdao. His family studied prajñā for generations” 祖寂, 父宗道, 世學般若. Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14 (juan 4).
auspicious signs of the pregnancy of Hongzhi’s mother and of Hongzhi’s birth. Zhao provides the most detailed account as follows:

His mother dreamed that a Buddhist monk gave her his personal bracelet, which was like a ball. [Later], she realized that she had become pregnant. When she gave birth to the Chan master, [during the night], the house emitted light. Neighbors were very astonished. As the master was growing up, he had a flesh-mark on his left wrist that was shaped like a ball. [He] did not like to show to people, but some people saw it.

母夢梵僧與一隨球環，覺而有娠。誕生禪師，夜屋發光，比鄰皆驚。及師長成左臂腕上有肉痕：若隨球相，不欲示人，而間有見者。35

Zhou also notes that Hongzhi’s mother had an auspicious dream prior to her pregnancy. When she gave birth to Hongzhi, there was a miraculous sign in their house. The bracelet that the monk gave to Hongzhi’s mother in her dream became one of Hongzhi’s physical attributes—a flesh-mark in the shape of a ball on his left arm. Zhou further indicates that the monk that appeared in Hongzhi’s mother dream came from Mount Wutai. Mount Wutai is regarded as a sacred place and an abode of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. Zhou also states that Hongzhi’s mother become vegetarian upon her pregnancy.36 All of these descriptions emphasize the auspiciousness of Hongzhi’s birth.

Then, the writers continue to depict particulars of Hongzhi’s childhood. Zhao provides a detailed anecdote:

Since the master was a child, he was fond of Buddhist scriptures. His nature was keen and sharp. He himself penetrated the principle of the teachings. Every time he told his parents that he would like to dedicate himself to the four directions [of north, south, west, and east].

師自童稚喜佛典，天性機敏，自達宗理，每白父母再四方從其志。37

35 *Tiantong si zhi*, 1a9–b1.

36 *Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu*, J 32.201a14 (juan 4).

37 Ibid.
Hongzhi was fond of reading Buddhist scriptures and often told his parents about his future dedication to Buddhism. Clearly, his interest in Buddhism since his childhood anticipates his religious calling. In highlighting this theme on prediction of Hongzhi’s religious calling, Wang also writes, the teacher of Hongzhi’s father and grandfather told them, “This child is outstanding—he exceeds his peers. He is not an ordinary person in the world. You should let him leave home. He will become a great Dharma vessel one day”嘗指師謂其父曰：「此子超邁不群，非塵埃中人，宜令出家，異日必為大法器。」.38 Regarding Hongzhi’s prodigy, Zhou writes, “When he was only seven years old, he was sharp like no other. Every day he recited thousands of words”年甫七歲，警悟絕人，日誦數千言.39 Wang includes a similar depiction: “At the age of seven, he recited several thousand words from books every day. Before long, he understood the Five Classic Books”七歲誦書日數千言。少日遂通五經.40 In his description, Wang provides a reference to Hongzhi’s familiarity with the Classics. This reference indicates Hongzhi’s intellectual and literary context of secular literature as Hongzhi’s writings abound with allusions to secular literature. I will look closely at Hongzhi’s usage of allusions from secular sources in his gong’an poetry in Chapter 4.

After their descriptions of Hongzhi’s childhood, the authors concisely write about Hongzhi’s tonsure, taking full precepts, and travelling around to meet various masters. At the age of eleven, Hongzhi became a monk, and was tonsured when he was fifteen. At the age of eighteen, he began to travel in search of answers to matters of life and death. For example, Wang writes, “When he travelled to Longmen (present-day Luoyang in Henan), he met a monk from

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38 Hongzhi lu, 4.316a10–b1; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119c8 (juan 9).
39 Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14 (juan 4).
40 Hongzhi lu, 4.316b1–2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119c9 (juan 9).
his hometown. This monk held the master’s arm and asked him to return home together. The master said, ‘I left home to travel in search of good teachers to realize matters related to life and death. Hometown life is of no interest to me.’ 

Subsequently, Hongzhi obtained initial enlightenment while visiting Kumu Facheng 枯木法成 (1071–1128). Wang provides the most detailed account of Hongzhi’s enlightenment experiences. On Hongzhi’s initial enlightenment when he was studying with Kumu, Wang writes:

He shouldered his baggage and walked directly to Xiangshan in Ru prefecture (present-day Pingding Mountain in Henan) to visit Cheng Kumu (Kumu Facheng). When Kumu met him, he (Kumu) thought highly of the master. One day he heard a monk reciting the Lotus Sūtra. As the master heard, “The eyes which came from parents at birth can see all the three thousand worlds,” suddenly he had an enlightenment experience. He rushed to the abbot’s quarter and talked about what he just realized. Shan (Kumu) pointed to the incense box on the altar and said, “What is inside?” The master said, “What does that have to with mental function?” Shan said, “What is derived from your enlightenment experience?” The master drew a circle with his hand and showed it to him. Then he threw it in the back. Shan said, “You are just a guy making a ball of mud. What is the limit?” The master said, “Wrong.” Shan said, “Only people with wrong views know what you are saying.” The master assented.

Hongzhi had initial awakening experience while listening to a sentence of the Lotus Sūtra.

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41 Hongzhi lu, 4.317a1–3; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119c18–21 (juan 9). The term, 知識 zhishi refers to shanzhishi 善知識, kalyāṇa-mitra.

42 Kumu Facheng was an important disciple of Furong Daokai 芙蓉道楷 (1043–1118). For a biography of Kumu, see Chen Ju 程俱 (1078–1114), Beishan ji 北山集, in Jingying Wenyuan ge siku quanshu 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 1130 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yingshuguan, 1983), 32.7b8–8a1. See also Ishii, Sōdai zenshū, 466.

43 Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法蓮華經, T 9, no. 262, 47c17 (juan 6).

44 Hongzhi lu, 4.317a3–10; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119c21–120a3 (juan 9).
Through language, he got this experience; nevertheless, Hongzhi used a gesture to demonstrate to Kumu that what he realized was beyond verbal expression. Kumu challenged Hongzhi’s response by saying that Hongzhi was like playing a ball of mud. Taking an aggressive position, Hongzhi denied the validity of Kumu’s words. Kumu seemed to approve Hongzhi’s understanding as Kumu replied that only people with wrong views could capture Hongzhi’s verbal negation. Kumu implied that Hongzhi’s negation fell into duality that was not true realization. Finally, Hongzhi affirmed Kumu’s reply. Later, Hongzhi studied with Kumu’s Dharma brother, Danxia Zichun. As both Kumu and Danxia were Dharma heirs of Furong Daokai of the Caodong lineage. Hongzhi’s studying with Kumu marks the starting point of his association with the Caodong lineage. When Hongzhi studied with Kumu, Hongzhi had his initial enlightenment while listening to a monk’s recitation of the Lotus Sūtra. Later, Hongzhi attained deep enlightenment under Danxia, as Wang depicts:

At that time, the teaching and practice of Chan Master Danxia was very popular. Therefore, the master visited him. Xia asked, him, “What was your self before the empty eon?” The master said, “In the bottom of a well a toad swallows the moon.” Xia said, “No, say more.” The master was going to answer. Xia hit him with a whisk saying, “Say nothing.” Suddenly the master got enlightened, and bowed to him. Xia said, “Why don’t you make a statement?” The master said, “Someone lost his money today and got punished.” Xia said, “I have no time to hit you. Get out.” At that time he was twenty-three years old.

45 The phrase, “in the bottom of a well a toad swallows the moon,” refers to a state of nonduality, so it symbolizes the Buddha-nature originally and inherently present in all beings. In the recorded sayings of Chan Master Xiangtian Jinian 象田即念 (d.u.), there is an old cases in his selection of gong'an commentarial proses. It reads: “Because a monk asked Chan Master Baima Ai (d.u.) ‘what is the pure Dharma Body?’ The master answered, ‘in the bottom of a well a toad swallows the moon.’” Xiangtian Jinian chanshi yulu 象田即念禪師語錄, J 27, no. B191, 167a8 (juan 2).

46 Hongzhi lu, 4.317a3–10; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119e21–120a3 (juan 9).
Hongzhi attained enlightenment while engaging in investigating the crucial phrase, “what was your self before the empty eon?” In replying Danxia, Hongzhi expressed the brightness of inherent Buddha nature that he realized through the imagery that it is not necessary to borrow a night-bright curtain.\(^{47}\) Danxia further asked Hongzhi to say more as he did not approve Hongzhi’s understanding. Just as Hongzhi was about to say something, Danxia hit him. At this moment, Hongzhi achieved awakening. When Danxia asked Hongzhi to describe his realization, Hongzhi used the paradoxical metaphor that a person’s money got lost, but he got punished for it. Hongzhi implied that whatever he said, he was wrong since the truth was ineffable. In summary, Wang presents the two stages of Hongzhi’s enlightenment. Hongzhi gained initial insight while hearing the recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Next, he attained full enlightenment under the guidance of Danxia.

After his enlightenment experiences, Hongzhi assumed important monastic positions and seven abbcacies in various monasteries. Hongzhi’s taking abbcacies was a crucial factor in his connection with government officials and literati. As I noted above, many of Hongzhi’s literati associates became involved in his appointments to lead monastics. In 1125, Hongzhi’s first abbcacy in Puzhaowang Monastery also got involved in literati’s engagement as Zhao describes, “In Si prefecture, in Puzhao Monastery, the seat [of the abbcacy] had been vacant for a long time. First, Xiang Xianglin (Xiang Ziyin 向子諲; 1086–1152) used the recommendation of various virtuous Chan [monks to invite Hongzhi].\(^{48}\) As a result, he came out into the world” 泗州普照虛

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\(^{47}\) In terms of “night-bright curtain,” according to Wansong’s commentary, “Emperor Ming of the Han dynasty [Han mingdi 漢明帝 28-75] built a Hall of Light; the curtains were made of pearls, the banisters were gold, the stairs jade—day or night, it was always light” 漢明帝起光明殿。以珠璣為簾箔。金兜玉階。晝夜長明. I use Cleary’s translation with slight revision. Cleary, *Book of Serenity*, 158. *Congrong lu*, T 48.251a19 (juan 3).

\(^{48}\) Xiang Ziyin 向子諲 (1086–1152) had the style name, Layman Xianglin 薌林居士. In 1123, when he served as the Administrative Assistant with the Tax Transport Bureau of Jianghuai (*Huainan zhuyun panguan* 淮南轉運判官),
The expression “come out into the world” chushi 出世 refers to those who are taking on their first abbacy. In addition, it is critical to note that as a Chan monk, Hongzhi could only be considered a true heir of the Dharma after having received an abbacy. Xiang had a style name, Layman Xianglin 荊林居士. He was a national figure as he served as the Vice Minister at Ministry of Revenue (hubu shilang 戶部侍郎). Xiang also had a close relationship with Dahui, and Dahui wrote a commemorative inscription for Xiang’s pavilion, and a letter to the layman. In the postscript of Hongzhi’s collection of remarks on gong’an, Xiang Ziyin 向子諲 himself wrote about urging Hongzhi to take the abbacy in Puzhao Monastery in his hometown.

The person who was in charge of Puzhao [Monastery] was sued by the monastic assembly and imprisoned. I was born in Si (Present-day Shangxi). I became an official and had socialized in political circles over the past twenty years. I pitied that the Chan seat [has become] disordered. Therefore, I was eager to reinvigorate it [Chan]. The disciples went to the powerful officials about their land. I determined that in the end it could not be taken away. When Xuefeng Liao (Zhengxie Qingliao, 1089–1151) was abbot in Changlu [Monastery], he and fifteen hundred monks all recommended the present-day Tiantong Jue be the chief monk. Consequently, I urged [Hongzhi] to strive to carry out the way of the patriarchs and not to have [any] fear.

he knew Hongzhi. In 1131, he served as the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Revenue (hubu shilang 戶部侍郎). For his biography, see Song shi, 377.11639–11640.

49 Tiantong si zhi, 8.1b7.

50 Hongzhi’s biography states, “He [Hongzhi] truly began to come out into the world and inherit the Dharma of Monk Chun (Danxia Zichun)” 始出世嗣法淳和尚. Schlüter explains the term “come out into the world” chushi 出世 refers to those who take their first abbacy. Schlüter also notes that a Chan monk’s first appointment to the abbacy of a public monastery clearly labeled a key transition in his career. Such evidence emphasizes that a Chan monk was accepted as a full member of his Chan transmission family only after having received his first appointment as an abbot. Ideally, this occasion marked the monk’s having his original inheritance certificate validated by his master. Schlüter, How Zen Became Zen, 51, 66.

51 Schlüter, How Zen Became Zen, 177.

52 Zhenxie was the abbot at Mount Xuefeng in Fuzhou from 1130 to 1136.
Xiang might become acquainted with Hongzhi during his involvement in this abbacy in Puzhao Monastery. At that time, Xiang was the Administrative Assistant of Tax Transport Bureau of Jianghuai (Huainan zhuanyun panguan 淮南轉運判官). This passage above shows that Xiang, as a Dharma protector (hufa 護法), regarded the flourishing of Chan as his own responsibility. Therefore, he urged Hongzhi to take the abbacy. Xiang’s example reflects how elites were deeply involved in monastic affairs at that time; indeed, they even regarded themselves as insiders in the Chan Buddhist circle as they considered the prosperity of the Chan tradition as their personal responsibility.

In 1127, Hongzhi transferred to the abbacy at Taiping Xingguo Monastery 太平興國 in Shu prefecture (present-day Anhui). Later, in the same year (1127), Hongzhi moved on to Yuan tong Monastery at Mount Lu (present-day Jiangxi). Hongzhi’s dharma brother Zhenxie Qingliao arranged for Hongzhi to begin expounding the Dharma at Yuan tong Monastery. Hongzhi’s abbacy in Yuan tong Monastery was engaged with Zhenxie’s involvement.

Subsequently, in 1128, Hongzhi served the abbacy in Nengren Monastery. Later in the sixth month of the same year, after Zhenxie left Changlu Monastery, Hongzhi succeeded Zhengxie to take up the abbacy. Again, the literati were involved, as Wang describes,

After resigning as abbot of Nengren, he travelled to Yunju [Monastery]. At the time, master Yuanwu was the resident Chan master there, while the abbot’s position was vacant at Changlu [Monastery]. The assembly strongly wanted the master to be their abbot. Yuanwu and the prince of Anding County, Lingjin, persuaded him to take this position.

53 Hongzhi lu, 2.149a1–9; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.34c20–24 (juan 3).
54 Tiantong si zhi, 8.1b8.
Master Yuanwu Keqing and the prince of Anding County, Zhao Lingjin urged Hongzhi to take the abbacy. In his biography for Hongzhi, Zhao describes his cordial relationship with Hongzhi. I will discuss their friendship in a later section about Hongzhi’s social network among the literati.

### Hongzhi’s career at Tiantong Monastery

In 1129, when Hongzhi was on his way to Putuo, he happened to pass by Tiantong Monastery. At the time the abbacy was vacant. The assembly and a local official compelled Hongzhi to take up the abbacy. Wang describes:

> In the fall of the third year of Jianyan (1129), he crossed the river to Ming prefecture (present-day Ningbo in Zhejiang). He wanted to cross the sea to prostrate to the Guanyin in Putuo. When he passed by Jingde Monastery in Tiantong Mountain (present-day Ningbo in Zhejiang), they were in need of an abbot coincidentally. All the monks saw the master’s coming. They secretly informed the prefect. As soon as the master overheard the news, he planned to run away. However, all the monks surrounded the monastery all night long so that he could not leave. Therefore, he had no choice but to accept their request.

Once again, this was another example of a local official’s involvement in Hongzhi’s receiving an abbacy appointment. In 1138, by imperial order, Hongzhi was transferred to Lingyin Monastery in Hangzhou. But Hongzhi only served there for a few months before he returned to his previous post at Tiantong. From that time until his death, Hongzhi remained as the abbot of Tiantong.

Having resided at Tiantong Monastery for the majority of his career, Hongzhi became so strongly associated with the monastery that authors of his biographies provide detailed accounts

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55 *Hongzhi lu*, 4.318b9–319a1; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.120a25–b3 (juan 9).

56 *Hongzhi lu*, 4.319a5–9; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.120.b3–11 (juan 9).
about his abbacy in Tiantong Monastery. For instance, Zhou describes Hongzhi’s dream before he went to Tiantong Monastery.

In the beginning, the master passed Shuqi (present-day Hubei), and he worshiped all the stupas of the patriarchs. He dreamed that he went to a monastery in a mountain where pine trees were lined up along two sides of a long road. He wrote a verse to commemorate the dream, which said, “Luxuriant pines reached toward a door to seclusion. When [I] arrived, there was new moon at the dusk.” When he went to Tiantong, it was just like his previous dream. Therefore, he had carried out his will.

When Hongzhi travelled around in Hubei to pay homage to patriarchal stupas, he dreamed about Tiantong Monastery. Upon his arrival in Tiantong, because the scene he saw was like the one in his dream, he thought that he was carrying out a prediction.

Hongzhi’s tenure at Tiantong was his longest, although his residency was interrupted by an imperial order appointing him to the abbacy of Lingyin Monastery in Hangzhou. Zhou depicts that Hongzhi built many halls in Tiantong Monastery:

His abbacy in Tiantong was thirty years from beginning to end. The monastery became anew. [After] reaching the three gates there was the great hall. The width of the hall was thirty pillars. [In the great hall], thousands of Buddhas were housed and worshiped. Furthermore, he built the hall of Vairocana where fifty-three kalyāṇa-mitra were set to the side. Lamps and mirrors [were placed] next to each other, and the lights interpenetrated each other. People watched [the scene] as if they travelled in the Ocean of the Treasury of Lotus. Therefore, [he] illuminated the defiled world to make [people] turn from [this defiled world] and to generate good roots. The sangha hall, monks’

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57 I cannot find this verse in the collection of Hongzhi’s recorded sayings in CBETA.

58 Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).

59 The “Entering the Realm of Reality” (ru fajie 人法界) chapter of the Huayan jing describes Mañjuśrī introduces Sudhana-śreṣṭhi-dāraka’s (Shancai tongzi 善財童子) visit to the fifty-three kalyāṇa-mitra.

60 According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, “lianhuazang shijie 蓮華藏世界 refers to the lotus-store, or lotus-world, the Pure Land of Vairocana, also the Pure Land of all Buddhas in their sambhogakāya, or enjoyment bodies. Above the wind or air circle is a sea of fragrant water, in which is the thousand-petal lotus with its infinite variety of worlds, hence the meaning is the lotus which contains a store of myriads of worlds.”
quarters, bedding, food, and utensils that were placed for his disciples were fine, delicate and perfect like the jeweled houses and the conjured jewel city.

其任天童，前後凡三十年，寺為一新，即三門為大閣，廣三十楹，安奉千佛。又建盧舍那閣，旁設五十三善知識。燈鑑相臨，光景互入。觀者如游華藏界海。所以輝耀塵世，使生厭離，以發起善根。而僧堂、眾寮、臥具、飲食、器用，所以處其徒者，亦皆精微華好，如寶坊化城。^{61}

On the one hand, Zhao states that Hongzhi established Buddha halls to lead visitors and the laity to give rise to good roots. On the other hand, Zhao mentions that Hongzhi built the sangha hall to accommodate monastic students. In addition to the depiction of Hongzhi’s establishment of housing in Tiantong, Zhou also states that Hongzhi dammed the sea to create additional land to grow grains for monastics. He writes:

In addition, he prevented the crevices close to the coastline from becoming briny salt rocks and plowed them for offerings to monastics. At the end of the year, travelling evangelists were not recruited to go fund-raising. In the dining hall and kitchen, there was abundant food, which was more than other places. None of students was dissatisfied [with the situation], so that they could devote themselves to [studying] the Way. However, whatever the master planned, people competed with each other to approach him. His countenance remained unperturbed. He sat and announced everything that was done. [People] suspected that ghosts and gods helped him. However, the master manifested the form of non-action.

又即濱海之隙，障其鹹鹵而耕之，以給僧供。末年至，不發化人，而齋廚豐滿甲於他方，學者無一不滿，得以專意於道。然師所規畫，人競趨之，不動聲色，坐以告辦，疑有鬼神陰為之助，而師無作相也。^{62}

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^{61} According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, parable of the conjured city is “one of the seven parables of the Lotus Sutra 法華七喩 (Skt. rādhi-nagarāvadāna). A group of people were making a journey to reach some jeweled city, but became exhausted along the way. A wise man, through his magical powers, created jeweled city for the people to rest in. Once they had recovered from their exhaustion, he allowed the mirage of the jeweled city to fade away so the people could once again resume their journey to the real city. So it is with the Hinayāna 小乘 nirvāṇa 涅槃, which is just a temporary resting place on the road to the ultimate goal of Mahāyāna. Hinayāna nirvāṇa, like the transformed city, is merely an upāya 方便 to lead the person a higher end.” See Miaofa lianhua jing, T 9.22a18–27b16 (juan 3). Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).

^{62} Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).
This passage stresses Hongzhi’s ability in administering monastic affairs as Zhou points out that Hongzhi’s establishment of facilities enabled his students to dedicate themselves to practice without worrying about external conditions. Zhou underscores Hongzhi’s composure while planning and accomplishing everything for the monastery.

Wang also writes about his personal visit to Tiantong Monastery as follows:

Boxiang (the author) has heard the master’s name for a long time. In the year of Wuwu (1138, the eighth year of Shaoxing reign), while I was teaching at prefecture school, I met the master for the first time. Once I visited the master, I left the waterway at Xiaobai (present-day Yin in Zhejiang) and walked on a road in the shadow of pine trees for over twenty miles. Lofty buildings and grand pavilions were soaring among ten thousand mountains. I was very much amazed at the scene, which I have never seen before. After entering the door, there were Chan robes and ten thousand fingers (thousands of monks in their robes) silently sitting on Chan beds. There was no idle chatting. When I was serving the Senior Vice Grand Councilor previously, we travelled throughout the area of Xian, Han, Jiangxi, and Nanyue (present-day Hubei, Jiangxi, and Hunan). I have not seen such a flourishing scene. I heard many senior and venerable monks all said, “In the past, there were less than two hundred monks in Tiantong. After the master came, learners flooded in from all directions in great rush like birds and beasts follow phoenixes and unicorns. It is also like hundreds of rivers running into a vast sea. Today there are over 1200 monks here.”

伯庠聞師名舊矣，歲在戊午教授州學，始識其面。嘗訪師，自小白捨舟道，松陰二十餘里。雄樓傑閣突出萬山之中，固已駭所未見。入門，禪毳萬指默座禪床，無謦欬者。伯庠頃侍老先參政，遍歷襄漢、江西、南嶽，未有如是盛也。聞之長老尊宿皆云：「天童舊眾不滿二百，師之來，四方學者爭先奔湊，如飛走之宗鳳麟，百川之赴滄海，今踰千二百眾矣。」

Wang describes the scene of magnificent buildings and the presence of over twelve hundred students. Wang emphasizes a thriving scene that was never seen in areas covering Hubei, Jiangxi, and Hunan. In addition, he also singles out the flourishing scene of Tiantong Monastery by comparing the number of students before and after Hongzhi’s abbacy. Before Hongzhi’s arrival, there were two hundred students. However, there were over twelve hundred students after Hongzhi took over the abbacy. Apart from the description about Hongzhi’s achievement in

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63 *Hongzhi lu*, 4.319b5–320a2; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.120b.11–19 (juan 9).
Tiantong Monastery, this passage indicates that Wang’s personal connection with Hongzhi might have come from his official visit to Tiantong Monastery. It was common at the time for high-ranking officials to inspect Buddhist monasteries during their official visits.

In addition, like Zhou, Wang also depicts Hongzhi’s accomplishments during his abbacy in Tiantong Monastery. He writes:

His residency [in Tiantong] lasted about thirty years. Thousands of monastery rooms were newly built. In the past when Buddhism was flourishing, Master Changlu (Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗懴, d. u.) and Master Xuefeng (Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存, 822–908) had their own halls, and they separated the monks into four or five places. Since there were so many monks in Tiantong, the master instructed the builders, according to his own ideas, to construct a hall to house 1200 residents, so everyone could be accommodated. The hall was majestic, grand, and solidly built, which was truly unprecedented. The farmlands were created land by blocking the tides between two mountains. The revenue had tripled comparing to before. All needs of the assembly were completely satisfied. Although this was something meaningful, others had looked disdainfully [at the renovation project] and had not dared to do it. The master had taken it on easily and had started to do it immediately.

前後垂三十年，寺屋幾千間，無不新者，異時長蘆、雪峰。僧方盛時，各居一堂，別為四五。天童衲子既多，師以己意指授匠者為一堂以處眾千二百人，悉皆容受，雄麗深穩，實所創見。即兩山間障海潮而田之。歲入三倍於前，凡眾所須無不畢具。此雖有為事，然他人睥睨不敢措手者。師優游其間，即日趣辨。64

Wang describes that Hongzhi’s construction of a hall to house twelve hundred monks was innovative at that time. In addition, Wang points out Hongzhi’s creation of land by blocking sea tides and notes that the monastery’s revenue tripled in comparison to the past. Similar to Zhou, Wang also singles out Hongzhi’s ease while accomplishing monastic affairs.

Aside from these authors’ descriptions about Hongzhi’s accomplishment of construction of housing in Tiantong Monastery, Hongzhi himself also composed a commemorative inscription for the completion of monastic hall. Regarding the construction, Hongzhi writes the following:

64 Hongzhi lu, 4.320a9–b6; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.120b22–c3 (juan 9).
In the front and the rear, there are fourteen bays, twenty rooms, three corridors, and two courtyards. Roofs keep out rain. Beneath, there is no wall. The length is two hundred chi and width is sixteen zhang. Windows and beds are wide, bright, tidy, and clean. One thousand monks (literally, ten thousand fingers) sublimely eat and rest at ease.

Hongzhi uses the phrase “ten thousand fingers” to imply the number of monks housed in the sangha hall. Hongzhi also described that the building offered monastics an optimum environment to practice Chan. He describes it as follows:

In the winter it is warm and in summer it is cool. During the day, it has the fragrance of incenses. At night, there are lights. Over there, monks open [their] bowls to eat and wash their feet to sit. Between [day and night], they plant crops. Silence warns and guides them. In the fall, [the weather] moistens ancient wells. When the spring comes, the [houses] transform to pivots. They are profound and accomplished silence. Over there, it is bright and light is offered. [Monks] can establish solid foundations [literally: the water fills caves and flows].

Hongzhi’s description reflects that the monastic hall provided a suitable environment during all four seasons; as the facilities meet all of the students’ needs, students could concentrate on their practice without being distracted. The biographers’ passages about Hongzhi’s abbacy in Tiantong Monastery emphasize Hongzhi’s accomplishment of an innovative building construction and his charisma to attract thousands monastics to study under him.

Hongzhi remained as abbot of Tiantong Monastery until his death. Regarding Hongzhi’s death, all the biographers focus on four themes: 1) Hongzhi’s bidding farewell to the laity; 2) Hongzhi’s dying moment; 3) Hongzhi’s relationship with Dahui; and 4) Hongzhi’s funeral. Zhou describes Hongzhi’s bidding farewell to laity as follows:

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65 *Hongzhi lu*, 2.80a2–5.
66 *Hongzhi lu*, 2.80a7–10.
On Renshen day in the ninth month in Dingchou (1157), the master went to Siming (present-day Ningbo). He further ordered a boat to Yue (present-day Shaoxing). All over, he visited people with whom he had acquaintance as if bidding farewell to them.

丁丑秋九月壬申，師入四明，又命舟至越，遍見常所往來者，若與之別。67

In addition, Wang describes, “Furthermore, he visited the Area Commander-in-Chief Zhao Linggang in Yue (present-day Zhejiang). He visited all of the patrons as if saying farewell to them” 又之越上謁帥守趙公令誏，因遍詣諸檀越家，若與之別.68 Zhao Linggang was Zhao Lingjin’s brother, therefore, he was a member of royal family.69 In his biography of Hongzhi, Zhao also records Hongzhi’s visit to his brother, “Today, my younger brother, Military Chief of Yue, also deeply admired the master. For ten days, he invited the master to my house to ask him about the Way” 今越帥舍弟，深亦推重，延入府庭，問道旬日.70 It seems that Hongzhi was highly esteemed by high-ranking officials, and appreciated patronage. Therefore, he visited and bid farewell to his patrons.

After Hongzhi bid farewell to the laity, he returned to Tiantong Monastery. Wang provides the following description:

He returned to the mountain on the seventh day in the tenth month [in 1157]. He invited guests to eat as usual. On the eighth day of the month, he took a bath and changed his clothing between seven and eleven o’clock in the morning.71 He sat upright and addressed the assembly. He asked his attendant to give him a pen to write a letter to Master Dahui to take care of things after he died. Then he wrote a poem: “Like dreams, like sky flowers, so is sixty-seven years of life. White birds vanish in the mist. Autumn

67 Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).
68 Hongzhi lu, 4.320b7–9; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.120c3 (juan 9).
69 For the biography of Zhao Linggang, see Song shi, 244.8683–8683.
70 Tiantong si zhi, 8.2a6.
71 Chen 辰 is about 7:00 to 9:00 am and yi 巳 is about 9:00 to 11:00 am.
water merges with the sky.” He laid down the pen and passed away.⁷²

十月七日還山，飯客如常。八日辰已間沐浴更衣，端坐告眾，顧侍者索筆作書屬以後事。又書偈曰：「夢幻空花，六十七年。白鳥煙沒，秋水天連。」擲筆而逝。⁷³

Hongzhi anticipated his death, and so took a bath and changed his robes. He delivered an announcement to the assembly, and calmly wrote a deathbed poem before passing away. His poetry portrayed the transitoriness of life.

As Hongzhi requested Dahui to be in charge of his funeral, the biographers depict Hongzhi’s friendship with Dahui. For example, Zhao writes the following:

In the twenty-sixth year of Shaoxing (1156), [the abbacy] in Yuwang [Monastery] was vacant. The master recommended Chan Master Miaoxi Fori to take the abbacy.⁷⁴ He personally wrote a letter to urge [Dahui] to take the abbacy. When Miaoxi resided in Yuwang [Monastery], he gave a sermon in the prefecture government. The master raised the wooden gavel of the chief monk for announcement.⁷⁵ Hongzhi deeply admired Dahui. They talked and discussed freely. The master held Dahui’s hand, saying, “Both of us are getting old. Only we two can respond spontaneously to each other, when you sing, I respond, and, when I sing, you clap your hands. Whichever one of us passes away first, the one who still lives would be in charge of the other’s funeral.” Later, when [the master] passed away, he left a verse to bid his farewell. Miaoxi indeed hosted his funeral ceremony, and he did not betray their promise to each other. [The pair] could be really be called “the southern mountain and the fall scene, in that both of them were high [in their essence].”⁷⁶ Such could be witnessed in these two monks.

⁷² According Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, "sky flowers" (konghua 空花) means "illusory flowers seen in the sky as the result of an optical disorder; spots before the eyes, muscae volitantes; illusion. A metaphor used in a broad range of philosophical works."

⁷³ Hongzhi lu, 4.320b9–321a2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.120c3–9 (juan 9).

⁷⁴ Fori Miaoxi is Dahui Zonggao. For Dahui’s biography, see Dahui Pujue chanshi nianpu 大慧普覺禪師年譜, J 1, no. A042, 793a2–807b21. According to Schlütter, Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043–1121) gave Dahui the sobriquet “Miaoxi 妙喜,” which became the name Dahui used most commonly for himself. In 1126, Dahui was conferred the honorific “Fori 佛日” by the imperial court. See Schlütter, How Zen Became Zen, 105–107.

⁷⁵ According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, “‘baizhui 白椎’ also called ‘baichui 白槌’ is to call an assembly to order by sounding with a wooden gavel.”

⁷⁶ “The southern mountain and the fall scene, where both of them were high [in their essence]” 南山與秋色、氣勢兩相高 originally appears in Du Mu’s 杜牧 (803–852) poem, “Chang’an qiuyang 長安秋望 (In Autumn see far in Chang’an) in Quan Tang shi 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 521.6003.
Zhao describes Hongzhi’s close connection with Dahui from its initial stage to Hongzhi’s death.

Hongzhi admired Dahui as he personally wrote a letter to persuade Dahui to take up the abbacy in Yuwang Monastery. Hongzhi even entrusted his funeral to Dahui. Zhou also describes their cordial friendship,

Upon receiving [Hongzhi’s] will, Fori (Dahui) arrived at Tiantong at night. He (Dahui) hosted all the rites of Hongzhi funerals. Because he recommended the disciples of the master to succeed [Hongzhi’s] seat, those who knew both [Dahui and Hongzhi] then realized that both elders transmitted their own traditions while they still supported each other by the Way. There had never been any difference (distance) between them since the start.”

Zhou emphasizes that although Hongzhi and Dahui advocated the teachings of different lineages, they wholeheartedly supported each other.

Finally, in terms of Hongzhi’s funeral, the authors emphasize the miraculous signs of his corpse and the responsive signs of the nature to his death. Zhou writes,

After being in the niche for seven days, his countenance looked alive. In the beginning, it was proposed that [his body was to be] cremated in order to collect his relics. Somebody said that the master used to shave his hair and the hair which fell into the fire often became a relic. Since then, people fought for his hair. [Based on that] How could one suspect that there would be no relics? On Bingwu day, his whole body was buried in the eastern valley of the mountain. Since the master passed away, wind and rain made the sky dark. Then it became sunny during the funeral. After the funeral finished, it again started to rain. Over ten thousand people came to bid farewell to him. They filled the

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77 Tiantong si zhi, 8.2a2–5.

78 Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).
valley of the mountain. There is no one who did not admire and lament mourned [the master] with tears.

龕留七日, 顏色如生。初議茶毘以收舍利, 或師嘗薙髮, 有墜火中者輒成舍利, 自是遺髮人所爭取, 豈嫌無舍利也耶？丙午迺奉全身葬山之東谷。自師之化, 風雨晦冥, 至葬開霽, 迄事復雨。送者逾萬人, 彌亙山谷, 無不涕慕歎仰者。79

Regarding the miraculous signs of Hongzhi’s corpse, Zhou describes that Hongzhi’s countenance looked alive. Zhou even further points out that when Hongzhi was alive, cuttings of his hair would become relics. In terms of the responsive sign of the nature, Zhou depicts the exceptional weather, rain that was a portent of Hongzhi’s death. Besides, ten thousand people attended his funeral. This again reflects Hongzhi’s popularity.

Hongzhi’s revival of the Caodong tradition

Having reviewed Hongzhi’s biography, I will now discuss Hongzhi’s contribution to the revival of the Caodong tradition, his literary accomplishments and his network among the literati.

Hongzhi’s critical role in the revival of the Caodong lineage can be found in some writings concerning Hongzhi’s making efforts to promote Caodong teachings. For example, Wang describes about Hongzhi’s reputation in promoting the Caodong teachings. Wang depicts that it was widely known that Hongzhi promoted the Caodong teachings while taking the first seat in Changlu Monastery in 1123.80 With respect to the contents Hongzhi taught about the Caodong teachings, Zhou provides a concise account.

79 Ibid.
80 According to Wang, “The position of abbot at Puzhaowang Monastery in Sizhou (present-day Xuyu in Jiangsu) had become vacant. Official Xiang learned that chief monk Zhengjue at Changlu, (present-day Liuhe in Jiangshu) advocated Caodong’s teaching, and that he was admired and highly regarded by other monks. He wrote a letter to invite Zhengjue to take on the position of abbot.” 泗洲普照王寺闕住持者，向公聞長蘆第一座僧正覺倡曹洞宗，衲子信嚮，具疏與帖，請補其處. Hongzhi lu, 4.316a3–6; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119b29–c6 (juan 9).
The master (Hongzhi), in the beginning, entered the way by sitting meditation. Chun (Danxia Zichun) instructed him (Hongzhi) about the empty eon. Instantaneously, he silently attained great enlightenment. Later, when he taught people, he devoted to illuminating the affairs prior to the empty eon. The master thoroughly realized the essence and the origin of the Buddha and patriarchs. He is sharp and keen. Those who were of middle and lower capability can hardly compare with him. Days and nights, he sat upright with the assembly without sleeping. His triple wheels [behavior, speech, and intention] were silent. Six functions left no marks. His teachings and articulation were complete and perfect. He restrained himself very strictly. He had promoted the Way for a very long time. He adorned the Buddha services. He also guided those who were lost on the path and fear that they could not attain the Way.

Zhou indicates that Hongzhi taught people to attain the state before the empty eon that is to realize non-duality, and his teachings were so sharp that people of middle and lower ability could not approach him. Hongzhi devoted himself to guiding people through both his teachings and eloquence. Hongzhi also dedicated himself to advocating Buddhist teachings and performing Buddhist service to lead people to realize the Way. In addition, in 1137, Feng Wenshu 馮溫舒 (d.u.) in “The Preface on the Informal Sermons of Monk Tiantong Jue” (“Tiantong Jue heshang xiaocan yuluxu” 天童覺和尚小參語錄序) writes about the prevalence of Hongzhi’s teachings,

The old monk Tiantong became famous early on in Handong (present-day Hubei) for his intelligence and brilliance. His teachings of the Way gradually became well-known in Jianghuai (present-day Jiangsu and Anhui) and reached far to Wuyue (present-day

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81 About Danxia’s biography, see “Suizhou dahongshan shifang congning baoshou chanyuan disidai zhuchi Chun chanshi taming” 隨州大洪山十方崇寧保壽禪院第四代住持淳禪師塔銘 by Han Shao 韓韶. See Hubei jinshi zhi 湖北金石志 24b–27a, in Shike shiliao xinbian 石刻史料新編 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1979), ser. 1, 16.12134–12136. For Danxia’s recorded sayings, see Danxia Zichun chanshi yulu 丹霞子淳禪師語錄, X 71.756a5–770a2.

82 According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, “‘triple wheels’ refers to ‘the three agents, or abilities: The Buddha’s body or deeds 身; mouth, or discourse 口; mind or ideas 意.’”

83 The six functions refer to the functions of the six faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

84 Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu 丹霞子淳禪師語錄, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).
Hangzhou). [People in] the cities and towns where he passed all admired him. At that time, eminent people vied to become acquainted with him as if they would lose out if they could not reach him.

Feng depicts that Hongzhi rose to prominence in Handong, then his fame reached Jianghuai and Wuyue. This implies that the area where Hongzhi’s teachings spread was very broad. Following that, Feng writes about Hongzhi abbacy in Tiantong Monastery, “the number of people who came and went to study together often numbered in thousands” 會學去來常以千數. Then Feng describes that although the Caodong teachings were moribund, Hongzhi played a crucial role in reinvigorating the Caodong teachings.

[Hongzhi] only realized that his own lineage was scarcely continuing and could barely survive. The original teachings of Taiyang (Taiyang Jingxuan) that had nearly diminished revived again. After his (Taiyang) teachings went through three or four generations, it prospered at this precise moment. [The prosperity of the teachings] is like a sudden thunder in the sky and it shook and penetrated the nine realms. The flourishing of the teachings] sprouted and bloomed. It flourished naturally. Its primordial energy was vastly created. Yet, it was never intended so by design in the beginning.

Feng describes that Hongzhi revived Taiyang’s teachings that already declined for three or four generations. Hongzhi’s teachings became very prevalent like thunder in the sky and sprouts

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85 Hongzhi lu, 4.237a1–5; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.57b14–16 (juan 5).
86 Ibid.
87 According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, “九地 jiudi” means “nine levels of existence.” The division of sentient experience into the desire realm (yujie 欲界), the four form-realms of meditation (sichan 四禪), and the four formless realms (siwus 四無色).
88 Hongzhi lu, 4.237a11–15; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.57b21–24 (juan 5).
89 According to the Caodong lineage, there were three generations from Taiyang to Hongzhi. After Taiyang, they were Touzi Yiqing, Furong Daokai, and Danxia Zichun. See Schlütter, How Zen Became Zen, 236.
blossom. It seems that Feng notices that Chan monks were concerned with the transmission of their own lineage. Therefore, Feng stresses the importance of the lineage to emphasize Hongzhi’s revival. In particular, he singles out Taiyang Jingxuan, as noted earlier, a crucial figure in the Caodong lineage, as Taiyang was the last Caodong master to be included in the Jingde chuanpeng lu. Feng writes that Taiyang’s teachings had almost been dismissed; after three or four generations, thanks to Hongzhi, the teachings were once again thriving.

As Hongzhi’s counterpart in the Linji tradition, in Hongzhi’s portrait eulogy, Dahui writes about Hongzhi’s achievement in the renaissance of the Caodong tradition,

起曹洞於已墜之際，
[he] gave acupuncture treatment at the time of dying.

善說法要，
He was talented to elaborate the essential of the teachings,

罔涉離微。
without entailing [the dualism of] transcendence and subtlety.

不起于座，
Without standing from his seat,

而變荊棘林為梵釋龍天之宮。
he could transform the forest of brambles into the palace of Śakra Devānāma-Indra, bramas, dragon king, and devas. 90

Because Hongzhi reinvigorated the Caodong lineage, Dahui regards Hongzhi as a key monk in the face of the Caodong’s demise. Dahui highly valued Hongzhi’s great eloquence in preaching Dharma. Because Hongzhi transformed wild land into monastic buildings, Dahui also admires Hongzhi’s capability with respect to the construction project. From Dahui’s point of view, Hongzhi’s extraordinary articulation of Buddhist teachings and his competence of building monastic infrastructure were both crucial factors in Hongzhi’s contribution to the revival of the Caodong lineage.

**Hongzhi’s literary achievement**

All the biographers single out Hongzhi’s literary talent. For example, Zhou writes,

> When Chun wrote commentarial verses on old cases, he asked the master to write a preface in the introduction. Chan Master Furong Kai read it and said, “With such [a monk] in the sangha, our tradition will not decline.” When he retreated to Nengren Monastery, he was invited by Changlu [Monastery]. While he was travelling Yunju Monastery, Chan Master Yuanwu saw that he was promoting [Chan]. He (Yuanwu) gifted him (Hongzhi) with verses, with words about “Fifteen hundred seasoned Chan monks.” However, his (Hongzhi) samādhi of eloquence creates writings naturally and they [the writings] were not from cognition or thinking.

淳作頌古，令師致敘其首，芙蓉楷禪師見之，曰：「僧中有此，即吾宗不墜矣」
其退能仁，受長蘆之請，適游雲居，圓悟勤禪師見其提唱，以偈送之，有「一千五百老禪將」之語，然辯才三昧自然成文，非出於思惟也。\(^{91}\)

91 Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).

Daokai, teacher of Hongzhi’s master, highly valued Hongzhi’s literary talent and had confidence that Hongzhi would not allow his lineage to decline. In addition, Zhou describes that Hongzhi’s impressive writing came naturally and beyond cognition. Besides, in his inscription poetry for Hongzhi, Zhou writes, “the tip of his pen is like waves in the Three Gorges” 筆端三峽為波瀾.\(^{92}\) Zhou uses the metaphor of “the waves in the Three Gorges” to depict Hongzhi’s writing as forceful and robust. In addition, Wang records an anecdote about Hongzhi’s literary art.

While travelling between Jin (present-day Jincheng in Shanxi) and Jiang (present-day Icheng in Shanxi), the master was stopped because he did not have a pass. The county magistrate admires his extraordinary appearance and demeanor, showed him the fan in his hand and asked him to write a few pivotal words on the fan. Responding to him, the master picked up a pen and wrote a poem on the fan. The magistrate was very pleased and got him a pass to travel on. He crossed a river (Yellow River) to Luo (Luoyang in Henan).

至晉絳間，或以無憑沮師，邑尹見師英拔，因以所執扇示之曰：「為我下一轉語。」

92 Ibid.
Hongzhi’s spontaneous writing ability enabled him to obtain a pass. Furthermore, Wang writes an account about Hongzhi’s talent in writing. “Initially, the master wrote things without special care or purpose. Once he started writing, whatever he wrote became an intact article” 其為文初不經意，下筆即成. Hongzhi’s writing could rival the composition of the third patriarch.94

Although biographers point out Hongzhi’s literary talent, none mentions Hongzhi’s literary works. For Hongzhi’s literary background, according to Hongzhi’s writings compiled in his collection of recorded sayings, Hongzhi composed commentarial verses and prose on old cases, and portrait encomia. Hongzhi composed one hundred commentarial verses on old cases during his abbacy in Puzhao Monastery between 1124 and 1126. Subsequently, he wrote one hundred commentarial proses on old cases during his abbacy in Changlu Monastery in 1128. Hongzhi composed gong’an writings in his early career. Aside from gong’an commentaries, there are 457 portrait encomia compiled in his collection of recorded sayings. Compared to contemporary monks, Hongzhi wrote much more portrait poetry.

**Hongzhi’s social network among literati**

As Hongzhi’s writings seemed to target the literati, it is helpful to understand his social network among the literati. Extant sources offer no letters between Hongzhi and contemporary literati. Nevertheless, by examining literati writings, it is possible to map out Hongzhi’s literati social

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93 *Hongzhi lu*, 4.316b7–10; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.119c14–c18 (juan 9).

94 “The master wrote things without special care or purpose initially. Once he started writing, whatever he wrote became an intact article. The Drafter in the Secretariat, Pan Lianggui asked the master to write an inscription for Great Function Hut. The master personally wrote it on a stone. Pan praised, “It is in league with ‘Faith in Mind’ composed by the Third Patriarch.” 其為文初不經意，下筆即成，中書舍人潘公良貴請銘大用菴，親為書石，歎曰：『與三祖《信心銘》相後先矣。』 *Hongzhi lu*, 4.322a4–6; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.121a1–3 (juan 9).
network. Representations of Hongzhi by literati clearly show that they found him impressive. Furthermore, two features of Hongzhi’s social network in the literati circle stand out in these writings. First, Hongzhi’s acquaintance with these literati writers were on two levels: some were personal relationships; others he knew from official capacities. Second, the identities of these writers demonstrate that Hongzhi’s social network included both national and local figures.

The descriptions in these writings show that contemporary literati were fond of making acquaintance with Hongzhi. Zhou writes that Hongzhi was very popular at that time, so that both commoners and literati highly admired him.

Wherever the master was present, people hoped to observe his demeanor, hear his speech, and imitate [each other] to make offerings to him. Those who vowed to take refuge [under the master] crossed hundreds and thousands of miles. Their baggage and shoes in outdoor-space were counted to the thousands. At that time, his diligence in carrying out the Way and the number of those who obtained the Way under him was without peer. The one who knows the path to Caoxi must be able to tend to the ox of Weishan. If [he] was not recommended by the people, he did not lightly agree to serve [lead] the people. Contemporary worthies and scholar-officials were also fond of establishing relationships with him and they made progress in their interior [cultivation] and external [behavior].

Hongzhi was perceived as a popular master as people would like to personally approach him and thousand people went over long distance to take refuge under him. His efforts to promote

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95 Caoxi is a stream in the southeast of Shaozhou 韶州 in Guangdong. Reference to “the one who knows the path to Caoxi” refers to Chan Sixth Patriarch Huineng 慧能. The original reference appears in the Platform Sūtra as follows: “Great master [Huineng] began to [teach Buddhist teachings] in Wuyang and ended at Caoxi. He expounded Dharma for thirty-seven years” 大師始於五羊，終至曹溪，說法三十七年. *Liuzu dashi fabao tanjing* 六祖大師法寶壇經, T 48, no. 2008, 345c18 (juan 1). Regarding the expression the ox of Weishan, in the biography of Weishan Lingyou 洵山靈祐 (771–853), it records that when Weishan was dying, he instructed his assembly that he would incarnate as a water ox. *Zutang ji* 祖堂集, no. 144, B 25, 604b6 (juan 16). In addition, the term *muniu* 牧牛 means an oxherd. According to *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, this is a metaphor in Chan tradition to refer to “the task of bringing the mind to awakening.”

96 *Mingzhou Tiantong Jingde Chansi Hongzhi Jue chanshi yulu*, J 32.201a14–23 (juan 4).
Buddhist teachings were also very famous. Moreover, as a member of the elite class himself, Zhou emphasizes that while making friends with Hongzhi, the literati also made progress in both self-cultivation and deeds.

In addition, Zhao describes that during Hongzhi’s residency at Tiantong Monastery both monastics and laity admired him. In particular, the literati affectionately made friends with Hongzhi, “In the thirty years [there], he was admired and revered by both monastic and laity. Aside from transmitting the Dharma, [Hongzhi] renewed the courtyards and buildings [in the monastery]. Members of the nobility and officials were delighted to entertain him” 三十年間，道俗欽仰，傳法之外，院宇一新、王公大人樂與之遊.97 Zhao himself was a member of the royal family. I will show below that he maintained a cordial relationship with Hongzhi.

I turn next to a discussion of the two types of relationships that comprised Hongzhi’s social network among the literati: personal and official. By definition, “personal relationship” means that Hongzhi had personal and private contact with individual literati. Zhao’s preface shows that he had a fairly close connection with Hongzhi,

Monk Chun passed away. [When] Chan Master Zhenxie (Zhenxie Qingliao) took up the abbsacy in [Monastery] Changlu, he vacated the seat of the chief monk to wait for Hongzhi. This was the affair which I personally witnessed while I then resided at the upper tower in Houxi in Mount Lu (present-day Jiangxi). When Chan master (Hongzhi) first came to my hut to transmit the Way, [he met with] Zhao Chanti (Baofeng Weizhao 寶峰惟照, d.u.), Yunju Gaoan (Gaoan Shanwu 高菴善悟, 1074–1132) and Xiufeng Xiang Chasou (Xiufeng Jingxia 秀峰景祥, 1062–1132), all of them were renowned masters of the time.98 They all formed close friendships. One day at midnight before dawn, I took advantage of the moonlight to part from the master. At the foot of the mountain, I wrote a verse, which said, “You and I together went down the corner of the mountain. The calm river was covered with frost and the hut was full of moon [light].” [I

97 Tiantong si zhi, 8.2a1.

98 About the biography of Xiufeng Xiang, see the entry of the Chan Master Baofeng Xiang 寶峰祥禪師 in Sengbao zhengxu zhuan 僧寶正續傳, X 79, no. 1561, 571a18–572a2 (juan 4). For the biography of Yunju Gaoan, see the entry of the Chan Master Yunju Wu 雲居悟禪師 in Sengbao zhengxu zhuan, X 79.572a3–b11 (juan 4).
Zhao personally composed a poem for Hongzhi to express their cordial friendship. It is unfortunate that the record of Hongzhi’s exchange with Zhao is lost. In Hongzhi’s collection of poetry, there are two poems for Zhao.\(^\text{100}\) The titles of these poems all contain Zhao’s style name, Layman Chaoran 超然居士 or Chaoran, which expresses Zhao’s Buddhist identity as a layman. Hongzhi actually replied to Zhao’s poem as well. The content of the poems are mainly about Chan teachings, and Hongzhi uses the metaphor of the Layman Pang Yun 庞蘊 to portray Zhao. In addition, Hongzhi encouraged Zhao to practice Chan to attain Vimalakīrti’s enlightenment of non-duality.

In the section above on Hongzhi’s biography written by Wang, we noted that Wang stated that Zhao persuaded Hongzhi to take the abbacy in Changlu Monastery. Moreover, because Zhao describes Hongzhi’s visit with Zhao’s younger brother, Hongzhi likely also had a close connection with him as well. All the biographers mention this meeting. It is especially significant because Zhao and his brother were members of the royal family. Having a relationship with the Zhaos shows that Hongzhi’s social network reached to the imperial house.

In his preface to his biography on Hongzhi, Fan Zongyin 范宗尹 (1098–1136) expresses his cordial relationship with Hongzhi. Fan’s style name was Layman Tuihui 退晦居士. In 1131, he attended the Superior College and later he served as the Attendant Censor (shiyushi 侍御史).


\(^{100}\) I will discuss the poems in Chapter 4.
and Right Grand Master of Remonstrance (you jianyi dafu 右諫議大夫). In 1127, on his way to Mount Lu, he encountered Hongzhi. Later, he served as the Drafter in the Secretariat (zhongshu sheren 中書舍人) and Vice Censor-in-Chief (yushi zhongcheng 御史中丞). In 1130, he became the Grand Councilor (zaixiang 宰相) and resigned from this position in the eleventh month of 1131.  

In the tenth month of 1131, he visited Hongzhi in Tiantong Monastery. After the visit, in 1132, he wrote “The Preface on the Recorded Sayings of Monk Tiantong Jue” (“Tiantong Jue heshang yuluxu”天童覺和尚語錄序). In this preface, Fan mainly summarizes his acquaintance with Hongzhi and criticizes his contemporaries’ attitudes toward studying Buddhism. Fan begins the preface by stating his indifference to making social acquaintances because ordinary people looked down on each other, but his fondness for making friends with Buddhist monks. He felt that the intentions of true monks were close to his, even if they did not talk with each other. Then he states that Hongzhi was this type of monk. He describes how he knew Hongzhi,

Our friendship began when I was punished to move to the south [in 1127]. My boat moored by Mount Lu. I happened to meet the master many times. Our friendship was already like that of old friends. Last year [1131] I resigned from the post of the Grand Councilor and came here from the east. The master visited me in Siming (present-day Ningbo). Then I visited the master in the mountain. Our numerous conversations made me happier day after day.

始余被罪南遷，泊舟廬山之下，與師一再邂逅耳。而相與之意，便如故人。去歲罷相東來，師過余於四明，余復訪之於山中，語累日益歡。

101 For Fan Zongyin’s biography, see Song shi, 362.11325–11326.

102 Hongzhi lu, 3.151a8–11; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.1a6–9 (juan 1).

103 In Fan’s biography, it wrote that he was exiled to Ezhou 鄂州 (present-day Hubei) because of a fraud decree (weiming 偽命). Song shi, 362.11325

104 In Hongzhi’s collection, there is a record about Fan’s visit in 1131 after he resigned from the post of the Grand Councilor. Hongzhi lu, 3.173a16–19; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.40c24 (juan 4).

105 Hongzhi lu, 3.151a8–b1; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.1a10–14 (juan 1).
Fan is very fond of talking with Hongzhi. Fan also writes that Hongzhi was teaching him to practice the Way and Fan was following what Hongzhi taught. In Hongzhi’s collection, there is a record about Fan’s visit in 1131 after he resigned from the position of Grand Councilor:

Grand Councilor Fan came to the mountain and requested [the Master] to ascend the hall whereupon the master raised the following case. “Grand Councilor Pei visited Huangbo. Pei pointed to a painting on the wall, asking, ‘The portrait is here. Where is the eminent monk?’ Bo called for the Grand Councilor (Pei) loudly. Pei answered. Bo said, ‘What is this?’ [Pei] came to a realization by his (Bo’s) words.” The master said, “Speak about what Grand Councilor Pei attained.” After a while, [The master] said, “Do not blame me for urging you to drink wine after you sit down. After our last departure, I rarely saw you.”

On this occasion, a case corresponding to Fan’s official position was elicited because Fan used to be a Grand Councilor. This case depicts the encounter dialogues between Huanbo and Pei Xiu 裴休 (791–864). Rather than conveying doctrinal points, Hongzhi’s remarks seem to express his friendship with Fan in sentimental terms.

Another member of Hongzhi’s social network, Feng Wenshu, the author of “The Preface on the Informal Sermons of Monk Tiantong Jue” is an obscure figure. The only biographical reference about him in the Collection of Wengong (Wengong ji 文恭集) states that he was the Vice Director of State Farms Bureau (tuntian yuanwailang 屯田員外郎). In this preface, Feng praises Hongzhi’s achievement in the revival of the Caodong teachings, and he encourages people to read this collection of informal sermons. Although Feng Wenshu did not write about

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106 *Hongzhi lu*, 3.151b6–7; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.1a15–21 (juan 1).

107 This gong’an case was compiled in the collection of recorded sayings of Chan Master Huanbo, *Huangbo Duanji chanshi wanling lu* 黃檗斷際禪師宛陵錄, T 48, no. 2012B, 384.a24.

his relationship with Hongzhi, there is a record in Hongzhi’s collection in which he requests Hongzhi to ascend the hall in 1135. Because Feng’s official title was Vice Director of State Farms Bureau, the “Vice Minister” used in this sermon might refer to him. Feng used “investigating studies” (canxue 參學) as his title when he wrote the preface in 1137. This implies that he probably had retired or had resigned from his position when he wrote the preface. Furthermore, the use of canxue in his title shows that he was apparently engaged in studying Chan. According to the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, canxue 參學 is an abbreviation of “investigate Chan and study the Way” (can Chan xue Dao 參禪學道). Feng may have studied Chan under Hongzhi, which is why he was likely to have maintained a personal relationship with him.

In addition to the personal ties with the literati, Hongzhi also had official relationships with them. Here, by definition, “official relationship” is built on practical concerns. The relationship is usually related to affairs about Hongzhi’s appointments of abbacy or an official’s visit. As noted in the section of Hongzhi’s life, Xiang Ziyin’s 向子諲 postscript shows that Xiang invited Hongzhi to be an abbot in a monastery in Xiang’s hometown. This implies that Hongzhi had the official relationship with Xiang. As mentioned above in my discussion of Wang Boxiang’s official visit to Tiantong Monastery when he was an instructor in the prefectural school. He had also attended high-ranking officials to travel the southern areas to inspect Buddhist monasteries in present-day Hubei, Jiangxi and Hunan. Among these monasteries that he

109 “Vice Minister Feng asked for [the master] to ascend the hall. A monk asked, ‘What would it become when there is not one-thread of distance?’”馮侍郎請上堂，僧問：「一絲不隔時如何？」“Not one-thread of distance” refers to the state without arising any thought. After the monk raised this statement, there are dialogues between Hongzhi and the monk. Hongzhi concludes this sermon by emphasizing that by letting go of any thought, one can realize the state of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Hongzhi regards the doctrine of the unity of the principle and phenomena as the essence of the Caodong teachings. I will discuss this doctrine in Chapter 3. Hongzhi lu, 3.219a4; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.52c27 (juan 4).
inspected, it seems that to these officials, Tiantong Monastery was one of the most popular monasteries which attracted thousands monks to study under Hongzhi. This is another extant account of Hongzhi’s relationship with the literati in the official capacity.

Hongzhi’s relationships with literati generally fall into two categories: personal and official. Moreover, the identities of these literati show that Hongzhi’s social network included figures at both national and local levels. Actually, as noted previously, all these literati held official titles in the imperial government. However, by carefully examining the positions that these literati took when they made their acquaintance with Hongzhi and wrote for Hongzhi, it becomes clear that they can be separated into national and local levels.

In terms of national officials, there are Fan, Zhao, and Feng. Fan knew Hongzhi in 1127 after he served as the Right Grand Master of Remonstrance and then was punished to exile in E prefecture (Ezhou 鄂州). After he resigned from the position of Grand Conciliator, in 1131, he went to Tiantong Monastery to visit Hongzhi. Although we know that Zhao was an imperial family member who had the title Commandery Prince of Anping, all we know about Feng is that he served as the Vice Director of the State Farms Bureau.

Xiang’s identity overlaps between that of a local and national official. Serving as a circuit officer in Huainan in 1123, Xiang encountered Hongzhi when Hongzhi was the Chief Monk in Changlu Monastery. Furthermore, as a local elite in Xi prefecture, he urged Hongzhi to take the abbacy in Puzhao Monastery in Xi prefecture. When he took the position of the Vice Minister of Ministry of Revenue, he wrote the postscript for Hongzhi.

Wang is the only local official figure among Hongzhi’s social network. As noted previously, he was an instructor in the prefectural school when he visited Hongzhi at Tiantong Monastery in 1138. In 1166, nine years after Hongzhi passed away, he wrote Hongzhi’s
biography when he served as the Attendant Censor.

Hongzhi’s social network reached out to figures at both local and national levels. This implies that, on the one hand, from Hongzhi’s perspective, his influence reached not only locally but also nationally. On the other hand, from these literati’s perspective, the literati’s engagement with Buddhism was a universal phenomenon as both local and national elites got involved in writing about Hongzhi.

Conclusion
An overview of Chan milieu enhances our understanding of motivations behind the compilation of Hongzhi’s gong’an texts. It took place in the contexts of the literary trend of commentarial practice on old cases in the Chan school as well as part of the tradition of compiling gong’an commentaries in Hongzhi’s own Caodong lineage, Hongzhi composed his gong’an works. The biographical information demonstrates different aspects of Hongzhi: an influential figure in the revival of the Caodong lineage, literary accomplishment, and social network among literati. As a key monk in reviving the Caodong lineage, Hongzhi’s teachings were widely known and appealed to thousands of students. His literary talent impressed the elite, and his literary production likely contributed to the congenial relationship he maintained with literati. The fact that his social network with literati included contacts at both local and national levels reflects the breadth of his influence within elite circles. By delving into these varied perspectives the following chapters will explore the particular teachings Hongzhi advocated to promote Caodong Chan through his gong’an commentarial verses, sermons, and poetry for literati. I will further examine how Hongzhi articulated doctrinal points through his literary eloquence when he commented on old cases and composed poetry for elite associates.
Chapter 2: Hongzhi’s Gong’an Writings within the Larger Chan Tradition

This chapter explores how Hongzhi’s gong’an writings fit within the larger Chan tradition. To place Hongzhi’s work within the literary context of gong’an writings, I begin with an examination of crucial forms of gong’an commentarial practice since the emergence of the genre. By examining the critical statements about the varied forms of commentarial practice, this chapter investigates the main function for the creation of different genres of gong’an commentaries. By studying the intertextual relationships between Hongzhi’s gong’an writings and other major gong’an collections, it situates Hongzhi’s work within the gong’an tradition. Turning from the macro to the micro perspective, it engages in the comparison of Hongzhi’s gong’an work and other gong’an collections through close reading. This comparison demonstrates the differences with regard to usage of old cases, personal style, and approaches to gong’an commentaries.

The Fundamental Forms and the Main Function of Gong’an Commentarial Practice

Since the emergence of commentarial practice on old cases from tenth century, Chan monks created diverse forms for commenting on old cases. Although Chan monks developed increasingly complicated modes of commentarial practice, their fundamental purpose was pedagogical.¹ In other words, through different ways of delivering their comments on old cases,

¹ Previous scholarship has explored the pedagogical function in only certain forms of gong’an commentarial practice as I discussed in the section of the review of field in Introduction. For example, in comparing the gong’an commentarial verses of Xuedou with those of Wumen, Hsieh argues that Xuedou used gong’an commentarial poetry as a vehicle to elucidate the Chan insight while Wumen transformed gong’an commentarial poetry into a pedagogical device to guide practitioners in their Gong’an Introspection practice. In another instance, in investigating Xuedou’s comments on old cases (niangu 拈古), Huang argues, through comments on old cases, Xudou not only elucidated meaning of old cases but also transmitted his religious value. Hsieh, “Poetry and Chan Gong’an: From Xuedou Chongxian (980–1052) to Wumen Huikai (1183–1260).” Huang, “Chan Master Xuedou
Chan masters aimed to illuminate the essential messages of the old cases in order to enhance their students’ understanding and to further engage them in their practice of meditation. This section begins with an overview of the fundamental forms of the commentarial practice on old cases. In addition, by examining critical statements concerning different forms of commentarial practice, I further delve into the main function of various modes of the commentarial practice.

**Substitute Phrases (daiyu 代語) and Alternative Phrases (beiyu 別語)**

In the Chan literature, commenting on old cases is a crucial component in the formation of Chan texts. Through varied commentarial forms, Chan masters produced a large body of *gong’an* commentary literature. The so called “old case” (*gu 古*) refers to conditions (*jiyuan 機緣*) that allowed patriarchal masters to realize awakening. The old cases later came to be known as *gong’an* 公案 (public cases). These consist of sayings or encounter dialogues from prior masters’ recorded sayings. Chan masters used *gong’an* commentaries to illuminate essential points of old cases for their students. Chan masters approached the old cases from different perspectives; sometimes they would comment on crucial parts of encounter dialogues, but at other times they would discuss complete cases. When they commented on critical parts, they might offer substitute phrases (daiyu 代語) as a way to provide answers to questions posed in the...
original cases. At other times, they might use alternative phrases (beiyu 別語) as a way to present different replies from those provided in the original encounter dialogues.

The earliest extant usage of the two modes of commentaries appears in Yunmen Wenyan’s 雲門文偃 (864–949) collection, one of the earliest extant anthology of recorded sayings, Extensive Record of Chan Master Yunmen Kuangzhen (Yunmen Kuangzhen chanshi guanglu 雲門匡真禪師廣錄). In Yunmen’s collection, in a section entitled “instruction of substitute phrases” (chuishi daiyu 垂示代語), Yunmen provides “substitute phrases” for two hundred and ninety old cases.⁴ For each of these cases, Yunmen first states a shorthand version of the old case and then raises a question about it. He then answers his own question by offering a “substitute phrase.” Urs App points out that there are two major situations where Yunmen offers substitute answers. In the first situation, Yunmen expresses his own view by taking the role of one or several persons in the old cases.⁵ In the second situation, Yunmen answers questions for his audience, who were unable to reply.⁶ Below is an example from Yunmen’s collection of the first situation:

Raised:

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⁴ In Yunmen’s collection, the section chuishi daiyu 垂示代語, see Yunmen Kuangzhen chanshi guanglu 雲門匡真禪師廣錄, T 47, no. 1988, 561c–567b (juan 2).


⁶ Ibid.
Yunmen adopts the roles of the Buddha and the non-Buddhist to answer questions. In the second situation, for example:

The Master raised up an ancient saying, “‘The ultimate way is not difficult if only [one] does not pick and choose.’ This is a sangha hall. This is a Buddha hall. Which is not picking and choosing?” [In place of someone from the audience], Master replied, “Why did you do that?”

Yunmen Kuangzhen chanshi guanglu, T 47.558b (juan 2).

Ibid., T 47.565b (juan 2).

“Xinxin ming” 信心銘, T 48. no. 2010.
employs hundreds of cases by posing questions to challenge the audience.\textsuperscript{10} By posing questions, Yunmen seems to raise the crucial points of the cases to challenge his students. Following the questions, he makes comments by inserting substitute phrases.

As to “alternative phrases” (\textit{biyu 別語}), Chan monks offered alternative answers to original replies supplied in the old cases. Yunmen provides an “alternative phrase” to reply to his questions in the example below:

Raised:

Hunan Baoci offered instruction, saying, “I have one sentence that can cover the Earth completely.” A monk asked, “What is the sentence that can cover the Earth?” Baoci said, “It is not vacant.” Master [Yunmen] said, “In this way, it does not match [that sentence].” [Master Yunmen] provided an alternative answer, “Why don’t you ask outside of the cloister?”

Here Yunmen comments twice. First, Yunmen critiques Baoci’s answer by commenting that his response does not supply one sentence that can cover the entire earth. Then, Yunmen offers his second remark by posing a question for the audience to ask someone outside the cloister. Baoci’s expression “It is not vacant” seems to explain his own statement, “it can cover the Earth.” Baoci does not actually offer the sentence. Therefore, Yunmen comments that Baoci’s answer does not correspond to that sentence. In terms of his alternative answer, by telling the monk to ask outside of the cloister, Yunmen implies that Baoci’s initial statement is actually the sentence itself, so it is not necessary to ask again. By offering an alternative answer, Yunmen makes the point that the monk does not grasp Baoci’s message, and Baoci does not answer properly.

\textsuperscript{10} Urs App, \textit{Master Yunmen: from the Record of the Chan Master “Gate of the Clouds”} (New York: Kodansha America, 1994), 71.

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Yunmen Kuangzhen chanshi guanglu}, T 47.560c (juan 2).
Through the forms of substitute and alternative phrases, Chan masters aimed to lead their students to grasp the essential points of the initial cases. Indeed, the function of these two modes of phrases lies in pedagogy. Xuedou’s disciple, Yuanying 圓應 (d.u.) also describes how Xuedou employed substitute and alternative phrases as teaching techniques to improve students’ understanding about the old cases. In the preface to Xuedou’s Puquan ji 瀑泉集, Yuanying states that Xuedou dedicated himself to expounding the essential message of the ancient teachings. In order to address his students’ doubts, Xuedou employed a variety of commentarial strategies, including expressing admiration or criticism, and providing substitute or alternative phrases on old cases to emphasize the import of the ancient teachings. In addition, Fenyang Shanzhao (947–1024) explains the function of substitute and alternative phrases in his collection. According to Fenyang, the two types of phrases are revisions or supplemental statements to answers in old cases as the original answers were neither perfect nor qualified. The two modes of phrases served as instruction methods to lead students to comprehend the old cases.

When Hongzhi’s contemporary, Dahui, criticizes various types of Chan practitioners, he describes how people use substitute and alternative phrases:

12 Mingjue chanshi yulu 明覺禪師語錄, T 47, no. 1996, 692b10 (juan 4). The preface reads: “In two monasteries, Master [Xuedou] often gave talks that responded to the occasions. The disciples collected them…What was recorded was his instructions with his own answers and the relevance of the ancient and contemporary. In the morning and evening, he raised points and made remarks. The intention of his rhetoric was vast and high. Fellow students could not understand. They would again ask [the master] for instruction. Consequently, using this and that, the master addressed what they could not comprehend or had doubts about. He spontaneously expanded and contracted. He sometimes praised and sometimes criticized. Sometimes he provided alternative or different phrases. There were almost one hundred and fifty cases. This is really what he was capable of doing at that time.” 師自兩處道場，多應機語句，門人集之。⋯⋯斯所紀者，乃垂帶自答，及古今因緣，朝暮提唱，辭意曠嶮，而學黨未喻。復致之請益。師蓋不獲已，隨所疑問，以此以彼，乍放乍收，或抑或揚，或代或別，近百五十則，實一時之能事也。

13 Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu 汾陽無德禪師語錄, T 47, no. 1992, 615c (juan 2). “In an abbot’s quarter, one requests instruction on old cases. If the answers [in the old cases] were not perfect, one requests [a master] to provide answers to replace them. If the answers are not qualified, one requests [a master] to provide alternative answers. These [answers] are regarded as substitute and alternative [phrases].” 市中請益古人公案。未盡善者。請以代之；語不格者，請以別之，故目之為代別。
In recent years, there are many approaches to [studying] Chan. Some use one question and one answer, and adding one more sentence at the end. They are doing (practicing) Chan as such. Some rely on occasions (causes and conditions) in which the ancients attained the Way. They meet together to discuss and say, “It is false here and it is true there. This word is profound and that word is marvelous.” They take using substitute phrases or alternative phrases as Chan.

Dahui argues that, rather than seeking enlightenment, people practice other approaches including the usage of substitute and alternative phrases in the discussion of cases. The term “the causes and conditions the ancients attained the Way” 古人入道因緣 might refer to encounter dialogues in old cases. Indeed, Dahui’s negative remark indicates the common use of alternative and substitute phrases in Chan practice at that time.

**Raising Old Cases (jugu 舉古)**

Aside from focusing on a critical point of an old case to comment through alternative or substitute phrases, Chan masters also gave overall remarks including anecdotes and evaluations upon old cases. The old cases consisted of either a quotation or encounter dialogues. A Chan teacher gave their remarks after a student brought up (ju 舉) an old case in either a formal setting, like the ritual of ascending the dharma hall (shangtang 上堂), or in an informal setting, such as in a private meeting with students who entered the teachers’ quarters for individual instruction (rushi 入室). Early examples of raising old cases appear in the section of “Words from abbot’s quarter” (shizhong yuyao 室中語要) in Yunmen’s collection of recorded sayings.

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14 Wei Daoru 魏道儒 cites in *Song dai Chanzong wenhua* 宋代禪宗文化 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji chubanshe, 1993), 83-84. *Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu*, T 47.941a29 (juan 30). This passage is found in Dahui’s letter to an official, Zhang Guoan 張國安 (d.u.).
although there is not a section entitled “raising old cases” in Yunmen’s collection. However, subsequently, in the recorded saying of Xuedou (around 1065), there was a section entitled “raising old cases” (jugu 舉古) and a section about “raising old cases in abbot’s quarter” (shizhong jugu 室中舉古). In each of these sections, an old case was raised and Xuedou made comments. The difference between “raising old cases” and “raising old cases in the abbot’s quarters” might lie in where they took place. An example from “raising old cases in the abbot’s quarters” reads:

Raised:
Longya asked Cuiwei, “What is the meaning of the first patriarch’s coming from the west? Cuiwei said, “Give me a meditation stick. Longya took a meditation stick and gave it to Cuiwei. Cuiwei took it and hit him (Longya) immediately. Longya said, “I will let you hit me, but this is not the meaning of the first patriarch.” Later, Longya also asked Linji, “What is the meaning of the first patriarch’s coming from the west?” Linji said, “Give me a cushion.” Longya took a cushion and gave it to Linji. Linji took it and hit him immediately. Longya said, “I will let you hit me, but this is not the meaning of the patriarch.” The master [Xuedou] said, “Linji and Cuiwei only understood ‘releasing’ but did not understand ‘contracting.’ If I were Longya, when they [Cuiwei and Linji] asked me for the cushion and the meditation stick, I would hold them right against my chest and throw them.”

With regard to the response given by Linji and Cuiwei to Longya’s inquiry about the meaning of the first patriarch, Xuedou criticizes Linji and Cuiwei for their limited understanding “releasing”

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15 According to Foulk, the primary sources for the early history of the gong’an commentarial practice are the collections of recorded sayings of Chan masters who flourished in the tenth century and later. Foulk notes that early examples include the recorded sayings of Yunmen Kuangzhen (864–949), Fayan Wenyi (885–958), etc. Foulk, “The Form and Function of Koan Literature,” 17, 42n3.

16 About jugu 舉古, see Mingjue chanshi yulu 明覺禪師語錄 T 47, no. 1996, 676b–677a (juan 2). About shizhong jugu 室中舉古, T 47.671c–672c (juan 1).

17 Mingjue chanshi yulu, T 47.672b (juan 1).
without realizing “contracting.” Xuedou seems to use “releasing” to imply the actions taken by both Linji and Cuiwei as they hit Longya. He further takes Longya’s position by expressing what he would do in the face of Cuiwei and to Linji’s action. Indeed, Xuedou evaluates the response of the three masters in their encounter dialogues through his comment.

Raising old cases became a regular practice in the ritual setting of “ascending the hall.” Although raising old cases seems to have been ritualized, this commentarial practice still served a pedagogical function. For example, when ascending the hall, Hongzhi remarks on old cases and he depicts himself as adding footnotes (xia zhujiao 下注脚 or xiage zhujiao 下箇注脚) to lead students to grasp the main points in old cases. Therefore, when Chan masters comment on old cases that are raised in ritual situations, their remarks not only have a ritual function but also teaching function.

Comments on Old Cases (niangu 扳古)

Similar to “raising old cases,” there was another mode of gong’an commentaries, namely, “holding up (comments on) old cases” (niangu 扳古). Huang Yi-hsun points out that niangu grew out of the phrase, nianyun 扳云 refers to Chan masters remarked on old cases by using “nianyun” after an old cases was raised. The content of niangu includes the raising of an old

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18 For references to xia zhujiao 下注脚, see Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.41b12 (juan 4), T 48.43a25 (juan 4). For references to xiage zhujiao 下箇注脚, see Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.46c, T 48.49b (juan 4).

19 For example, a case appears in the section of “Words from the abbot’s quarter” (shizhong yuyao 室中語要) in Yunmen’s collection. It reads: “Raised: Deshan said to rector, ‘How many people have just arrived?’ The rector replied, ‘Eight.’ Deshan said, ‘Call the cook and deal with them all together.’ Master (Yunmen) commented, ‘Why bother to say deal with them all together’” 華山問維那：「有幾人新到那？」云：「八人。」山云：「喚典座來一時生按過。」師拈云：「更說什麼生按過！」Yunmen Kuangzhen chanshi guanglu, T 47.560b (juan 2). Huang points out that there is not yet a formal section of “niangu” in Yunmen’s text; nevertheless, this passage showing the initial form of genre of “niangu.” I adopt the translation of Huang. See Huang, “Chan Master Xuedou and His Remarks on Old Cases in the Record of Master Xuedou at Dongting,” 80–81.
case and remarks made in response to the old case. The commentarial forms of niangu and jugu are similar; how they differ might lie in where they took place. As previously mentioned, jugu were offered in either public or private settings, namely in the ritual of ascending the hall or during instructions given in the teachers’ quarters. In contrast, niangu were associated with informal sermons (xiaocan 小参). These sermons involved a teacher’s replies to questions raised by students on old cases. In addition, comments on old cases were originally oral remarks on old cases that were later recorded by Chan monks. Gradually, instead of orally delivering comments, Chan masters employed written prose to remark on old cases. This kind of commentarial practice also led to the creation of a distinct genre in gong’an literature. In many Chan masters’ collections, sections of niangu became separate texts for circulation. For example, “niangu” appears as a category in Xuedou’s collection. Further, his comments on one hundred old cases that were compiled as his Xuedou heshang niangu ji 雪竇和尚拈古集. Hongzhi’s niangu is also well-known among niangu writings.

Chan masters’ usage of “comments on old cases” as a pedagogical device is reflected in statements concerning the motivation for commenting old cases. In commenting Xuedou’s gong’an commentarial verses, Yuanwu Keqin’s defines the function of niangu: “comments on old cases simply outlines old cases and draws a conclusion based on the clauses [stated in the

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20 For example, a niangu in Xuedou niangu reads: Raised: Jingqing asked a monk, “[Regarding the case about] Zhaozhou (Zhaozhou Chongshen 趙州重谂 778[?]–897) went to drink tea. How do you understand this statement?” Then the monk went out. Qing said, “It imitates the way Handan people take walks.” The master [Xuedou] said, “This monk was not from Handan. How did he learn the way Tang walks? If [you] can understand, I would go drink tea with you.” 舉：鏡清問僧：「趙州喫茶去。爾作麼生會？」僧便出去，清云：「邯鄲學步。」師云：「者僧不是邯鄲人，為什麼學唐步，若辯得出，與爾茶喫。」 Mingjue chanshi yulu, T 47.687c8 (juan 3).

21 Huang, “Chan Master Xuedou and His Remarks on Old Cases in the Record of Master Xuedou at Dongting,” 83–84.
Students could obtain the masters’ guidance on grasping crucial points of old cases through their resolutions to the old cases. In addition, in composing the preface to Hongzhi’s gong’an commentaries, Hongzhi’s disciple, Xuedou Sizong (1085–1153) indicates that the [gong’an] comments raises the main points of old cases拈以振其綱. In summary, all these statements demonstrate that Chan masters use “comments on old cases” as a pedagogical tool to raise crucial points that guide their students to grasp the essential messages of old cases.

Commentarial Verses on Old Cases (songgu 頌古) and Capping Phrases (zhuyu 著語)

A more refined literary form, songgu 頌古 namely commentarial verse on gong’an, also emerged. Differing from the plain prose in niangu, Chan masters employed poetic lines to evaluate old cases. Fenyang’s composition of commentarial verses on gong’an is regarded as the earliest extant work on verse commentary of old cases. A case appears in Fenyang’s collection:

A monk asked Zhaozhou (Zhaozhou Chongshen 趙州重諗 778[?]–897), “I heard that you [monk] have personally met with Nanquan, haven’t you? Zhaozhou said, “Zhen county produces big radishes.”

僧問趙州：「承聞和尚親見南泉，是否？」州云：「鎮州出大蘿蔔頭。」

By offering an answer that is irrelevant to the monk’s question, Zhaozhou tries to guide the monk to understand that there is non-duality between Nanquan’s instruction and ordinary things. The monk expects to hear something associated with Zhaozhou’s enlightenment experience.

22 Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤, Foguo Yuanwu chanshi Biyan lu 佛果圓悟禪師碧巖錄, T 48.141a15-16 (juan 1).
23 Hongzhi lu, 2.81a10. Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.18b (juan 2).
24 Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.610c (juan 2).
under Nanquan. Through providing a statement that is irrelevant to this monk’s inquiry, Zhaozhou might be trying to quell the monk’s delusionary thinking. \(^{25}\) Fenyang’s verse reads:

因問當初得法緣，
Because [the monk] asked about the occasion at which he (Zhaozhou) obtained Dharma,
不言東土及西天。
[He] did not talk about the eastern land and western heaven.
鎮州有菜名蘿蔔，
In Zhen county there is a vegetable called a radish.
濟却飢瘡幾萬千。
It already has saved hundreds of thousands of hungry and wounded people. \(^{26}\)

By employing straightforward language, Fenyang outlines the encounter dialogue between the monk and Zhaozhou. The first couplet indicates the monk’s question and Zhaozhou’s response. The monk asks how Zhaozhou became enlightened under Nanquan. What Zhaozhou replies appears to have nothing to do with his teacher Nanquan. The terms “eastern land” and “western heaven” usually refer to Chan patriarchs in China and India. Fenyang uses these terms to refer to Nanquan. The second couplet reveals Zhaozhou’s irrelevant answer about radishes in Zhen county. Instead of saying something associated with Nanquan, Zhaozhou’s replies that Zhen county produces big radishes. Fenyang explains that the radishes have already saved thousands of hungry and wounded people. Through the verse, Fenyang reveals the implications of Zhaozhou’s answer to clarify what is going on in the case.

By employing verse, Chan masters conveyed their comments on gong’an in order to manifest the profound messages in old cases. Thus, Chan masters used the form of commentarial verses as an instruction device to propel students’ understanding of the meaning of gong’an. This prime teaching purpose of gong’an commentarial verses is evident in statements made by Chan masters describing why they are composing commentarial verses. For example, Fenyang

\(^{25}\) Yuanwu comments that Zhaozhou’s answer is “tasteless talk and just stuff and fills the person’s mouth” 無味之談塞斷人口. *Biyan lu*, T 48.169c (juan 3).

\(^{26}\) *Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu*, T 47.610c (juan 2).
explicitly explains the purpose of the composition of commentarial verses on *gong’an* in a verse titled, “general verse” (*dusong* 都頌). The verse reads:

| 總頌 | The one-hundred cases of former sages  
天下錄來傳, | that [I recorded] from the world to transmit.  
難知與易會, | It covers those difficult to know and those easy to understand.  
汾陽頌皎然。 | Fenyang’s verses are clear [to understand].  
空花結空果， | Sky flowers bear empty fruit.  
非後亦非先。 | They are neither latter nor former.  
普告諸開士, | [I] universally announce to all enlightened beings  
同明第一玄。 | to realize the first profound [meaning].

Fenyang explains that the hundred cases are drawn from the world. This implies that, instead of culling cases from his own lineage, he selects cases from all lineages in the world. These cases include both those that are difficult and those that are easy to comprehend. The nature of emptiness of composing verses will result in bearing the nature of emptiness. Because of the nature of emptiness, there is neither latter (a verse) nor former (a case). Fenyang’s verses on these cases are explicit in order to help people to capture the profound message of the cases. It is worth noting that unlike the setting of commentarial practice discussed above, commentarial verses were probably written to reach an audience outside monastic institutions. Xuedou’s student, Tanyu 曇玉 (d.u.) indicates that Xuedou advocated essential messages of old cases through verses in order to help people who struggled to understand them. In commenting on

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27 *Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu*, T 47.613c (juan 2).

28 According to Tanyu, “Today he [Xuedou] further collects the marvelous of all one hundred marvelous cases of the old sages’ “encounter dialogue” (teaching methods). He speaks words to compose verses. Through verses he [Xuedou] manifests the essential messages [of these cases], and from the essential messages he passes down instruction for late ages. He hopes that those who are ignorant can become intelligent, that those who are obstructed can penetrate the cases, and that those who are mired, so unable to reach beyond, can all be saved.” 今又採古聖機緣之妙者凡百則，發言以為頌，由頌以宣義，由義以垂裕，俾夫昧者明、窒者通、泥而不能致遠者咸有所救焉. *Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji* 雪竇顯和尚明覺大師頌古集, in *Sibu Congkan* 四部叢刊 (hereafter *SBCK*) Xubian jibu 續編集部 series 2, vol. 370 (Shanghai: Hanfen lou, 1935), 1a–b.
Xuedou’s commentarial verse, Yuanwu states that commentarial verses depict Chan in a roundabout way.\textsuperscript{29} Similarly, as a reader and a writer of commentarial verses, Dahui indicates that commentarial verses perform a pedagogical function to aid grasping the essential points in old cases. In Dahui’s chronological biography, there is an anecdote concerning that Dahui and Chan Master Donglin Gui 東林珪 (d.u.) composed commentarial verses on old cases in 1133 as Dahui writes:

In the past, Master Baiyun Duan (Baiyun Shouduan 白雲首端, 1025–1072) resigned [the abbacy] in Yuan tong. He invited Chan Master Baoning Yong (Baoning Renyong 保寧仁勇, d.u.) to take a summer retreat at the White Lotus Peak. They composed one hundred and ten commentarial verses on old cases.\textsuperscript{30} They indicated thoroughly what the ancients did not point out. From the beginning, they added piercing words on each [case]. We two did the same [thing] in the summer. What we did is similar to their deed. Although we imitated them (the ancients), we did not feel ashamed. Consequently, we selected one hundred and ten old cases, and composed a verse for each of them. We further exchanged the verses. We expounded on what was hidden and profound. We pondered and discussed the profound and the shallow [statements] of the ancients. We criticized the absurdity and folly of contemporary times when people do not know to open the doors and windows to correct views. We did not get involved in rhetorical shortcuts. In accordance with occasions and conditions [of the ancient], we directly point out what is essential. For people who are determined to engage in the profound, we hope their minds can be cleansed and their worries can be eased through [our verses].

昔白雲端師翁謝事圜通，約保寧勇禪師夏居白蓮峰，作頌古一百一十篇，有提盡古人未到處，從頭一一加針錐之語。吾二人今亦同夏，於此事跡相類，雖效顰無媿也，遂取古公案一百一十則，各為之頌，更互酬酢，發明蘊奧，斟酌古人之深淺，譏訶近世之謬妄，不開知見戶牖，不涉語言蹊徑，各隨機緣，直指要津，庶有志參玄之士，可以洗心易慮於茲矣。\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} “Generally speaking, verses on old cases just depict Chan in a roundabout way; comments on old cases simply outline old cases and draw the conclusion based on the clauses [stated in the proses].” 大凡頌古只是繞路說禪，拈古大綱，據款結案而已. Biyan lu, T 48.141a (juan 1).

\textsuperscript{30} Regarding the collection of commentarial verses, see “Shuzhou Fahuashan Duan heshang songgu yibai yishi” 舒州法華山端和尚頌古一百十則 in the recorded sayings of Baiyun Shouduan 白雲首端 (1025–1173). See Baiyun Shouduan chanshi guanglu 白雲首端禪師廣錄, X 69, no. 1352, 321b11–328b (juan 4). In the recorded sayings of Baoning Renyong 保寧仁勇 (d.u.), there is a section of commentarial verses, see Baoning Yong heshang yulu 保寧勇和尚語錄, X 69, no. 1350, 289c–294a.

\textsuperscript{31} Wei Daoru cites a quotation “有提盡古人未到處” from this passage in Wei, Song dai Chanzong wenhua, 92. Dahui Pujue chanshi nianpu 大慧普覺禪師年譜, J 1, no. A042, 798c.
There are two main themes in this passage. One is Dahui’s reception of the function of commentarial verses and the other is Dahui’s motivation to write verses on old cases. Regarding Dahui’s reception, Dahui indicates that the commentarial verses can complement the old cases as Chan masters added critical remarks by composing verses. In verses, they comprehensively raised points that were not revealed in the original cases. By writing commentarial verses, Dahui aims to directly explain the essential points corresponding to each occasion of cases without being entangled by words. He also intends to make cases explicit so that they are easily understood. Thereby, he hopes through reading the verses, people engaged in Chan can purify their minds and ease their concerns. In short, Chan masters’ compilations of commentarial verse aim to aid people to obtain the understanding of old cases.

With the emergence of commentarial verse, another commentarial form, capping phrases, also appeared. Through capping phrases, Chan masters offered a concise critique of former masters’ responses in original old cases. “Capping phrases” first appears in Xuedou’s collection of commentarial verses, Xuedou songgu 雪竇頌古. Xuedou made crucial points upon certain parts in encounter dialogues. Furthermore, capping phrases seemed to serve as critical notes, based on which Xuedou composed his commentarial verses. I will discuss this usage in the next section. In addition, capping phrases also serve as substitute phrase. For example, Xuedou adds capping phrases to comment on an encounter dialogue between Changsha and a chief monk after Changsha had taken a walk up a mountain. It reads:

Raised:
One day Changsha visited a mountain. Upon returning, he went to the gate. The chief monk asked, “Where did monk (you) come from?” Sha said, “I came from visiting a mountain.” The chief monk said, “Where are you coming to?” Sha said, “I went following fragrant grass and returned chasing falling flowers.” The chief monk said, “Generally like the feeling of spring.” Sha said, “It transcends an autumn dew dropping onto the lotus.” The master’s [Xuedou’s] capping phrase said, “Thanks for replying.”
Changsha just came back from travelling to a mountain. Upon his arrival, a chief monk asked Changsha where he had come from. Changsha answered that he had gone to a mountain. However, the chief monk kept asking him where he had come from. Changsha replied that he went by following grass and returned by chasing falling flowers. The chief monk said that it was like the feeling of springtime. Changsha replied that it was like autumn. In the end, Xuedou remarked, “Thanks for replying.” Changsha seems to have used the imagery of fragrant grass and falling flowers to portray his traceless coming and going. But the chief monk probably did not capture the meaning, and only got the superficial understanding of springtime. By replying that the meaning of his trek transcended a time in autumn, Changsha seemed to suggest that the monk should not fall into the duality. In response to the encounter dialogues, Xuedou’s remark seems to serve as a substitute phrase. According to Yuanwu’s commentary, in place of the chief monk’s answer to Changsha, Xuedou said, “Thanks for replying.” Thereby, Xuedou’s capping phrase implies that he affirmed Changsha’s response. In Xuedou songgu, he only offered capping phrases in four original cases. However, subsequently this practice was commonly used.

Indeed, Chan masters employed “capping phrases” to critique every phrase of both old cases and commentarial verses.

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33 Biyan lu, T 48.174b (juan 4).
34 Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji, in SBCK, series 2, vol. 370, 2b, 7b, 9b, 11a.
Prose Commentaries (*pingchang* 評唱)

Based on the verse commentaries on *gong’an*, Chan monks continued to develop increasingly complicated commentarial styles. Adding layers of commentaries on both old cases and commentarial verses led to the creation of interlinear prose commentaries, (*pingchang* 評唱). This is a tertiary commentarial practice because it is based on secondary commentary such as commentarial verses. Chan masters used *pingchang* to explain sources or allusions that were relevant to particular cases and verses. This format contributed to the masterpieces of *gong’an* literature, *Biyan lu* and *Congrong lu*. *Biyan lu* consists of prose commentaries based on Xuedou’s *gong’an* commentarial verses; *Congrong lu* consists of prose commentaries based on Hongzhi’s *gong’an* commentarial verses. In these two works, each case consists of five parts of commentary. *Pingchang* commentaries open with a short introduction in which the author presents his point of view on the targeted case. The second part consists of a prior case interspersed with parenthetical comments. The third part is prose commentary on the targeted case. The fourth part takes the form of a commentarial verse interspersed with parenthetical comments. The fifth part consists of prose commentary on the commentarial verse.

Chan masters also used *pingchang* to guide students who were confused while studying old cases. For example, Puzhao 普照 (d.u.) revealed Yuanwu’s pedagogical intentions for his

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36 In *Biyan lu*, the introduction begins with *chuishi* 垂示; in *Congrong lu* the introduction begins with *shizhong* 示眾. Both *chuishi* and *shizhong* mean to give instruction.
Yuanwu did this by carefully analyzing gong’an and aimed to help people who had become bogged down in language instead of penetrating the meaning manifested in old cases.37

This section has shown that the diverse forms of gong’an commentarial practice emerged out of different settings and distinct literary styles. Chan masters’ usage of various forms of commentarial practice of gong’an as pedagogical devices is the critical reason behind the emergence of innovation and proliferation of gong’an commentaries. The critical statements on compilation of the different forms of commentaries demonstrate that Chan monks aimed to embellish their students’ understanding of old cases so that they could engage them in their meditation practice. Employing different expedients, Chan teachers strove to make the profound messages of cases explicit to capture the import of former cases. Due to teaching purpose, different types of gong’an commentarial practice emerged. These distinct modes of gong’an commentaries also contributed to textual production of a large body of gong’an literature.

The Intertextual Relationship between Hongzhi Gong’an Writings and Major Gong’an Commentaries in the Larger Chan Tradition

When Chan masters employed different forms to comment on old cases, it was within a pedagogical context. The varied modes of commentarial practice that they drew on led to the

37 Regarding the motivation for Yuanwu’s composing Biyan lu, in 1128 Yuanwu’s disciple, Puzhao 普照 (d.u.) wrote the preface, he stated: “In the Yue (present-day Guangdong), there was an elder, Foguo [Yuanwu]. When he was dwelling at the Blue Cliff, the students who were confused asked him for instruction. The old man sympathized with them compassionately. Carefully he screened the profound sources and analyzed the underlying principles. Facing the sun, he directly pointing to the ultimate, how could he alone establish view and knowledge? The hundred public cases are strung through on one thread from the beginning. A whole rank of old fellows are all examined one after another...The ultimate Way is truly wordless. Masters of our traditions, with compassion, salvaged the fallacies. If you can see this, then you start to realize [their] thorough kindheartedness, just like that of old women. For those who get muddied by the phrases and sunk in words, they are inevitably destroying the Buddha’s race”粵有佛果老人，住碧巖日，學者迷而請益，老人愍以垂慈，剔抉淵源，剖析底理，當陽直指，豈立見知？百則公案，從頭一串穿來；一隊老漢，次第總將按過。⋯⋯至道實乎無言，宗師垂慈救弊。僕如是見，方知徹底老婆；其或泥句沈言，未免滅佛種族. Biyan lu, T 48.139a (juan 1).
creation of *gong'an* texts such as the collections of commentarial prose and verses. In short, the ways in which Chan masters offered comments on old cases contributed to the forms of *gong'an* textual production. In addition to the development of commentarial forms, the old cases included in *gong'an* collections from which the Chan masters drew upon for their commentaries, are a crucial component in the formation of *gong'an* anthologies. In particular, different masters drew on different cases from a set of common cases. This section will discuss which cases Hongzhi drew from for commentaries in his *gong'an* collections. To place Hongzhi’s *gong'an* works in the *gong'an* tradition, this section will study the textual sources of Hongzhi’s *gong'an* anthologies in relation to other major *gong'an* collections. To demonstrate the intertextual relationships between Hongzhi’s *gong'an* writing and influential *gong'an* anthologies, I use digital visualization. Through network graphs, I will show how Hongzhi’s *gong'an* writings shared cases with other important *gong'an* works within the larger corpus of Chan *gong'an* literature. With the aim of shifting to the exploration of sectarian perspectives, I will further analyze traditions related to the shared cases. By sectarian nature, I mean the promotion of a particular genealogical lineage. These visualizations will articulate the argument that Hongzhi took an ecumenical approach to selecting cases for his commentaries. I will show that he drew on cases from different traditions without concern for promoting of his Caodong lineage.

In comparison to the conventional way of presenting data in table forms, data visualization has the benefit of visually demonstrating connections between sources. First, for the textual relationships, through a computation of shared cases between Hongzhi’s *gong'an*...
writings and other crucial gong’an commentaries, I provide graphs where the nodes represent the common cases, and the edges link the nodes that cluster cases from Hongzhi’s writings with the nodes that cluster cases sourced from other major gong’an commentaries. Next, for sectarian detection of shared cases, through computation traditions of the shared cases, I demonstrate in the graphs where nodes that represent different traditions cluster together cases that belong to the same tradition.

Within the copious gong’an literature, the representative gong’an commentaries are

- *Fenyang songgu* 汾陽頌古 (998–1022), *Xuedou songgu* 雪竇頌古 (1017–1021), and *Xuedou niangu* 雪竇拈古 (1017–1021). As discussed above, *Fenyang songgu* is the earliest extant commentarial verses; *Xuedou songgu* 雪竇頌古 is the essential text of *Biyan lu* 碧巖錄 (1125), a masterpiece of gong’an literature. In addition to these works of commentarial verses, *Xuedou niangu*, an important collection of comment on old cases, contributed to Yunwu Kequin’s creation of *Jijie lu* 擊節錄 (the Record of Hitting the Joint).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commentary Collections</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Fenyang songgu</em>汾陽頌古</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Fenyang Shanzhao (947–1024)</td>
<td>998–1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Xuedou songgu</em>雪竇頌古</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Xuedou Chongxian (980–1052)</td>
<td>1017–1021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Xuedou niangu</em>雪竇拈古</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Xuedou Chongxian (980–1052)</td>
<td>1017–1021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hongzhi songgu</em>宏智頌古</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1057)</td>
<td>1124–1127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hongzhi niangu</em>宏智拈古</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1057)</td>
<td>1128–1129</td>
</tr>
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Table 1: The Five Major Gong’an Commentaries of the Tenth to Twelfth Century
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Caodong 曹洞</td>
<td>Masters from Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价 (897–869) to posterior masters of Caodong lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fayan 法眼</td>
<td>Masters from Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958) to posterior masters of Fayan lineage</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Linji 臨濟</td>
<td>Masters from Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 867) to posterior masters of Linji lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Weiyang 潇仰</td>
<td>Masters from Weishan Lingyou 潇山靈祐 (771–853) to posterior masters of Weiyang lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yunmen 雲門</td>
<td>Masters from Yunmen Wenyuan 雲門文偃 (864–949) to posterior masters of Yunmen lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mazu 馬祖</td>
<td>Masters from Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788) to masters prior to branching into Linji and Weiyang lineages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shitou 石額</td>
<td>Masters from Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790) to masters prior to branching into Caodong and Yunmen lineages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Xuefeng 雪峰</td>
<td>Masters from Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存 (822–908) to masters prior to branching into Yunmen and Fayan lineages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Masters during the proto-Chan or early-Chan periods 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>Cases drawn from sutras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Masters can not be identified by Zengaku daijiten 禅学大辞典</td>
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</table>

Table 2: List of Gong’an Literary Attributions and Traditions

For assessing the sectarian nature of the common cases, the definition of traditions is a critical parameter. My method is to identify the Dharma lineages of masters involved in each original case, rather than identifying textual sources from which individual cases were drawn. I define traditions to be the Dharma lineages of masters involved in gong’an encounter dialogues. Accordingly, I categorize these traditions into eleven types. Eleven categories are summarized in Table 2. The Chan literature corpus is enormous, and not all Chan texts have been digitized. Because it would take a tremendous amount of time to identify textual sources from which cases were drawn, identifying textual sources of cases is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

From the vantage point of this categorization of cases, this classification by masters’ lineages suggests that textual sources were drawn from particular masters’ traditions. In addition, Japanese scholars tend to classify Chan traditions into Five Houses. However, their classification overlooks traditions prior to the branching into five lineages. While my categorization of tradition presents a challenge to truncate lineages from the prior-to-Five Houses period and the after-Five Houses period, the non-division of lineages between these two periods would cause problems in presenting the visualization. There are overlaps among Five Houses because some lineages had common antecedent masters. However, non-truncating cannot differentiate the Five Houses since some lineages are traced back to common antecedent masters.

In order to illustrate cases shared by all commentaries, I first present the data in a table format. I then depict the connections in an all-encompassing picture using a network graph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title of Cases</th>
<th>No. in Hongzhi Songgu</th>
<th>No. in Fenyang Songgu</th>
<th>No. in Xuedou Songgu</th>
<th>No. in Xuedou Niangu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The World Honored One Ascends the Seat 世尊陞座</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bodhidharma’s Vast Emptiness 達磨廓然</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Qingyuan’s Price of Rice 青原米價</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mazu’s White and Black 馬祖白黑</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nanquan Kills a Cat 南泉斬貓</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63, 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Old Woman of Taishan 臺山婆子</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Attendant Kuo Passes Tea 廖侍過茶</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Magu Shakes His Staff 麻谷振錫</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fayan’s Hairbreadth 法眼毫釐</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yantou’s Bow and Shout</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page1</td>
<td>Page2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Luzu Faces the Wall</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Xuefeng’s Looking at the Snake</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yanguan’s Rhinoceros Fan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yangshan Points to Snow</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fengxue’s Iron Ox</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dasui’s Kalpa Fire</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Yunmen’s Bare Pillar</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sansheng’s Golden Fish</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Fengxue’s Speck of Dust</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Master Ma Is Unwell</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nanyang’s Water Pitcher</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Zhaozhou’s Cypress Tree</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Vimalakīrti’s Nonduality</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Xuefeng’s “What?”</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Huangbo’s Dreg Slurpers</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Yunyan’s Great Compassion</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The Diamond Sūtra’s Revilement</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Tiemo’s Old Cow</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Zhaozhou Asks About Death</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cuiyan’s Eyebrows</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Yunmen’s Sesame Cake</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Gong'an Cases in the *Hongzhi songgu* that Also Appear in One or More of the Commentaries of Fenyang and Xuedou

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Number</th>
<th>Case Title</th>
<th>Appearance in Hongzhi</th>
<th>Appearance in Xuedou</th>
<th>Appearance in Fenyang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Longya Passes the Board</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Juzhi’s One Finger</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The Appearance of the Stupa of the Preceptor of State</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>The Śūraṅgama’s Not Seeing</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Nanquan’s Peony</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Yunmen’s One Treasure</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Luzu’s Not Understanding</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Yunmen’s Bowl and Bucket</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 clearly displays the order of the shared cases in different collections. After counting the shared cases, we find that in *Hongzhi songgu*, there are twenty-nine cases shared with *Xuedou songgu*, eleven cases with *Fenyang songgu*, and five cases with *Xuedou ninangu*. In total, in Hongzhi’s commentarial verses collection, there are thirty-nine cases common to these important gong’an works. The table form does not provide a way to see the visual connections among these gong’an commentaries in a clear picture. The network graph below takes care of this deficiency.

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My translation of the titles of cases is based on Thomas Cleary’s translation with minor Changes. Cleary, *Book of Serenity*.
In the graph in Figure 1, all the numbers represent sequential numbers of old cases in *Hongzhi songgu*. The graph shows the interrelationships between *Hongzhi songgu*, *Fenyang songgu*, *Xuedou songgu* and *Xuedou niangu*. This graph illustrates that *Hongzhi songgu* shared more common cases with *Xuedou songgu* than *Fenyang songgu*: *Xuedou songgu* is the largest node and *Fenyang songgu* is the second largest. Also, *Hongzhi songgu* shared cases with *Xuedou songgu*.

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For references to the cases’ titles of the sequential numbers, see Table 3.

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41 For references to the cases’ titles of the sequential numbers, see Table 3.
niangu. The graph suggests that Hongzhi might have culled cases from these three gong’an collections. Among them, Xuedou songgu probably is the central source from which Hongzhi drew cases while Fenyang songgu and Xuedou niangu seem to have been less important provenances for Hongzhi’s gong’an collections. In addition, this graph depicts where Xuedou songgu and Fenyang songgu overlap, and it further shows the connection between Fenyang songgu and Xuedou niangu. The network graph implies that Xuedou might have drawn cases from Fenyang songgu for his Xuedou songgu and Xuedou niangu. To assess the sectarian nature of the shared cases, this project will reveal the traditions of the shared cases. Hongzhi songgu shared more common cases with Xuedou songgu than it did with Fenyang songgu and Xuedou niangu. Therefore, I primarily focus on dealing with the traditions of shared cases between Hongzhi songgu and Xuedou songgu.

Regarding the traditions of twenty-nine shared cases between Hongzhi songgu and Xuedou songgu, the graph below in Figure 2 shows that the largest cluster is associated with Mazu, followed by Yunmen, and lastly by Xuefeng and Linji traditions. In the graph, all the numbers represent sequential numbers of old cases in Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses collection. The major traditions of the shared cases are Mazu and Yunmen, rather than Caodong. Actually, there is only one case related to the Caodong tradition. It is obvious that Hongzhi culled more cases associated with other traditions from Xuedou songgu. The graph shows that Mazu was an important source. The cases related to masters of the Mazu lineage actually occupy a large portion not only in Hongzhi’s gong’an commentaries but also in his sermons. Hongzhi likely drew on Xuedou’s gong’an texts as a main source for his cases because Xuedou commented on many cases associated with the Mazu lineage. Cases associated with Mazu
Figure 2. Network Graph of the Textual Attributions of Gong’an Cases Common to the Hongzhi songgu and the Xuedou songg
lineage were much more numerous than the cases from Hongzhi’s Caodong lineage. For this reason, Hongzhi drew on many Mazu lineage cases. Hongzhi’s ecumenical approach to drawing cases is reflected in this.

After viewing the textual network between Hongzhi songgu and other major gong’an works, now I move to deal with the interrelationship between Hongzhi ninangu and other important gong’an commentaries. Again, I will first present the data in a table form, and then I will demonstrate them in network graph format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title of Cases</th>
<th>No. in Hongzhi ninangu</th>
<th>No. in Fenyang Songgu</th>
<th>No. in Xuedou Songgu</th>
<th>No. in Xuedou Ninangu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nanquan’s Circle Mark</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Xianyan Climbs a Tree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fongxue’s Detachment and Subtlety</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Xuanshan’s Faults and Distress</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lianhua’s Non-Dwelling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Zhimen’s Lotus</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mazu’s Circle Mark</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Baofu’s Illumination and Objects</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Weiyang’s Picking Tea</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Xuefeng’s Ancient Mountain Brook</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shigong’s Bow and Arrow</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yunmen’s Dharmakāya</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Xuefeng’s Ancient Mirror</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yangshan’s Asking a Monk</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Gong’an Cases in the Hongzhi niangu that Also Appear in One or More of the Commentaries of Fenyang and Xuedou

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title in English</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title in Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Shengming and Xuansha</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Yunmen’s Prior to and After the Fifteenth Day</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Daci’s Recognizing Sickness</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Xuefeng’s Three Strikes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Qinshan’s Three Barriers</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Xuansha’s Three Invalids</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A Monk Questions Shishuang</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Dasui Pays Homage to Samantabhadra</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Xuansha’s Circle Mark</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Zhaozhou’s Picking and Choosing</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Muzhou’s Tip of a Hair</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dongshan’s Alms Bowl Bag</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After counting the shared cases, we find that in Hongzhi ninangu, twelve cases are shared with Xuedou niangu, nine cases with Xuedou songgu, and seven cases with Fenyang songgu. In Hongzhi niangu, there are twenty-six cases shared with these important gong’an works. However, one cannot capture the interrelationship between Hongzhi niangu and the other sources in a single picture.

The network graph below in Figure 3 depicts the interrelationships between Hongzhi niangu, Fenyang songgu, Xuedou songgu and Xuedou niangu. In the graph, all the numbers...
Figure 3. Network Graph of the Intertextual Relationship between the *Hongzhi niangu* and the Commentaries of Fenyang and Xuedou

represent sequential numbers of old cases in *Hongzhi niangu*. In this graph, *Xuedou niangu* seems to have been the major source from which Hongzhi drew cases for his *niangu*. In addition to *Xuedou niangu*, Hongzhi might have also drawn cases from *Xuedou songgu* and *Fenyang songgu* for the compilation of his *niangu*. As there are only twelve shared cases between *Hongzhi niangu* and *Xuedou niangu*, I will not further discuss the traditions of these cases.

---

42 For references to the cases’ titles of the sequential numbers, see Table 4.
In addition, this graph also shows that there is an overlap between *Fenyang songgu* and *Xuedou songgu*. It suggests that Xuedou might have drawn cases from *Fenyang songgu*.
However, it is clear that there is no overlap between *Xuedou niangu* and *Fenyang songgu*. In contrast, Figure 1 shows overlapping cases between *Fengyan songgu* and *Xuedou niangu*. In centering on Hongzhi’s collection of *gong’an* commentarial verses in Figure 1, I have displayed all the cases in his work while the cases in other major *gong’an* texts are not fully presented.

Lastly, in figure 1 and figure 3, the above two network graphs between Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings and other important *gong’an* works, *Hongzhi songgu* and *Hongzhi niangu* stand out as the largest and the most central of them all. This highlighting is due to my having focused on Hongzhi’s works, while the cases in other works are not displayed fully.

The graphs show that the *gong’an* collections prior to Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings probably were the main repertories from which Hongzhi drew cases. In particular, the network graphs demonstrate that Hongzhi drew many cases from *Xuedou songgu* and *Xuedou niangu*. That is, Xuedou’s *gong’an* works had a strong impact on the creation of Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings. After having reviewed Hongzhi’s usages of the cases in sermons, I have observed that Hongzhi seems to have primarily drawn cases not only from Xuedou’s works but also from Fenyang’s collection of commentarial verses. I suspect that in Hongzhi’s sermons, Hongzhi drew most cases from former *gong’an* works. Ishii also has pointed out that, aside from Hongzhi’s commentarial verses and prose (*niangu*), Xuedou’s *gong’an* works had a strong influence on Hongzhi’s selection of cases in his sermons.\(^\text{43}\) Ishii demonstrates this in Hongzhi’s public and informal sermons, which are cases extracted from Xuedou’s *gong’an* works.\(^\text{44}\)


\(^{44}\) Ibid.
Scholarly research on the sources of Hongzhi’s *gong’an* collections also reinforces the network graphs: *gong’an* collections prior to Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings probably were the main repertories from which Hongzhi drew cases. Maruyama Kōgai 丸山劫外 has delved into the provenance of each case in *Hongzhi songgu*. In addition to creating tables demonstrating the source of the one hundred cases, she categorizes them into four types: 1) recorded sayings of individual masters; 2) lamp histories; 3) *gong’an* collections; 4) other and unknown sources. Among these different types of sources, *gong’an* collections seem to be a critical source for *Hongzhi songgu*. According to Maruyama’s research, twenty-five cases originated from *Xuedou songgu*, two cases from *Fenyang songgu*, two cases from *Touzi songgu*, three cases from *Danxia songgu*, and twenty-eight cases from *Zongmen tongyao ji*. In total, there are sixty-one cases sourced from *gong’an* collections. Noticeably, Hongzhi drew a crucial portion of cases from *gong’an* anthologies.

Hongzhi’s usage of *gong’an* collections might also reflect the general approach among contemporary Chan monks of culling cases from earlier *gong’an* works for their *gong’an* writings. The sources can be categorized into two types: original and secondary bodies of cases. The original body of cases refers to the primary sources, such as lamp transmission texts and collections of recorded sayings of individual masters. The secondary body of cases refers to

45 Maruyama Kōgai 丸山劫外, “Wanshijuko hyakusoku shutten no kenkyū『宏智頌古百則』の出典研究,” Komazawa daigaku daigakuin bukkyōgaku kenkyūkai nenpō 駒沢大学大学院仏教学研究会年報 36 (2003): 51-70. With regard to the recorded saying of individual masters, they are recorded sayings of Yunmen, Xuedou, Huanglong Huinan, Shoushan Shengnian 首山省念 (926–994), Shengding Hongyin 神鼎洪諲 (d.u.), Langya Huejue 琅琊慧覺 (d.u.), Dayu Souzhi 大愚守芝 (d.u.), Wuzhu Fayan 五祖法演 (d. 1104), and Foyan 佛眼 (d.u.). In terms of transmission texts, they are *Jingde chuanzhen lu*, *Tiansheng guandeng lu* (1029), *Jianzong jingguo xudeng lu* 建中靖國續燈錄 (1101), and *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* (1124). About the *gong’an* collections, they are *Fenyang songgu*, *Xuedou songgu*, *Touzi songgu*, *Danxia songgu*, and *Zongmen tongyao ji*. Finally, other and unknown sources include scriptures and sources of some cases which cannot be found.

gong'an works, such as Xuedou songgu or Fenyang songgu. For pioneering gong’an collections, such as Fenyang songgu, the sources might range from original collections like Jingde chuandeng lu, collections of recorded sayings, to the oral transmission of Chan lore.47 Nevertheless, after the emergence of the pioneering gong’an texts, Chan masters might mainly extract cases from prior gong’an works rather than from transmission texts or collections of recorded sayings.

Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 indicates that Fenyang’s selection of his hundred cases for composition of commentarial verses is closely associated with the publication of Jingde chuandeng lu.48 Yanagida also points out that in Fenyang’s recorded sayings, Fenyang composed a verse to celebrate the compilation of this transmission history.49 Therefore, Jingde chuandeng lu is probably the main source for Fenyang songgu.50 However, for later gong’an collections such as Xuedou songgu, in addition to primary sources, gong’an anthologies might be the main source. Nagai Masashi 永井政之 and Yanagida indicate that there are five main types of sources for Xuedou songgu: 1) lamp histories, 2) individual masters’ recorded sayings, 3) scriptures, 4) lamp transmission texts.

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47 Special thanks to Professor William Bodiford for raising this point about the oral transmission of Chan lore as a potential source for the gong’an collections.


50 Ibid., 44–45. About lamp transmission texts, Zutang ji, Baolin zhuan 寶林傳, Jingde chuandenglu and Tiansheng guandenglu 天聖廣燈錄 are main sources. With respect to the genre of recorded sayings, Yanagida points out that there are main recorded sayings of two lineages, Yunmen and Linji. In terms of writings of Yunmen lineages, there are recorded sayings of Yunmen, Zhimen Guangzuo 智門光祚 (d.u.), Dongshan Shouchu 洞山守初 (d.u.), Xuefeng, and Xuansha. Clearly, Xuedou seemed to draw eighteen cases from Yunmen’s collections. With regard to the recorded sayings of Linji lineage, they are Sijia lu 四家錄, recorded sayings of Zhaozhou 趙州, Fenxue 風穴 (897–973), Fenyang 汾陽, Shoushan 首山, and Shimen Fengyan ji 石門鳳嚴集. Finally, Xuedou’s contemporary material includes his record of the ritual of ascending hall and remarks on old cases.
Xuedou’s contemporary texts, and 5) unknown sources. All these sources are original sources. However, a close reading reveals that the secondary source, *Fenyang songgu*, might also have been the provenance for *Xuedou songgu*. Nagai compares wording in two cases among *Xuedou songgu, Fenyang songgu, Jingde chuandeng lu*, and *Zongmeng zhengdeng lu*. Judging from the degree of similarity of wording, he argues that wording in *Xuedou songgu* is very much closer to *Fenyang songgu* than to other lamp histories.\(^{51}\) Indeed, there are seven common cases shared between *Xuedou songgu* and *Fenyang songgu* as shown in Table 3.

Besides, in “Chanzong songgu lianzhu jiuiben” (The Preface of Old Version of *Pearl String Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases form the Chan Tradition*), it said that in 1175, Monk Faying 法應 (d.u.) completed the compilation of *Pearl String Collection*. This collection contained 325 cases, 2100 commentarial verses, and 122 masters (authors of commentarial verses).\(^{52}\) One can infer that during the interval between the earliest *gong’an* works, such as *Fengyan songgu* between 998 and 1022, and the posterior work, *Pearl String Collection* in 1175, an enormous corpus of *gong’an* works were produced. The cases in these *gong’an* collections served as the main repertoire for Chan masters’ production of new *gong’an* texts. For future studies, scholars can explore this aspect from approaching *gong’an* works of Hongzhi’s contemporary monks to investigate their original sources for the creation of their *gong’an* works.

Digital visualization of the data illustrates the intertextual relationships between Hongzhi’s *gong’an* writings and influential *gong’an* anthologies. The visualization demonstrates that Hongzhi drew many cases from *Xuedou songgu* and *Xuedou niangu*. Hongzhi’s approach

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\(^{51}\) Nagai, “Setchō no roku no seiritsu ni kansuru ichikōsatsu san,” 12.

\(^{52}\) *Chanzong songgu lianzhu tongji* 禪宗頌古聯珠通集, X 65.476.b3–15, no.1295, 476b (juan 1).
also reflects the trend of using particular sources during his time. Aside from primary sources such as lamp transmission texts or individual masters’ recorded sayings, secondary gong’an collections played a critical role in the formation of new gong’an texts. Chan masters’ usage of secondary sources might have also led to a new approach to textual production, namely recycling of old cases from gong’an texts. Additionally, cases were also recycled or reused in different ways to produce new gong’an works; for example, the separation of a case into two stories or the inclusion of related cases. In addition to the usage of old cases, through close reading, the next section will compare commentarial strategies of Hongzhi’s gong’an verses and others.

Recycling Old Cases and Comparative Commentarial Strategies

To provide a better view of the differences among the usage of original cases and these gong’an commentaries concerning their language and approach, let us closely consider the five overlapping cases commented on by Fenyang, Xuedou, and Hongzhi below. The first case shows their different use of the same original cases. In addition, in their verse commentary, they employed different tones and distinct literary styles to offer their comments. The first overlapping case that appears in Fenyang songgu reads:

Nanquan saw two chief monks of the two halls arguing over a cat. Upon seeing [this scene], Nanquan grabbed the cat and said, “If any of [you] can speak [the Way] correctly, then I won’t slay it.” The assembly had nothing to reply, so Nanquan slew the cat. Later, Nanquan raised this question to ask Zhaozhou. Zhaozhou took off his sandals and put them on his head and left. Nanquan said, “If you had been present on the scene, you could have saved the cat.”

南泉兩堂爭貓兒，泉見遂提起云：「道得即不斬。」眾無對。泉便斬却。後舉問趙 州，州脫草鞋，於頭上戴出。泉云：「子若在卻救得貓兒。」

Bruce Rusk’s idea about “used” and “recycled” has inspired my thinking about the use of Chan public cases. Bruce Rusk, “On Reading Late Imperial Guidebooks to Elite Taste,” (presentation for a workshop: “Reading, Information, Quantification in Traditional China,” University of California at Los Angeles, May 31, 2014).

Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.610b (juan 2).
By slaying a cat, Nanquan tries to cut off the monks’ delusive thinking, attachment to the cat.\(^{55}\) In contrast to Nanquan’s aggressive approach, by taking non-verbal action, Zhaozhou put his shoes on his head. Fenyang’s verse, a quatrain of seven syllables reads:\(^{56}\)

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兩堂上座未開盲， In the two halls, the chief monks did not lead the blind.
猫兒各有我須爭。 I must argue on behalf of the cat for both sides.
一刀兩段南泉手， [The cat] was cut into two by Nanquan’s hand.
草鞋留著後人行。 Sandals were left for future generations to walk in.
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Facing the different treatment of Nanquan and Zhaozhou, Fenyang seems to affirm Zhaozhou’s approach. Fenyang’s language is very plain. The first half of the verse describes the circumstance of two monks arguing over a cat. Fenyang uses “blind” to describe the monks’ delusion about the quarrel over the cat. The latter half of the poem depicts how Nanquan and Zhaozhou dealt with the quarrel. Nanquan uses a knife to slay the cat while Zhaozhou puts sandals on his head. In the final line, Fenyang seems to affirm Zhaozhou’s action by linking “sandals” with “walk,” and Fenyang expresses that sandals were left for future generations to walk in. This implies that Zhaozhou’s reply could provide an ultimate resolution for future generations.

Xuedou separates the version of this episode into two cases; Nanquan’s slaying the cat and Zhaozhou’s wearing his sandals on his head. This shows that Xuedou uses the initial case in a different way. The wording of Nanquan’s slaying the cat is slightly different from Fenyang’s version. Xuedou added “eastern and western” to describe the two halls. In addition, in the description of Nanquan’s killing the cat, Fenyang simply wrote, “Nanquan cut it” 泉便斬却

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\(^{55}\) Sharf points that this case is “the most scandalizing in the monastic context” because “Nanquan slitting the throat of a cat” violates the precept of non-killing. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan Gong’an,” 236.

\(^{56}\) Yang Zengwen 楊曾文 points out that most of Fenyang’s verses are quatrains of seven-syllables. There are eighty-three verses consisting of quatrain of seven syllables, fourteen verses consisting of six lines of seven syllables, two verses consisting of eight lines of seven syllables, and one verse consisting of a quatrain of five syllables. See Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, “Fenyang shanzhao jiqi Chanfa 汾陽善昭及其禪法,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 中華佛學學報 15 (2009): 228.
while Xuedou elaborates, “Nanquan cut the cat in two” 泉斬却猫兒為兩段.⁵⁷ Xuedou’s verse reads:

兩堂俱是杜禪和,  
撥動煙塵不奈何。  
賴得南泉能舉令，  
一刀兩段任偏頗。  

In both halls they all were fake Chan monks.  
Stirring up smoke and dust, they were helpless.  
Fortunately [the quarrel] relied on Nanquan’s ability to assert command.  
With one stroke of the knife he cut into two, letting the pieces be odd and unequal.⁵⁸

Like Fenyang’s verse, this verse is a quatrain of seven syllables.⁵⁹ Unlike Fenyang’s neutral tone to comment on the case, Xuedou takes a critical tone to judge the dialogues in the encounter. On the one hand, he criticizes the monks arguing over a cat. On the other hand, he praises Nanquan’s questioning of the monks and his action of slaying the cat. Xuedou scolds the quarrelling monks by describing them as fake monks. Because they were unable to solve their quarrel, it seems to Xuedou they were not qualified to be monks. He further uses the typical imagery of “smoke and dust” as afflictions in reference to the monks’ arguing over the cat without being capable of replying to Nanquan. The second half of the verse describes how Nanquan behaves in the face of the quarrel. Xuedou remarks on both Nanquan’s posing the question and his slaying the cat, but Fenyang only depicts Nanquan’s killing action. Xuedou seems to approve of Nanquan’s approach because he states that the quarrel “relies on” 賴得 Nanquan’s capacity to give an order by asking the monks to speak the Way. Xuedou takes the analogy of raising a command (ling 令)

⁵⁷ I underline the different wording in the original text: 舉南泉一日東西兩堂爭猫兒。南泉見遂提起云。道得即不斬。眾無對。泉斬却猫兒為兩段。See Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji, in SBCK, series 2, vol. 370, 18a–b.

⁵⁸ I use the first half of the translation from Cleary. See Cleary, The Blue Cliff Record, 293.

⁵⁹ According to Itō Yūten 伊藤猷典, there are thirty-three verses consisting of this pattern and seventy-seven verses consist of different lines in Xuedou songgu. See Itō Yūten 伊藤猷典, “Hakiganshu to Shoyoroku no hikaku sononi碧巖集と從容錄の比較（其の二）,” Tōkai bukkyō 東海佛教 6 (1960): 2.
to affirm Nanquan’s authority. Xuedou also portrays Nanquan’s cutting the cat into two pieces without any concern for impartiality.

In *Xuedou songgu*, Zhaozhou’s anecdote is identical to Fenyang’s. Xuedou’s verse comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Xuedou’s Verse</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>公案圓來問趙州，</td>
<td>Once the case was completed, he came to ask Zhaozhou.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>長安城裏任閑遊。</td>
<td>In the capital city Chang’an, he wandered leisurely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>草鞋頭戴無人會，</td>
<td>[Walking] with the sandals he put on his head, nobody can comprehend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>歸到家山即便休。</td>
<td>Upon returning to his hometown, he rested.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Xuedou expresses Zhaozhou’s ease in solving this dilemma and his incomprehensible approach, putting sandals on his head. The second line uses leisurely wandering in the capital city, Chang’an, to imply Zhaozhou’s ease in the face of the troubling situation of the quarrel among the monks because “Chang’an” is a metaphor for the troubling case of slaying the cat. In addition, Chang’an symbolizes enlightened state. Therefore, this line suggests that Zhaozhou was in enlightened state. The third line depicts that nobody could understand Zhaozhou’s action of walking with his sandals on his head. By taking the metaphor “returning to hometown” to refer to “original nature,” the concluding line indicates that once one sees one’s Buddha nature, one ceases to take action to express the ineffable state of seeing Buddha nature. This implies Zhaozhou’s that action of wearing sandals on his head intentionally shows ordinary people that the Way was ineffable. Therefore, Zhaozhou intentionally put sandals on his head. Nevertheless, for Zhaozhou himself, as he already had seen his Buddha nature, upon returning his home, he

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60 Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjiu dashi songgu ji, in *SBCK*, series 2, vol. 370, 18b.

61 According to Yuanwu’s commentary in *Biyan lu*, Chang’an was a noisy city and a place where was not easy to live. *Biyan lu*, T 48.195a17 (*juan* 7).

62 Zengaku daijiten, 857b.
would have no longer worn his sandals on his head. In contrast to Fenyang’s plain and straightforward treatment, Xuedou employs metaphorical Buddhist language to evaluate the case.

The anecdote in *Hongzhi songgu* is the same as in Fengyan’s collection, namely, a combination of the two stories. However, the wording used in Hongzhi’s version is identical to Xuedou’s description. This suggests that Hongzhi might have drawn the two cases from Xuedou’s collection. As discussed in the earlier section, the network graph shows that *Xuedou songgu* is a major source for Hongzhi’s gong’an writings. The verse appearing in Hongzhi’s collection reads:

六堂雲水盡分拏       The wandering monks of the two halls all held their own arguments.
王老師能驗正邪。       Teacher Wang [Nanquan] could verify what was orthodox and heterodox.  
利刀斬斷俱亡像，       As the sharp knife cut through, all images [forms] perished.
千古令人愛作家。        For ages, people have admired adepts.
此道未喪，              This Way is not lost.
知音可嘉。              A true friend will appreciate [the Way].
鑿山透海兮唯尊大禹，   In chiseling mountains to penetrate to the sea, only Great Yu is honored.
鍊石補天兮獨賢女媧。  In melting rock to mend the sky, only Nüwa is capable.
趙州老有生涯，          Old Zhaozhou made a livelihood.
草鞋頭戴較些些，       Putting his sandals on his head, he attained a little bit.
異中來也還明鑒。      Coming from within the difference, he still clearly perceived.
只箇真金不混沙。       Only true gold is not mixed with sand.

In this verse, Hongzhi shows admiration for how both Nanquan and Zhaozhou approach the quarrel. Noticeably, unlike the quatrains of seven syllables by Fenyang and Xuedou, Hongzhi’s verse consists of unequal lines and his verse seems more complex than the verses by Fenyang.

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63 Nanquan’s surname is Wang, therefore, he was also called Teacher Wang. *Zengaku daijiten*, 126c.

64 *Hongzhi lu*, 2.85a4–8; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.19a (juan 2).
Hongzhi expresses his verse in poetic and allusive language. The first two couplets depict Nanquan’s treatment of the quarrel between the two monks. Hongzhi likens the cat to images or forms; these represent people’s delusional thinking because form is a changeable phenomenon in contrast to unchangeable nature. However, ordinary people tend to be cofounded by phenomena just as the monks revealed their ignorance in their argument over the cat. Hongzhi seems to praise Nanquan’s authority and capability in managing the quarrel, by saying that Nanquan is an adept whom people have admired for ages. The line “The Way is not lost” connotes Nanquan’s action; the line “a true friend will appreciate [the Way]” refers to Zhaozhou’s understanding in dealing with the case. The term “true friend” (zhiyin 知音) means intimate friends who know each other’s thoughts without the aid of words. Hongzhi alludes to Great Yu 大禹 and Nüwa 女媧 to depict Nanquan’s and Zhaozhou’s wisdom. The allusion to Great Yu is drawn from the Shangshu 尚書 chapter “Yu Gong” 禹貢, it describes Great Yu’s mythological control of the waters.66 The allusion to Nüwa is drawn from the Huainanzi 淮南子 chapter “Lanming xun” 賗冥訓, which discusses the circumstances after a catastrophe—a pillar of the sky has collapsed, and Nüwa smelts five-color rocks to repair the damaged sky.67 Hongzhi uses these two allusions as analogies to describe Nanquan and Zhaozhou. By associating Nanquan with Great Yu, Nanquan’s action of slaying a cat is likened to Great Yu’s chiseling mountains. Great Yu and Nanquan both carried out actions aimed at resolving problems; namely, Great Yu treated a flood while Nanquan dealt with the dispute among monks. In addition, the

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65 According to Itō, there are seventy verses consisting of unequal lines in Hongzhi songgu. Itō, “Hakiganshu to Shoyoroku no hikaku sononi,” 2.

66 Shangshu zhengyi 尚書正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 345.

67 Huainanzi 淮南子 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1989), 65b.
word “chiseling” (zao 鑿) expresses the sharp sense of “slaying” in Nanquan’s case. Hongzhi associates Zhaozhou with Nüwa. Zhaozhou’s wearing sandals on his head seems to be parallel with Nüwa’s mending the sky. In addition, the word “repair” (bu 補) seems to convey an analogous action to Zhaozhou’s providing an alternative resolution to rescue the cat. In short, through allusions to Great Yu and Nüwa, Hongzhi articulates that “Nanquan manifests a marvelous capacity as if Great Yu chiseled mountains to penetrate the sea. Zhaozhou completes the crucial phrases as if Nüwa melts rocks to mend the sky.”

The ending two couplets express Zhaozhou’s action of putting his sandals on his head. Hongzhi high esteem for Zhaozhou is expressed by his depiction of him as making a livelihood and pure gold. “True gold” is also a Buddhist metaphor for Buddha nature.

In writing their verses, all three masters portray Nanquan’s action of slaying a cat to end the quarrel. However, they tackle this issue differently. Both Fenyang and Xuedou only depict Nanquan’s cutting action, but Hongzhi points out that Nanquan’s killing a cat symbolizes the discarding of all forms. Hongzhi’s singling out of Nanquan’s action conveys the point that one should not be attached to any form. The three masters’ commentary verses demonstrate their different styles. While Fenyang employs language that is easily understood, Xuedou uses metaphorical idioms. Comparing Fenyang’s and Xuedou’s language, Hongzhi’s language is more poetic. By using rich allusions from both Buddhist and secular literature, Hongzhi demonstrates his literary talent. Hongzhi’s strategy of using secular literature probably aims to appeal to secular elite readers. His use of allusions from secular sources also makes his depictions more vivid than Fenyang’s and Xuedou’s verses. In addition, while Fenyang and

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68 According to Wansong’s commentary, “南泉如大禹鑿山透海。顯出神用。趙州如女媧鍊石補天。圓卻話頭。”Congrong lu, T 48.233a4 (juan 1).

69 Zengaku daijiten, 607d.
Hongzhi take a neutral tone to evaluate the masters involved in the initial dialogues, Xuedou takes a critical tone. Aside from the different styles in their commentarial verses, they all draw on the same original case in different ways; notably, Xuedou separates the case into two stories.

The second case shows that all three masters, despite coming from different positions, shared the same view about the dilemma of using language in their commentaries. Xuedou adds capping phrases in his treatment of the original case. This is a distinct difference from the work of Fenyang and Hongzhi on this same case. The second case is an anecdote concerning Magu Baoche’s 麻谷寶徹 (d.u.) usage of a staff to show something to Zhangjing Huaihui 章敬懷暉 (755–816) and Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (748–835). The story in Fenyang’s collection reads:

Magu, holding his staff, went to Zhangjing. He circumambulated the Chan meditation seat three times. He shook his staff and stood still. Jing said, “Right. Right.” He (Magu) again went to Nanquan. He did the same thing again. Quan (Nanquan) said, “Wrong. Wrong.” [Magu] said, “Zhangjing said right. Why did master [you] say ‘wrong’?” Quan said, “Zhangjing was exactly right. It was you who were wrong. Turned by the power of the wind, it (Magu’s action) eventually would be corrupted and destroyed.”

Through contrasting responses to Zhangjing’s reply “Right” and Naquan’s answer “Wrong,” Zhangjing and Nanquan tried to guide Magu to transcend the dichotomy. However, Magu fell for the duality of their opposite responses. Fenyang’s verse reads:

章敬南泉路似殊，

明明道理話親疎。

The paths of Zhangjing and Nanquan appeared to be different.

Clear principles were spoken as close and distant.

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70 These three masters were all disciples of Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788).

71 Yuanwu indicated that “Turned by the power of the wind” 風力所轉 originally appears in Perfect Enlightenment Sutra (Yuanjue jing 圓覺經).

72 Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.608a24 (juan 2). I have underlined places with different wording.
Many people are not needed to polish metal mirrors.
Han were by nature Han; barbarians were by nature barbarians.
Using his finger to point at the moon, someone got lost, confused by his own finger.
\[ \text{Magu} \text{ held a staff to show [his understanding] to the monks, yet it was as if he did not.} \]

Fenyang seems to affirm both Zhangjing’s and Nanquan’s responses while negating Magu’s action. Again, Fenyang employs very straightforward language. He opens the line by indicating the paradox of using speech. He makes a point that, although Zhangjing’s and Nanquan’s answers apparently contradict each other, their messages are the same and can be clearly understood. The second couplet criticizes Magu’s staff-shaking. It does this by comparing it to the redundancy of people polishing mirrors to reveal their ethnicity. Such action is redundant because people’s ethnic identity would naturally manifest itself without using mirrors. The final couplet describes Magu’s demonstration of holding his staff as a way to point to the moon with his finger, but he gets lost in his own finger. Fenyang concludes that Magu’s demonstration is like a non-demonstration. In other words, originally Magu intends to get approval from the two masters by holding up his staff, but their different responses confuse Magu. Therefore, the validity of his action is moot. Thus, Fenyang seems to approve Zhangjing’s and Nanquan’s responses while denigrating Magu’s action.

The story of Xuedou’s version is described slightly different from Fenyang’s version. The content of the original case in Xuedou’s collection demonstrate two features. First, the content is more detailed than Fenyang’s version. Second, not only does Xuedou compose a

\[ Fenyang \text{ Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.608a28 (juan 2).} \]

\[ About \text{ the description of Magu’s shaking his staff, Fenyang writes, “[Magu] shook his staff and stood” 振錫而立. Xuedou has this description: “[Magu] shook his staff one time and stood upright” 振錫一下，卓然而立. In addition, regarding Magu’s turning to show to Nanquan, Fenyang only writes, “Again [Magu] went to Nanquan, and did again” 又到南泉，亦如是. In contrast, Xuedou repeats the complete timeline about that Magu going to Nanquan} \]
commentarial verse on the entire original case, at some points he also remarks on the masters’ individual responses in the initial dialogues through capping phrases. Indeed, Xuedou’s addition of capping phrases on original cases is a distinctive feature that differs from presentations in *Fenyang songgu* and *Hongzi songgu*. About the description of Magu’s shaking his staff, Fenyang writes, “[Magu] shook his staff and stood” 振錫而立 while Xuedou describes, “[Magu] shook the staff one time and stood upright” 振錫一下，卓然而立. In addition, regarding Magu’s turning to show to Nanquan, Fenyang only writes, “again [Magu] went to Nanquan, and did this again” 又到南泉，亦如是 while Xuedou repeats the complete narration about Magu in reference to Zhangjing as he did for Nanquan. 75 Besides, Xuedou adds the capping phrase “wrong” to both Zhangjing’s and Nanquan’s answers. 76 Thereby, the content of the original case in Xuedou’s collection demonstrate two features. First, the content is more detailed than Fenyang’s version. Second, not only does Xuedou compose a commentarial verse on the entire original case, at some points he also remarks on the masters’ individual responses in the initial dialogues through capping phrases. Xuedou’s verse reads:

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此錯彼錯，切忌拈卻。  This is wrong and that is wrong; by all means do not take it up.
四海浪平，百川潮落。  The waves are calm in the four seas; the tides fall in hundred rivers.
古策風高十二門，  In high wind, there is the ancient staff on the twelve gates. 77
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and shaking his staff in front of him. Moreover, Xuedou adds the capping phrase “wrong” to both Zhangjing’s and Nanquan’s answers.

75 I underline the different wording in the text: 舉麻谷持錫到章敬。繞繩床三匝。振錫一下。卓然而立。敬云。是是。師著語云。錯。麻谷又到南泉。繞禪床三匝。振錫一下。卓然而立。泉云。不是不是。師著語云。錯。谷當時云。章敬道是。和尚為什麼道不是。泉云。章敬即是。是汝不是。此是風力所轉。終成敗壞.

Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji, in *SBCK*, series 2, vol. 370, 9b.

76 Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji, in *SBCK*, series 2, vol. 370, 9b.

77 According to Yuanwu’s commentary in *Biyan lu*, “the ancient staff 古策” refers to a monastic staff, while “twelve gates 十二門” refers to the place where emperors and Indra 帝释 reside. By extension, the twelve gates also serve as
In each gate there is a path, empty and desolate.
It is not desolate.
The adept is fond of seeking medicine without diseases.

While Fenyang affirms Zhangjing’s and Nanquan’s reply, Xuedou negates their responses in a critical tone. In taking different positions, both Fenyang and Xuedou point out the trap of using language. Here Xuedou’s capping phrases serve as observations; based on his capping phrases, “wrong,” he offers his comments. Echoing his capping phrase “wrong” on the two masters’ answers, in a critical tone, Xuedou opens the first line by indicating that both masters’ responses are wrong. Their answers make Magu fall into duality—right (shi 是) and wrong (bushi 不是). He also cautions that people should avoid giving remarks. Furthermore, drawing a parallel between the sea and a river, Xuedou draws on typical metaphors of waves and tides to symbolize the nature of phenomena. Thus, the first couplet indicates that once one stops making comments, one can see true nature. Like Fenyang, Xuedou seems to negate the use of language. The third and fourth couplets refer to Magu’s action of holding a staff. According to Yuanwu’s commentary in Biyan lu, the ancient staff refers to the monastic staff, while twelve gates refers to where emperors and Indra 帝釋 reside. By extension, the twelve gates also serve as a metaphor for meditation states. This third line implies that if one can understand Xuedou’s comment, “wrong,” one would not need to hold a staff like Magu does. The fourth line expresses that there are different paths to each gate that are either desolate or non-desolate. The paths might refer to different approaches to practice while the gates refer to attainment of enlightenment. Xuedou first remarks that the path is empty and desolate. This might imply that one can achieve a metaphor of meditation states. See Biyan lu, T 48.170b (juan 4). According to Wansong’s commentary in Corong lu, the “twelve gates” refer to four meditation states, four immeasurable minds, and four formless concentrations. See Congrong lu, T 48.237b (juan 1).

78 Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji, in SBCK, series 2, vol. 370, 9b.
enlightenment without recourse to any particular means, hence Magu does not need to hold a staff. However, Xuedou later adds, “it is not desolate.” According to Yuanwu’s commentary, a non-desolate path refers to the way adepts indulge in searching for medicine without illness. These concluding two lines follow the same analogy and suggest that Magu’s non-desolate approach is like an adept who loves to search for medicine even when he does not have an illness.\(^79\) Overall, Xuedou evaluates this case in a very oblique manner. By criticizing the two masters’ answers as wrong, Xuedou stresses the danger of using language.

The version of the episode in Hongzhi’s collection is almost identical to that of Xuedou’s collection.\(^80\) Again, this provides yet more evidence demonstrating that Hongzhi drew cases from Xuedou songgu. Hongzhi’s verse reads:

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是與不是，
好看捲褚，
似抑似揚，
難兄難弟。
縱也，彼既臨時；
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Right and wrong.
Watch out for the trap.\(^81\)
They (“Right” and “wrong”) are like criticisms but also like praise.
It is difficult to distinguish who is the elder brother and who is the younger brother.\(^82\)
Conceding, he adapts to the time. \(^83\)
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\(^79\) Yuanwu’s commentary in Biyan lu, see T 48.170b (juan 4).

\(^80\) I underline the different wording in the text: 舉麻谷持錫到章敬。繞禪床三匝。振錫一下。卓然而立。敬云。是是。谷又到南泉。繞禪床三匝。振錫一下。卓然而立。泉云。不是不是。谷云。章敬道是。和尚為什麼道不是。泉云。章敬即是。是汝不是。此是風力所轉。終成敗壞. Hongzhi lu, 2.87a18–88a3; Hongzhichanshi guanglu, T 48.20a (juan 2).

\(^81\) I use Cleary’s translation. Cleary, Book of Serenity, 68.

\(^82\) The allusion of distinction of two brothers 難兄難弟 is from Shishuo xinyu 世說新語 (Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages). The story describes two brothers who possessed the same degree of virtue and talent; this made it was difficult to distinguish who was the elder and who was the younger brother. “Chen Yuanfang’s son, Changwen, possessed outstanding ability. Once he and his cousin, Xiaoxian (the son of Yuanfang’s younger brother, Jifang), were each discussing his father’s relative achievements and virtues, and after getting into an argument over it, could not reach a solution. They referred the matter to their grandfather Taiqiu, who replied, ‘It is hard for Yuanfang to be older brother, and for Jifang to be the younger.’” 陳元方子長文有英才,與季方子孝先,各論其父功德,爭之不能決,咨於太丘。太丘曰：「元方難為兄,季方難為弟。」 I use Richard Mather’s translation with slight revision. Richard Mather B., trans., Shih-shuo Hsin-yu (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), 4. Yang Yong 楊勇, Shishuo xingyu jiaojian 世說新語校箋 (Taipei: Zhengwen shuju, 2000), 1.9.
Denying, what is special to me?\(^{84}\)

Shaking the metal staff is too aloof.

Circumambulating a rope seat three times is a game.

Monasteries become chaotic when right and wrong arise.

Imagine seeing ghosts in front of skeletons.\(^{85}\)

Differing from Xuedou’s critical tone by indicating wrong answers, Hongzhi takes a neutral tone. Neither affirming nor negating Zhangjing’s and Nanquan’s response, Hongzhi expresses caution regarding becoming trapped by words or dualisms. The first half of the verse focuses on the paradoxical nature of the two masters’ answers while the second half criticizes Magu’s action.

Regarding the first half, by using “like criticisms but also like praise” and difficulty of distinction between superior and inferior brothers, Hongzhi seems to highlight the dilemma of the duality of the two contrasting answers. The allusion to the two brothers is from 《世說新語》(Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages). The story describes two brothers who possessed the same degree of virtue and talent; as such, it was difficult to distinguish who was the elder and who was the younger brother. Furthermore, Hongzhi employs binary (paired) words, “conceding” 《纵》 and “denying” 《夺》, “he” and “I”, to manifest the duality of the two answers.

Hongzhi uses “conceding” to depict Zhangjing’s response “right” that apparently affirms Magu’s behavior. He expresses “denying” to describe Nanquan’s reply “wrong” that apparently negates Magu’s action. The second half of the poem depicts Magu’s arrogant and playful action causing agitation in the monasteries. Here, Hongzhi uses the word “right and wrong” 《是非》 to imply the two answers. The term 《是非》 has the implication of quarrel. Thus, Hongzhi seems not to approve of Magu’s action. In their commentarial verses, despite taking different positions,
the three masters make the same point concerning the danger of being trapped in language. This reflects the paradox of Buddhist position on language. On the one hand, Buddhism emphasizes eschewing the traps of words and language since ultimate truth cannot be expressed through language. On the other hand, language is regarded as a skillful means through which one can realize ultimate truth. Regarding their style, while Fenyang employs simple language, Xuedou and Hongzhi use metaphorical language. Xuedou uses Buddhist metaphors while Hongzhi draws an allusion from secular literature. Again, Hongzhi draws allusions from secular writings. I will discuss Hongzhi’s usage of secular sources in Chapter 4.

The third overlapping case shows different uses of the same original cases. Moreover, in their verse commentaries on this case, they each employed different tones and distinct languages to offer their comments. This case is a story concerning a monk asked if the chiliocosm (three billion worlds) would be destroyed by fire in the end of the kalpa. From different perspectives, the three masters offer their evaluation of the problem. In Fenyang songgu, the case reads:

A monk asked Dasui (Dasui Fazhen 大隨法真, 834–919), “The fire at the end of the kalpa rages through everything, and the great chiliocosm is completely destroyed." [I] do not understand whether this is destroyed or not.” Sui said, “Destroyed.” [The monk] said, “Since it’s this way, just let it go.” Sui said, “Let it go.”

僧問大隨:「劫火洞然, 大千俱壞。未審這箇壞不壞?」隨云:「壞。」云:「恁麼則隨他去也。」隨云:「隨他去。」

The monk intends to ask Dashui about the doctrinal point concerning “the fire at the end of the kalpa rages through everything and the great chiliocosm is completely destroyed.” Dasui’s

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86 Wansong points out that these phrases, “the fire at the end of the kalpa rages through everything and the great chiliocosm is completely destroyed,” were in a thirty-two line verse in Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra for Humane Kings Protecting Their Countries (Scripture on the Benevolent King Safeguarding the Nation) (Renwang huguo bore boluo miduo jing 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經. T 8, no. 246, 840b (juan 2). Jiehuo 劫火 is the fire in the eon of destruction (huaijie 壞劫) “that consumes the physical universe,” according to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism.

87 Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.608b (juan 2).
answer, “Let it go” just follows this monk’s sayings, “just let it go.” Through Dasui’s response of non-dual thinking, “Let it go,” this case raises the main point that one should transcend the duality of destroyed and non-destroyed. Fenyang’s verse reads:

懶安的子大隨師，
人問隨他師亦隨。  
返顧不能休駐意,
更生異見却狐疑。  
汾陽與汝開天路,
萬別千差一道歸。

The heir of Lan’an is Master Dasui.  
When people [the monk] asked him whether to let it go, the Master let it go.  
Looking back, one cannot stop dwelling in intentions.  
Further giving rise to different views and suspicions.  
Fenyang, I will open a road to heaven for you.  
Ten thousand disparities and thousands of differences all return via one path.

Fenyang not only focuses on Dasui’s response without abiding intentions he but also demonstrates his authority. Fenyang’s language is very straightforward and simple. The first line refers to Dasui’s genealogical lineage as he is the dharma heir of Lan’an, Master Changqing Daan 長慶大安 (793–883). Following that, Fenyang depicts the main point of the encounter dialogues (i.e., both the monk’s sayings and Dasui’s answer, “let it go”). Then Fenyang expresses his view that once abiding in thinking, one develops doubt. He seems to affirm Dasui’s response because Dasui just followed the monk’s saying without intentional thinking. In the fifth line, Fenyang establishes his authority by indicating that he will open a road for his audience. Fenyang actually uses a similar phrase to establish his authority in other cases. In the final line,

88 In Biyan lu, Yuanwu comments that this monk tried to ask the doctrinal meaning of these phrases. See Biyan lu, T 48.169a (juan 3).

89 Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.608b (juan 2).

90 “Fenyang opens a delusive road for you” 汾陽為爾開迷路 or “Fenyang will tell all of you Chan monks (practitioners)” 汾陽報汝諸禪侶 in his verses. Another example of “Fenyang [I] will open a road to heaven for you 汾陽與汝開天路 in Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.610a12 (juan 2); “Fenyang will tell all you Chan monks (practitioners)” 汾陽報汝諸禪侶 in T 47.611c (juan 2); “Fenyang opens a delusive road for you” 汾陽為爾開迷路 in T 47.613b (juan 2).
“Ten thousand disparities and thousands of differences” seems to imply that myriad phenomena trace back to the same principle.

Xuedou’s version of the story is almost identical to that in Fenyang songgu, yet there is a different phrase. In Dasui’s answer, Fenyang writes, “renmo 恍愌” while Xuedou writes, “yumo 與麼.” Nevertheless, the meaning of the two terms is the same. Xuedou’s verse writes:

劫火光中立問端，
衲僧猶滯兩重關。
可憐一句隨他語，
萬里區區獨往還。

In the light of the kalpa fire, he raised a question.
The monk is still stuck at the double barrier.
How pitiful, for the single phrase “let it go,”
He alone toiled back and forth for ten thousand miles.

Xuedou’s verse focuses on the monk’s dilemma, yet Fenyang’s concentrates on Dasui’s response. While Fenyang seems to highly value Dasui’s response of not dwelling on intentions, Xuedou seems to sympathize with the monks’ condition of not understanding Dasui’s message. In contrast to Fenyang’s more straightforward language, Xuedou employs poetic language. The first two lines describe the event where the monk asks a question about whether the chiliocosm is destroyable as he lingers within double barriers. Here Xuedou uses a metaphor “double barrier” to imply the monk’s dilemma of stumbling between double barriers of dual thinking—namely, “destroyed” and “not destroyed.” The second couplet describes how Dashui’s reply makes this monk work hard. In commenting on this case, Yuanwu makes a reference to an anecdote concerning this monk’s long travel to get an explanation from Touzi Datong 投子大同 (819–914). Without realizing Dasui’s point, this monk travelled over ten thousand miles from Hunan

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91 I underline the different wording in the text: 舉僧問大隨。劫火洞然。大千俱壞。未審。這箇壞不壞。隨云壞。

92 Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji, SBCK, series 2, vol. 370, 9a.

93 In commenting this case in Biyan lu, Yuanwu explains the monk’s questions includes the double barriers of “destroyed” or “not destroyed.” Biyan lu, T 48.169a (juan 3).
to Anhui pose his question to Touzi. When the monk asked Touzi, Touzi told him to go back to inquire Dasui; by then, Dasui had already passed away.\(^94\) To highlight the monk’s issue of not getting Dasui’s point and instead asking Touzi, Xuedou depicts the monk travelling back and forth for ten thousand miles between Dasui and Touzi. “Back and forth” might also refer to the dichotomy of “destroyed” and “not destroyed.” Thus, by expressing that the monk was entangled in the duality of the answers, Xuedou suggests the danger of getting entangled with language traps.

Hongzhi’s version of this case consists of two anecdotes. Indeed, the combination of relative anecdotes is a distinct feature that shows how Hongzhi makes use of old cases. In *Hongzi songgu*, there are several cases that consist of two stories. According to Itō Yūten, a feature that distinguishes Hongzhi’s *gong’an* commentaries from work by Xuedou and Fenyang is that Hongzhi combines two cases into one or adds related episodes to original cases.\(^95\) In this case, aside from the encounter dialogue between a monk and Dasui, Hongzhi adds another anecdote in which a monk asks Longji Shaoxiu (active in the 10th c.) the same question. The wording in Dasui’s story is identical to Xuedou’s. Maruyama demonstrates that the first story comes from *Xuedou songgu*, and the second episode is from *Jingde chudeng lu*.\(^96\)

Longji’s response writes:

Ji (Longji Shaoxiu) said, “Not destroyed.” [The monk] said, “Why is this not destroyed?” Ji said, “Because this is the same as the chiliocosm.”

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\(^94\) Regarding the anecdote of this monk’s visit of Touzi, see Yuanwu commentary in *Biyan lu*, T 48.169a (juan 3).

\(^95\) Itō Yūten, “Hakiganshu to Shoyoroku no hikaku sonoichi” 碧巖集と從容錄の比較（其の一）,” *Tōkai bukkyō* 東海佛教 6 (1960): 5.

\(^96\) Maruyama, “Wanshijuko hyakusoku shutten no kenkyū,” 69.
By incorporating Longji’s answer, Hongzhi’s original case is different from the encounter dialogues of Fenyang and Xuedou. There are two stories in Hongzhi’s Chan case. One story is about a monk who questions Dasui while the other is a monk who questions Longji. Wansong indicates that Longzhi was a contemporary monk of Xuedou, so Xuedou did not read Longji’s recorded sayings. Dasui and Longji gave the monk contradictory answers. Hongzhi’s verse writes:

破不破，
隨他去也大千界，
句裡無鉤鎖機，
腳頭多被葛藤礙。
會不會？
分明底事丁寧殺，
知心拈出勿商量。
還我當行相買賣。

Destroyed, or not destroyed,
Letting it go, is just the great chilicosm.
Their responses are devoid of the function of hook and chain.
Their feet are much obstructed by entangling vines,
Do you understand or not?
A distinctly clear matter, an extreme warning.
Those who know my mind take it up without discussion.
Return to my original profession, buying and selling.

While Xuedou focuses on the monk’s dilemma of being trapped in the answer, Hongzhi addresses both parties. On the one hand, Hongzhi points out that there is no entanglement in the words, namely the two masters have contrasting answers. On the other hand, Hongzhi indicates that it is the monk’s fault for allowing himself to be trapped in the replies. The first line “destroyed, not destroyed” indicates the question posed by the two monks, “whether this is destroyed or not?” This line also refers to the two answers Dasui and Longji provided. Dasui answers, “Destroyed,” while Longji replies, “Not destroyed.” The second line refers to the

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97 *Hongzhi lu*, 2.93a8–10; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.21a27 (juan 2).

98 *Congrong lu*, T 48.247a14 (juan 2). Wansong, “Xuedou and Longji (Master of the Mountain Xiu) were contemporaries—he hadn’t seen Longji’s answer. 雪竇與脩山主同時，未見脩山主答. I use Cleary’s translation in *Book of Serenity*, 133.

99 *Hongzhi lu*, 2.93a11–13; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.21a29 (juan 2).
answers from Dasui and Longji. On the one hand, Dasui answers, “Let it go.” On the other hand, Longji says, “Because this is the same as the chilicosm.” Then taking the metaphor of hook and chain in reference to speech, Hongzhi points out that there is no speech function in the two masters’ answers. Employing the metaphor of a vine to words, Hongzhi indicates that the two monks were entrapped in the words without grasping the meaning of the answers. Following that, Hongzhi seems to turn his tone to the audience by asking, “Do you understand or not?” Then Hongzhi tells the audience that if one understands his message, one has no need to use language to discuss it. In the final line, Hongzhi seems to use the metaphor of “original profession” in reference to the understanding of the cases. Hongzhi seems to assert his authority by asking his audience to answer him if anyone can capture the essential point. In this commentary, while Fenyang establishes his authority by demonstrating his capability of guiding the audience to capture the essential point, Hongzhi retains his authority by challenging his audience to exchange with him if they understand the case. In addition, although focusing on different perspectives and take different positions, both Fenyang and Xuedou again suggest the danger of being trapped by speech. This reflects Chan’s assertion that true realization transcends language and one should realize the ultimate truth that is beyond speech. With respect to the original case, Hongzhi’s incorporation of related cases differs from Xuedou’s and Fenyang’s prior case.

A fourth case shared by the three masters demonstrates how in different ways, they evaluated the two monks involved in this case. The story is about Sansheng Huiran (d.u.) asking Xuefeng what a golden fish ate for food. The case reads:

Sansheng asked Xuefeng, “When the golden fish penetrates the net, what does it eat for food?” Xuefeng said, “Once you come out of the net, I will tell you.” Sheng said, “The

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100 In Congrong lu, Wansong explains that speech is like hooks and chains. See T 48.247c17 (juan 2).
kalyāṇa-mitra of fifteen hundred people does not even know a saying.”¹⁰¹ Feng said, “I (old monk) as the abbot, my tasks are many.”

三聖問雪峰:「透網金麟以何為食?」峰云:「待汝出網來, 即向汝道。」聖云:「一千五百人善知識，話頭也不識。」峰云:「老僧住持事繁。」¹⁰²

Through the metaphor of a golden fish penetrating a net, Sansheng implies that he himself has attained awakening. By taking the analogy of food for golden fish penetrating the net, Sansheng intends to ask Xuefeng how one practices after attaining enlightenment.¹⁰³ Xuefeng’s reply about coming out of the net suggests that Sansheng has not yet attained the state of enlightenment.

Sansheng, in aggressive way, tells Xuefeng that Xuefeng does not know what Sansheng is talking about. In contrast, Xuefeng, in a humble way, answers that as an abbot, he is busy with monastic affairs.

透網之魚不識鉤，
貪游浪水認浮頭。
高灘坐釣垂慈者，
迴棹收綸卻上舟。

The fish penetrating the net does not recognize a hook. Indulging in swimming among the waves, it recognizes the crest of the water. Sitting on the high bank, a compassionate one is fishing. Turning to the oar, he withdraws the fishing line, yet boards a boat.¹⁰⁴

Fenyang praises Xuefeng, yet criticizes Sansheng. Differing from the straightforward language Fenyang employed in his comments on earlier cases, he uses metaphorical language here. For Fenyang, the fish refers to Sansheng, while the fisherman represents Xuefeng. Taking a critical tone, in the opening couplet Fenyang depicts Sansheng as a fish only enjoying swimming without recognizing a hook. The hook connotes Xuefeng’s response to Sansheng question about

¹⁰¹ According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, “kalyāṇa-mitra” means that “good friend or teacher who knows one well, and is able to advise properly concerning spiritual matters.”

¹⁰² Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.610b (juan 2).

¹⁰³ Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhizhu Xuedou Xian heshang songgu, X 67.261b (juan 1).

¹⁰⁴ Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.610b (juan 2).
not yet coming out of the net, and is a reference to the fact that Sansheng has not yet realized awakening. In the final two lines, Fenyang seems to praise Xuefeng; Fenyang describes Xuefeng as a fisherman with compassion who turns to board his boat rather than continue fishing. This scene parallels the anecdote in which Xuefeng does not directly answer Sansheng’s question.

In *Xuedou songgu*, this story appears almost identically to the presentation in Fenyang’s version. There are only two places that differ. First, Xuedou adds “do not understand” *weishen* 未審 to Sansheng’s question about what the fish eats for food. Second, Fenyang uses *fan* 繁 while Xuedou writes *fan* 煩 in the description of abbot’s task.¹⁰⁵ *Fan* 繁 means many; in contrast, *fan* 煩 has the negative sense of annoying. As *fan* 煩 is more appropriate in Xuefeng’s context and in *Biyan lu* the word also appears as *fan* 煩, the use of *fan* 煩 might be a copying error.

Xuedou’s poem reads:

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透網金鱗，休云滯水，
The golden fish penetrates the net. Stop saying it tarries in the water.
搖乾蕩坤，振鬣擺尾。
It shakes the heaven and sweeps the earth. It flaps its fin and sways its tail.
千尺鯨噴洪浪飛，
When a thousand-whale spouts, giant waves fly.
一聲雷震清飄起。
At a single thunderclap, a light whirlwind arises.
清飄起，天上人間知幾幾?
A light whirlwind arises, in the heavenly and human realms, how many know this?¹⁰⁶
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Fenyang affirms Xuefeng while negating Sansheng. Taking a different position from Fenyang, Xuedou affirms both Sansheng and Xuefeng. Although affirming both parties, Xuedou comments more about Sansheng. Xuedou employs very allusive language in this poem. The opening two lines depict Sansheng’s aggressive position as a golden fish that can shake heaven

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¹⁰⁵ I underline the different wording in the text: 舉三聖問雪峯。透網金鱗。未審。以何為食。峯云。待汝出網
來向汝道。聖云。一千五百人善知識。話頭也不識。峯云。老僧住持事煩。*SBCK*, series 2, vol. 370, 14a.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
and earth. In commenting on this case in *Biyan lu*, Yuanwu states, “When a thousand-foot whale spouts, giant waves fly” refers to Sansheng’s saying, “The kalyāṇa-mitra of fifteen hundred people, and you do not even know a saying.” The line, “At a single thunderclap, the light whirlwind arises” refers to Xuefeng’s statement, “I (old monk) as the abbot, my tasks are many.” This verse praises both of them as adepts. 107 Thus, in contrast to Fenyang’s criticism of Sansheng, Xuedou highly values Sansheng as he employs the metaphor of a giant whale to portray Sansheng. Xuedou further refers to a whale’s momentum to describe Sansheng’s aggressive position. In contrast to the image of a whale’s momentum, Xuedou offers an image of a light whirlwind with a thunderclap to portray Xuefeng’s response—it appears light yet is actually powerful. This portrayal depicts Xuefeng’s answer is apparently nonsensical, but there is a message embedded in his mundane reply. In the final line, Xuedou seems to pose a question to the audience: do they grasp the point of “a light whirlwind arises?” By posing this question, Xuedou seems to make the critical point that Xuefeng’s mundane answer actually conveys the significant implication contained in the initial dialogues.

The wording of Hongzhi’s story is the same as Xuedou’s version. Hongzhi’s verse reads:

浪汲初昇，雲雷相送，
When first ascending the crest of waves, both clouds and thunder go along with it.

騰躍稜棱看大用，
Leaping up powerfully; witness the great function.

燒尾分明度禹門，
[A dragon] with a burnt tail clearly crosses the Gate of Yu.

華鱗未肯淹醯瓮。
[A dragon] with beautiful scales is reluctant to be drowned in a pickle pot.

老成人，不驚眾。
A virtuous elder does not startle the assembly.

慣臨大敵初無恐，
He is used to encountering a great enemy and from the start, he has no fear.

泛泛端如五兩輕，
Floating, floating, [Xuefeng’s answer] is just as light as five ounces;

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107 *Biyan lu*, T 48.185a (juan 5).
Standing firmly, how can it (Xuefeng’s answer) only be a thousand piculs? [Sansheng’s] exalted fame is spread over the four seas [whole world]; whose [fame] can parallel his? [Xuefeng] stands alone and the eight winds cannot move him.  

Taking the same position with Xuedou, Hongzhi also affirms both parties while commenting more about Xuefeng’s response. Like Xuedou, Hongzhi also employs very allusive language to portray the encounter dialogues between Sansheng and Xuefeng. The opening two couplets depict the encounter between Sansheng and Xuefeng. The rest of the verse portrays Xuefeng’s calm attitude toward Sansheng’s offensive posture. According to Wansong’s commentary, Gate of Yu was called Dragon Gate, and was chiseled by Great King Yu. The gate had three levels.  

In the *Classic of the Water* (*Shui jing* 水經), it said that sturgeons came from caves and in the third month they crossed the Dragon Gate to become dragons. In “Wenyan” 文言 of *Yijing* 易經, it says, “Clouds follow dragons. Winds follow tigers” 雲從龍風從虎. Wansong explains that the phrase “both wind and thunder go along with it” refers to “becoming a dragon.” In the third line “leaping up powerfully” depicts two great men, Sansheng and Xuefeng. Wansong comments that Sansheng is like “first ascending the crest of waves,” and Xuefeng is like “both clouds and thunder go along with it.” The two descriptive phrases refer to dragons. In the first line, Hongzhi uses the image of dragons to portray Sansheng and Xuefeng. In the second line, Hongzhi seems to ask the audience to see the function of the two masters as two dragons leaping up magnificently. Following that, Hongzhi describes Sansheng’s posing a question as a dragon

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108 *Hongzhi lu*, 2.94a16–19; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.21b (juan 2).

109 Congrong lu, T 48.249c (juan 3).

110 Ibid.
with a burnt tail that crosses the Yu Gate while Xuefeng’s response as a dragon with beautiful scales that is unwilling to be sunk into a pickle jar. The pickle jar might refer to Sansheng’s challenge, and clearly the jar has a derogatory implication. This line suggests that Xuefeng wants to win over Sansheng. In the following line, Hongzhi describes the encounter dialogue between Xuefeng and Sansheng as a virtuous and fearless elder versus a powerful enemy. Hongzhi depicts Xuefeng’s reply, which looks light but is very powerful. The final two lines describe Sansheng’s fame and Xuefeng’s composure. The term “eight winds” means eight causes leading to vexations. In this case, differing from Fenyang’s position, both Xuedou and Hongzhi highly value both Xuefeng and Sansheng despite focusing on different parts. Xuedou is concerned with Sansheng’s aggressive posture, but Hongzhi emphasizes Xuefeng’s calm attitude in the face of Sansheng’s challenge. Through different approaches, both Xuedou and Hongzhi inform the audience not to take Xuefeng’s final reply at face value. By asking how many people can understand Xuefeng’s response, Xuedou seems to stimulate the audience to ponder the meaning of Xuefeng’s answer. Using a more explicit tactic, Hongzhi indicates that Xuefeng’s reply looks weak but is strong. Thus, both Xuedou and Hongzhi regard Xuefeng’s response as a critical point in the encounter dialogues.

The final common case is an episode concerning Juzhi and the use of his finger as a pedagogical device. The three masters highly value this teaching approach in different ways. The story as it appears in Fenyang songgu reads:

Whatever [question] Monk Juzhi (Jinhua Juzhi 金華俱胝, d.u.) was inquired for, he would just raise one finger.

俱胝和尚凡有請問，只竪一指。112

111 According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, the eight winds are gain (利 利), loss (shuai 衰), defamation (毁 毀), eulogy (誉), praise (称 稱), ridicule or slander (讒), pain (苦), and joy (乐 樂).

112 Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.609a (juan 2).
Rather than using language, Juzhi holds up his finger to teach people in response to any question. Juzhi actually tries to guide people to realize empty nature behind the phenomenon of raising his finger.\(^{113}\)

天龍一指悟俱胝，
當下無私物匪齊。
萬互千差寧別說，
直教今古勿針錐。

Tianlong’s one finger enlightened Juzhi. 
At that [enlightenment] moment, there was no self and everything was not the same. 
Do not speak of the myriad disparities and one thousand differences. 
Only do not let the contemporary and ancient [teachings] be stabbed by needles and awls.\(^ {114}\)

Fenyang links Juzhi’s awakening realization to his speechless teaching technique. The verse opens with Juzhi’s achieving enlightenment under Tianlong’s single finger. The second line probably expresses Juzhi’s enlightenment experience that he realized the nature of non-self and differences in phenomena. The second couplet seems to depict Juzhi’s pedagogical approach that he simply raised his finger without uttering a word. His teaching strategy also guides people without using language. In Chan texts, needles and awls tend to be associated with words and language.\(^ {115}\) In the third line, “the myriad disparities and one thousand differences” might refer to myriad phenomena. Thus, the last two lines imply the ineffable truth realized by attaining enlightenment. This realization cannot be expressed through language that is like needles and awls.

\(^{113}\) Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhizhu Xuedou Xian heshang songgu, X 67.458b (juan 2). In discussing this case, Sharf points out, “when the finger is rendered a ‘teaching’—a signifier—the master cuts it off.” Sharf, “How to Think with Chan Gong’an,” 228–229.

\(^{114}\) Fenyang Wude chanshi yulu, T 47.609a (juan 2).

\(^{115}\) See page 71 in this chapter about the expression piercing words 鈞錐之語 in one of Dahui’s passage. In addition, according to Zengaku daijiten, “zhen zhui 針錐” means a strict method that a master uses to train his disciples. Zengaku daijiten, 617b.
Xuedou’s version is very similar to Fenyang’s, but they differ in their use of characters. Fenyang writes *qingwen* 請問 while Xuedou uses *suowen* 所問 in the description of Juzhi being questioned by people.\(^{116}\) Xuedou’s verse reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>對揚深愛老俱胝</th>
<th>I respect and deeply admire Elder Juzhi.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>宇宙空來更有誰</td>
<td>Since the universe has been empty, who else is there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>曾向滄溟下浮木</td>
<td>Having thrown a piece of driftwood into the great ocean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>夜濤相共接盲龜</td>
<td>In night waves it (a piece of driftwood) tallied with a blind turtle.(^{117})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Xuedou shows his personal admiration of Juzhi for his finger Chan. Xuedou further takes a Buddhist analogy to Juzhi’s teaching method. Xuedou opens his verse by expressing his admiration of Juzhi because no one was his equal. In the second couplet, “a blind turtle” is an allusion from the *Lotus Sūtra*.\(^{118}\) The story describes a one-eyed turtle with its neck stuck in a piece of driftwood. This circumstance allows the turtle momentarily to see the sun and moon. This metaphor illustrates the rarity of meeting the Buddha or the rarity of being reborn as a human. Xuedou seems to liken the piece of driftwood to Juzhi’s finger and links the blind turtle to people who are seeking enlightenment. The second couplet implies that Juzhi used his finger to lead deluded people to the attainment of enlightenment—just like a cast off piece of wood might let a blind turtle see the sun and the moon.

The wording of Hongzhi’s version is identical to Xuedou’s. Hongzhi’s verse reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>俱胝老子指頭禪</th>
<th>Elder Juzhi’s Finger Chan,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>三十年來用不殘</td>
<td>for thirty years, he used it without exhausting it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>信有道人方外術</td>
<td>[He] believed in the techniques of a man of the Way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{116}\) I underline the different wording in the original text: 舉俱胝和尚。凡有所問。只豎一指。*Xuedou Xian heshang Mingjue dashi songgu ji*, SBCK, series 2, vol. 370, 6a.

\(^{117}\) Ibid.

\(^{118}\) *Miaofa lianhua jing*, T 9.60b (juan 7). Also Yuanwu’s commentary in *Biyan lu*, T 48.160a (juan 2).
There are no mundane objects before his eyes to be seen. What he obtained is very simple. What he facilitated is even broader. The land and sea of chiliocosm is sunken into the tip of a hair. Limitless fish and dragons will fall into whose hand? Please appreciate gentleman Ren’s holding of a fishing pole. The master (Hongzhi) again raised his one finger, saying: “Look.”

Hongzhi highly values the non-mundane and simple aspects of Juizhi’s teaching device. In addition, he makes use of metaphors drawn from both Buddhist and secular literature to portray Juizhi’s finger Chan. The first couplet indicates that Juzhi used finger Chan to instruct people throughout his entire life. According to Wansong’s commentary, before dying, Juzhi instructed his assembly, “I obtained Tianlong’s one finger Chan and have used it during my entire life without exhausting it” 吾得天龍一指頭禪，一生用不盡. The second couplet expresses that once one believes the technique of a man with the Way, whatever one sees is not mundane. This implies that Juzhi’s finger Chan could lead people to realization. The line “There are no mundane objects before his eyes to be seen” comes from Du Fu’s 杜甫 (712–770) poem entitled “Haphazard Compositions” (Mancheng 漫成). As to the line, “The land and sea of chiliocosm is sunken into the tip of a hair,” Hongzhi is alluding to the phrase, “four seas enter a hair” from

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120. *Congrong lu*, T 48.281a2 (juan 6).

The middle four lines describe what Juzhi obtained as little, yet what he instructed people as broad. Juzhi’s finger was like a hair that can embrace the land and seas in three million worlds. This metaphor also connotes that myriad phenomena can be manifested in Juzhi’s raising one finger. These lines imply that Juzhi’s single finger gesture is apparently simple but actually has the capacity to lead people to achieve enlightenment, a state where there is no distinction between a single hair and land and seas. In the ending couplet, Gentleman Ren is an allusion from *Zhuangzi* 莊子. The story depicts Gentleman Ren making huge hooks and large fishing lines in order to catch great fish. This metaphor implies how a man cultivates people through the Way. A parallel is drawn between Juzhi’s finger and Ren’s fishing pole; Hongzhi seems to urge people to cherish Juzhi’s finger Chan. Hongzhi concludes the verse by raising his finger to inspire his audience to obtain the realization of finger Chan. In this verse, Hongzhi employs rich allusions from both Buddhist scriptures and secular literature to reveal the message embedded in the case. In a very vivid way, he uses his body gesture to urge the audience to get the meaning. Within the literary verse form, Hongzhi uses this colloquial approach to interact with his audience. In this case, three masters use different images to affirm Juzhi’s pedagogical device, one finger Chan. Fenyang emphasizes Juzhi’s speechless teaching approach and associates it with Juzhi’s personal ineffable awakening experience. Xuedou employs the Buddhist metaphor to liken Juzhi’s finger Chan to the driftwood tallying with a

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122 *Congrong lu*, T 48.281a02 (juan 6).

123 “Prince Jen made an enormous fishhook with a huge line, baited it with fifty bullocks, settled himself on top of Mount K’uai-chi, and cast with his pole into the eastern sea. Morning after morning he dropped the hook, but for a whole year he got nothing. At last a huge fish swallowed the bait and dived down, dragging the enormous hook. It plunged to the bottom in a fierce charge, rose up and shook its dorsal fins, until the white waves were like mountains and the sea waters lashed and churned. The noise was like that of gods and demons and it spread terror for a thousand li.” 任公子為大鉤巨緇，五十犗以為餌，蹲乎會稽，投竿東海，旦旦而釣，期年不得魚。已而大魚食之，牽巨鉤錎沒而下，騖揚而奮鬐，白波若山，海水震蕩，聲侔鬼神，憚赫千里。 Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 296. Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, comp., *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, 26.925.
blind turtle. Hongzhi uses not only Buddhist but also secular allusions to portray Juzhi’s pedagogical device that looks simples but has an inconceivably powerful capacity. Hongzhi depicts Juzhi’s method as the tip of a hair that can suck the chiliocosm. Hongzhi also takes the analogy of Juzhi’s finger with Gentleman Ren’s fishing pole. He again draws on allusions from Buddhist sūtra, the writings of philosophers and poets. This again demonstrates his literary talent for the incisive use of allusions.

Through careful reading of their content, this section has shown that the masters approached the old cases from different points of view. Although they drew from the same original cases, they presented those cases in different ways. For example, Xuedou added capping phrases, and Hongzhi combined two cases into one. In the verses, Fenyang employed plain words while Xuedou and Hongzhi used oblique language. Although Xuedou and Hongzhi shared the same approach of using metaphorical language, they drew on different references to express their verses. Xuedou referred to Buddhist texts to create his metaphors. Hongzhi alluded not only to Buddhist sources but also to secular literature for his comments. In approaching old cases, they assumed different positions. Fenyang and Hongzhi took neutral positions; in contrast, Xuedou took an aggressive position. They took different approaches to establish their authority: Fenyang assured his audience that he would guide them to get insight into initial cases. Hongzhi challenged his audience to carry on discussions with him if they understand old cases. Xuedou took a sharp tone in evaluating masters involved in cases while criticizing or praising them. By employing these varied strategies, from different perspectives, they raised main points about initial cases to achieve their pedagogical objective—to help their audience capture pivotal messages conveyed in old cases.
Conclusion

This Chapter began as an examination of the major forms of commentarial practice on old cases and crucial statements related to varied fashions of *gong’an* commentaries. These diverse modes of commentarial practice emerged from different tactics, styles, and settings. However, there was a pedagogical imperative behind the emergence of distinct forms of offering comments on old cases. Through different modes of commentaries, Chan masters aimed to enhance the understanding of those who became mired in confusion in their attempts to grasp the essential messages in old cases. In addition, these varied forms of commentaries contributed to producing distinct genres of *gong’an* literature. The ways in which Chan masters commented on prior cases—such as with commentarial prose or commentarial verses—became key components in the formation of *gong’an* collections. Hongzhi’s anthologies of commentarial prose and verse were compiled within this pedagogical context.

In addition to varied forms of commentarial practice, textual sources, namely old cases, play an important role in the textual production of *gong’an* collections. The study of intertextual relationships between Hongzhi’s *gong’an* works and other influential *gong’an* commentaries has revealed that Hongzhi seems to have drawn a high proportion of old cases from prior *gong’an collections*. Hongzhi’s tendency to use such sources infers that his contemporary counterparts might also have used two major sources for their composition of *gong’an* anthologies, namely, primary and secondary sources. The usage of secondary sources might have led to a trend that favored recycling old cases rather than drawing on new sources of original cases. The Chan masters seemed to reuse the same original cases in different ways to create new *gong’an* texts. Although in Chinese literature recycling material is not an innovative approach for textual production, we can see how Chan masters used this practice in compiling *gong’an* commentaries.
Through close reading, the comparison of the overlapping cases and commentarial verse in major *gong’an* collections reveals the masters’ different usages of the same prior cases and distinct approaches to tackling the fundamental message in old cases. Regarding using the old cases, Xuedou divided one case into two stories while Hongzhi incorporated more related anecdotes in the original cases. In addition, Xuedou’s additional terse remarks on critical parts in original cases distinguish his *gong’an* collection from other *gong’an* works. The three masters employed different strategies, including tones, positions, asserting authority, and literary engagement. In general, Fenyang and Hongzhi tended to take a neutral tone while Xuedou employed a critical tone. Fenyang established his authority by telling his audience that he would guide them through his commentarial verse. Hongzhi demonstrated his authority by challenging his audience to exchange ideas with him if they understood cases. From different positions, each either praised or criticized the prior masters’ response in original cases. Each focused on different parts of original cases to offer their own evaluation. Regarding their literary styles, they each used different types of language. While Fenyang used very straightforward language, Xuedou and Hongzhi employed metaphorical language. Xuedou tended to use Buddhist metaphors, yet Hongzhi not only employed Buddhist analogies but also drew allusions from secular literature including classics (*jing* 經), histories (*shi* 史), and the writings of philosophers (*zi* 子) and literature (*ji* 集). It is worth considering that the different strategies masters used to approach original cases might reflect their responses to earlier commentators. In dealing with the same cases, they each had to assume their own position or take a distinct perspective to make their points. However, in spite of their different approaches of treating initial cases, they shared

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124 In later periods, some masters made the original cases longer, such as Wumen Huikai’s 無門慧開 (1183–1260) *Wumen guan 無門關*; others only used titles to refer to original cases, such as Dahui’s section of commentarial verses. About *Wumen guan*, see T 48, no. 2005, 292a–299a. Regarding to the section of Dahui’s commentarial verses, see *Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu*, T 47.850c–856a (*juan* 10).
the same view about the dilemma of using language. All three masters made the point that the use of the language leads to dualist thinking. Recognizing the paradox of commenting on the cases through language, they each pointed out the ineffability of the messages and the danger of becoming entangled in words.
Chapter 3: Creating a Caodong Identity through Hongzhi’s Gong’an Commentarial Verses and Sermons

By employing different commentarial strategies to achieve their pedagogical objective, Chan masters raised crucial points to make it easier for their audience grasp essential messages in old cases. In the last chapter, I showed how Chan masters conveyed doctrinal positions through their gong’an commentaries. In this chapter I will focus on how Hongzhi specifically articulated Caodong doctrine through his gong’an writings. The characteristic teaching style of the Caodong tradition was closely associated with the doctrine of the interpenetration of principle and phenomena or the fusion of the essence and function. This teaching explicates the relationship between conventional and ultimate truth. The themes in this teaching also figure prominently throughout both Hongzhi’s sermons and writings, demonstrating Hongzhi’s commitment to advocate this teaching. By delving into the doctrinal aspect in Hongzhi’s gong’an writings and sermons concerning this teaching, this chapter analyzes three essential ways in which Hongzhi distinguished the Caodong position. First, Hongzhi asserted that the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, or the merging of the essence and function, was the central teaching of his lineage. Second, Hongzhi ingrained the Caodong point-of-view within his gong’an commentaries through metaphors associated with this doctrine. Third, Hongzhi defended this perspective by giving sermons responding to criticism directed at Caodong Chan. By contextualizing Hongzhi’s active creation of the Caodong position within both secular and Buddhist traditions, this chapter begins with a survey of the wider intellectual milieu in which the Caodong tradition was situated when it emerged as a distinct tradition that upholds the tenet of the fusion of the principle and phenomena as its core. This chapter goes on to examine crucial metaphors associated with essential teachings in Caodong literature. Specifically, I will
demonstrate how key metaphors associated with Caodong teachings were used to express Caodong’s distinct sectarian identity. It then examines how Hongzhi employed particular metaphors to define the essence of the Caodong tradition. In his gong’an commentaries, Hongzhi not only used these metaphors but also created new imagery to convey the doctrine of the interpenetration of the principle and phenomena. Lastly, this chapter investigates how Hongzhi responded to contemporary criticism of the Caodong tradition in his sermons. I show how he used these sermons as opportunities to clarify the Caodong perspective.

**Intellectual Milieu for the Advocacy of Caodong Central Doctrine**

The teaching of the Caodong tradition was characterized as the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena, or the essence and the function in the Song dynasty, a period marked by the emergence of Daoxue 道學 (Learning of the Way) which became the foundation of Neo-Confucianism.\(^1\) Daoxue and Buddhism share a concern for principle and phenomena in relation to self-cultivation, but reached very different conclusions.\(^2\) Daoxue investigates principle and phenomena (“things” wu 物 or “affairs” shi 事) to achieve innate moral awareness, while Buddhism realizes the interfusion of the principle and phenomena to attain innate Buddha nature. According to Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), the leading figure of Daoxue, all things have their own

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1. In Rentian yanmu 人天眼目 (1188), a work of the pivotal teachings of the Five Chan traditions, a Southern Song monk (1127–1279), Huiyan Zhizhao 晦巖智昭 characterizes the teaching style of the Caodong tradition as the advocacy of the essence and the function as well as the principle and phenomena. T 48, no. 2006, 320c (juan 3). On the studies of Daoxue, see Peter K. Bol, “This Culture of Ours”: Intellectual Transitions in T’ang and Sung China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). See also Peter K. Bol, Neo-Confucianism in History (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008).

principle, “which causes them to be what they are.” Zhu Xi regards this principle as true (shi 實), while Buddhism refers to principle as the nature of emptiness arising from changing causes and conditions. Furthermore, Zhu Xi asserts that there is both “a coherence of a single things,” and a “unitary coherence.” The former refers to particular concrete coherence of all things while the latter refers to the heaven principle (tianli 天理). However, Buddhists think there is a singular and universal principle within myriad phenomena. Regarding the concept of self-cultivation, Daoxue aims to regain the clarity of moral insight attained by sages through moral self-cultivation. On the other hand, in Buddhism the goal is to realize the innate Buddha empty nature of non-self through Buddhist practice. Even though Buddhism and Daoxue ultimately pursue different realization of principle, both employ the same approach, through the investigation of things. Thus, despite a shared context of concern and usage of self-cultivation to ultimately realize the principle, both Daoxue and Buddhism have their own definitions of principle and different ways of self-cultivation. Through this brief survey, we can see that

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3 According to Zhu Xi, “all things in the universe, whether natural or man-made, have their own Principle or li which causes them to be what they are. Before the thing itself can exist, moreover, there must first be its Principle” 天下之物，無論其是天然的或人為的，皆由其所以然之理；其理並在其物之先. I use Derk Bodde’s translation. Feng Youlan馮友蘭 cited this Zhu Xi’s quotation in Zhongguo zhexue shi 中國哲學史 (Hong Kong: Taipingyang Tushu, 1959), 897. I use Derk Bodde’s translation. Fung Yu-Lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, vol. 2, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 536. In addition, according to Bol, “principle is used as a term for describing how things worked” and “as a normative term for identifying how things should work.” Bol, Neo-Confucianism in History, 163.


5 Peterson, “Another Look at Li,” 16–18.

6 In discussing of the relationship between gong’an practice and investigation of things (gewu 格物) of Zhang Jiucheng’s 張九成 (1092–1159), Dahui’s lay disciple, Ari Borrell states that gong’an practice (contemplating on a crucial phrase from gong’an) and the investigation of things were both used for exploring the unity in diversity, the unchangeable in change. Ari Borrell, “Ko-wu or Kung-an? Practice, Realization in the Thought of Chang Chiu-Ch’eng,” in Buddhism in the Sung, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 95.
Caodong Chan, a tradition that promoted the doctrine of the principle and phenomena, was an integral part of the fabric of the Song intellectual milieu. Indeed, Hongzhi’s engagement in creating the Caodong sectarian position through the doctrine of the principle and phenomena fit the larger trend of Daoxue movement.⁷

After situating Caodong Chan’s advocacy of the principle and phenomena in the larger intellectual context, now I turn to place this teaching in the historical trajectory of Buddhist doctrines. The origins of the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena can be traced back to the doctrines associated with dualism in Buddhism. Among them, the cardinal doctrines were the teaching of emptiness that denies dichotomy (dualism), and the mutual interpenetration of principle and phenomena, from Mādhyamika tradition and the Huayan tradition, respectively.⁸

According to Robert Gimello, the Huayan doctrine “provided a rationale for sublimating the teaching of emptiness into an affirmative category.”⁹ In a negative way, the doctrine of emptiness denies the duality between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, delusion and enlightenment, and phenomenal and ultimate truth. Taking a positive approach, Huayan doctrine addresses the relationship between these dualities. This positive approach manifested in the doctrine of interpenetration of principle and phenomena. This provides a doctrinal foundation for Chan, a tradition that emphasizes engaging in the mundane world to pursue realization, attaining

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⁷ Although Hongzhi’s (1091–1157) time was before Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 (1130–1200), Daoxue had already emerged during the Northern Song. During the Northern Song, the key figures of Daoxue were Shao Yong 邵雍 (1012–1077), Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073), Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077), Cheng Hao 程頤 (1032–1086) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107). See Bol, “This Culture of Ours,” Chapter 9; Neo-Confucianism in History, Chapter 2 and 3.


⁹ According to Robert Gimello, “Principle, however, subsumes both emptiness and forms, and the interfusion of principle with phenomena gives a more affirmative and concrete cast to the discernment of the dharma-element.” Robert Gimello, “Chih-Yen (602–668) and the Foundation of Hua-yen Buddhism” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1976), 481.
enlightenment amidst mundane phenomena. Indeed, Chan adopted much of the core values of Huayan during the simultaneous rise of Chan and decline of Huayan. Among different Chan lineages, Gimello points out that the thought of “Five Positions” (Wuwei 五位) can be seen as a transmutation of Huayan doctrine. It was a pivotal teaching of the relationship between the principle and the phenomena, and which Caodong founders Dongshan Lianjie and Caoshan Benji built upon the Huayan doctrine. Gimello further states that Five Positions can been seen as the next phase in the history of Huayan after Guifeng Zongmi (784–841), Fifth Patriarch of Huayan tradition. Huayan doctrine was actually an integral component in the formation of Chan thinking. Within the broader Chan tradition, different lineages applied Huayan teaching to their practice. However, the Caodong lineage was the only tradition that established its core teaching based on Huayan cardinal doctrine—the interpenetration between principle and phenomena. The representative style of the Caodong lineage was therefore strongly associated with the doctrine of the principle and phenomena, and this doctrine further


11 The Five Positions Verses elucidate five stages of practice: 1) The first position: the adjunct within the proper (正中偏 zheng zhong pian); 2) The second position: the proper within the adjunct (pian zhong zheng 偏中正); 3) The third position: (the adjunct) coming from the proper (zheng zhong lai 正中來); 4) The fourth position: going within together (jian zhong zhi 兼中至); 5) The fifth position: arriving within together (jian zhong dao 兼中到). The proper symbolizes the principle (li 理) and the essence (ti 體) while the adjunct symbolizes the phenomena (shi 事) and the function (yong 用). Thus, Five Positions doctrine also elucidates the interfusion between the essence and function, and the principle and phenomena. For a detailed discussion of Five Positions doctrine, see Powell, *The Record of Tung-shan*, 11–12.


13 In discussing the role of the *Huayan Sūtra* and Huayan doctrine in Chan thought, Wu Yansheng indicates that within the Chan tradition, among the Five Houses and Seven Lineages, the Caodong a tradition especially advocated the relationship between the principle and phenomena. Wu Yansheng 吳言生, *Chanzong sixiang yuan yuan 禪宗思想淵源* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 267.
became the sectarian identity of the Caodong tradition. Huiyan Zhizhao (active late 12th c.) in *Eyes of Humans and Heaven Beings* (*Rentian yanmu*, 1188), the compilation of the distinctive teaching styles of the Five Chan traditions, employed the symbols of the Caodong doctrine to characterize the teaching style of the Caodong tradition:

Generally, the teaching style of the Caodong tradition is nothing more than essence and function, the adjunct and the proper, and the guest and the host; all of these illuminate the upward path. Would you like to see Caodong? It is before the empty eon when Buddhas and patriarchs were not born, and it is that the proper and the adjunct do not fall in the pivot of existence and non-existence.

大約曹洞家風，不過體用、偏正、賓主，以明向上一路。要見曹洞麼？佛祖未生空劫外，正偏不落有無機。14

Huiyan’s statement reflects two striking features of Caodong Chan. First, there were various symbols associated with the doctrine of the principle and phenomena throughout the Caodong tradition. It reflects that Caodong monks dedicated themselves to devising diverse sets of metaphors to explicate this doctrine. The other distinct characteristic of Caodong Chan is the doctrine of the fusion of the principle and phenomena. In Huiyan’s statement above, he exemplifies it as having a variety of associated symbols that epitomize the teaching style of the Caodong tradition. Throughout Caodong literature, the dual symbols of the adjunct (*pian* 偏) and the proper (*zheng* 正), as well as the guest (*bing* 賓) and the host (*zhu* 主), refer to phenomena and principle, or function and essence, respectively. The development of these symbols will be discussed in the next section. Huiyan indicates that the goal of Caodong teaching is to attain the state beyond the empty eon during which Buddhas and patriarchs were not born. “The empty eon,” an expression almost exclusively used in the Caodong writings, is “a state that is before and beyond any existence, which is the true state of Buddha nature in which all sentient beings

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14 *Rentian yanmu*, T 48.320c (juan 3).
already dwell.”¹⁵ The realm of true Buddha nature is a state of non-dual thinking. This non-duality means there is no distinction between existence and non-existence or between phenomena and principle. In other words, when one attains enlightenment, one abides neither in the nature of emptiness and non-existence nor in the phenomena of existence. At the time of the emergence of Huiyan’s text (1188), Caodong sectarian identity was already strongly entwined with metaphors referring to the essence and the function or to the principle and the phenomena. As such, this doctrine was considered a core teaching that distinguished the Caodong tradition from other Chan lineages.

Because the doctrine of the principle and phenomena was so closely associated with Caodong sectarianism, Caodong monks made a point of expressing themselves in terms of this teaching. This is particularly evident in their gong’an writings. Among different lineages of Chan literature, Caodong masters produced a comparatively prolific body of gong’an writings; their use of gong’an commentaries as a vehicle to show their sectarian identity is quite evident. Regarding the gong’an literature in the Caodong lineage, Hongzhi’s predecessors, Touzi Yiqing 投子義青 (1032–1083) and Danxia Zichun 丹霞子淳 (1064–1117) wrote Touzi Shan Qing heshang songgu ji 投子山青和尚頌古集 (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Monk Qing at Mount Touzi) and Danxia Chun chanshi songgu ji 丹霞淳禪師頌古集 (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Chan Master Danxia Chun, 1102–1106). These two gong’an works, along with Hongzhi’s Tiantong Hongzhi Jue heshang songgu ji 天童宏智覺和尚頌古集 (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Monk Hongzhi Jue at Tiantong), contributed to the formation of Sijia songgu 四家頌古 (The Commentarial Verses

¹⁵ Schlütter, “‘Before the Empty Eon’ versus ‘A Dog Has No Buddha-Nature,’” 175.
on Old Cases of the Four Houses, 1342), which represented the mainstream textual tradition during the Yuan (1206–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties. Features such as the authors’ particular selections of cases from different lineages or from their own lineage distinguish the three Caodong gong’an writings them from each other. Nevertheless, all three authors’ use gong’an commentaries as a vehicle to express their sectarian identity. Touzi compiled his songgu when the Caodong tradition was on the brink of extinction. For him, using gong’an commentaries was likely an attempt to bolster interest in the Caodong core teaching to restore his tradition in the face of crisis. Similarly, Danxia composed his songgu in order to illuminate central teachings of his tradition when it was in decline. To pursue the goal of creating self-identity, the Caodong masters employed typical Caodong metaphors and symbols to convey the doctrine of the principle and phenomena through gong’an commentaries. Hongzhi’s use of metaphors to express the doctrine will be addressed later.

In subsequent eras, the three Caodong collections of commentarial verses were considered critical sources to understand the fundamental teachings of this lineage. Yongjue

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16 In addition to the three Caodong gong’an commentarial verses, there is another songgu from the Yunmen lineage, Xuedou Mingjue heshang songgu ji 雪竇明覺和尚頌古集 (The Collection of Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Monk Xuedou Mingjue).

17 As for the distinct characteristics of the three Caodong gong’an commentaries, one is the different sources of their selections of old cases. In the large Chan tradition, most Chan masters drew cases from different lineages rather than focusing on their own lineage. Likewise, Hongzhi and Touzi took this mainstream approach. However, Danxia primarily drew cases from his own Caodong tradition. Shiina Kōyū 椎名宏雄 made a Caodong lineage chart to demonstrate different generations of Caodong masters in Danxia songgu. Shiina Kōyū 椎名宏雄, “Gen-ban Shikeroku to sono shiryō 元版『四家録』とその資料,” Komazawa daigaku bukkō garubū ronshū 駒澤大学佛教学部論集 10 (1979): 256. With regard to the intertextual relationship between Hongzhi’s songgu and his predecessors’ songgu, Hongzhi only drew 2 cases from Touzi songgu and 3 cases from Danxia songgu. See Maruyama, “Wanshijuko hyakusoku shutten no kenkyū,” 60-61.

18 In his Chuanfa zhengzong ji 傳法正宗記, Qisong 契嵩 (1007–1072) comments on the state of different Chan traditions before 1061. In his view, Caodong was on the brink of extinction. Schlütter cites this in How Zen Became Zen, 79. Chuanfa zhengzong ji 傳法正宗記, T 51, no. 2078, 763c (juan 8).

19 Ishii cites in Sōdai Zenshū shi no kenkyū, 253. Sijia lu 四家錄, D. 49, no. 8942, 274a (juan 4). I will return to this point later when I discuss how Hongzhi use gong’an writing to express his Caodong identity.

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Yuanxian 永覺元賢 (1578–1657) who advocated Caodong Chan during the end of the Ming and Qing dynasties, wrote “Dongshang guche” 洞上古轍 (The Ancient Track of the Caodong); it consisted of a compilation of the Caodong principal teachings that viewed the Caodong gong’an commentaries as subtle words of ancient virtuous masters (xiande weiyan 先德微言) to illuminate the essential teachings of the tradition (faming gangzong 發明綱宗). In addition, a striking feature of the three Caodong gong’an commentaries is that Touzi, Danxia, and Hongzhi had separately published gong’an collections while most Chan masters instead included gong’an commentaries in their collections of recorded sayings. The Caodong masters were more actively publishing their gong’an writings than were monks from other lineages. Through publication of their gong’an texts, Caodong masters probably aimed to disseminate Caodong teachings broadly. This abundance of published material from the three Caodong masters seems to reflect their active interest in reaching a larger audience, including literati circles; promoting the Caodong teachings embedded in their gong’an commentaries to a larger audience was a way to present the Caodong perspective. Despite the lack of textual evidence of the literati’s reception of the Caodong gong’an works, prefaces for Caodong works written by literati show masterful usage of Caodong metaphors to portray Caodong monks or Caodong Chan. For example, in the Preface of Touzi songgu (1084) by Li Chongyuan 李沖元 (jinshi 進士 in 1088).

20 Yongjue Yuanxian chanshi guanglu 永覺元賢禪師廣錄, X 72, no. 1437, 535c (juan 27), 549a (juan 28). Yongjue selected many Caodong masters’ recorded sayings to demonstrate the seminal teachings of Caodong. For most of his selections, he draws from their gong’an commentaries.

21 In introducing Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings, Schlütter notes that despite the fact that many Song masters have songgu or niangu collections included in their compilations of recorded sayings, few separate editions exist. Schlütter, “The Record of Hongzhi and the Recorded Sayings Literature of Song-Dynasty Chan,” in The Zen Canon, ed. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004), 191.

22 Unfortunately, there is no textual evidence regarding literati’s reception of their songgu. Moreover, none of the prefaces written by literati describes the publication’s purpose of reaching out to literati audiences.
and the preface of *Danxia songgu* (date unknown) by Wang Cai 王槯 (1078–1118), both Li and Wang employed prominent Caodong metaphors. Their many applications of Caodong metaphors demonstrate that they were perfectly capable of employing symbols exclusively associated with Caodong to represent Caodong monks and a Caodong style of Chan teaching. Thus, the literati could identify metaphors as belonging specifically to the Caodong lineage. The literati’s familiarity with Caodong metaphors also reflects their deep engagement with Caodong writings at that time.

**Crucial Metaphors for the Doctrine of the Principle and the Phenomena**

We have seen that a variety of symbols related to the doctrine of the principle and phenomena were employed to characterize the Caodong teaching style. Unlike exegetical traditions such as Tiantai and Huayan that use doctrinal terms to explicate Buddhist teachings, Chan monks tended to employ metaphors to convey Buddhist doctrines. This practice is likely due to their rejection of scriptural authority. Within this trend of metaphor usage within the broader Chan tradition, Caodong monks constructed diverse systems of metaphors and images to deliver their core teaching, the doctrine of the principle and phenomena, or the essence and function. This section examines crucial metaphors used to elucidate the principle and phenomena in Caodong literature.

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23 Both of Li and Wang used “a wooden man” and “a stone girl” as metaphors to refer to the principle or the essence. The sole biographical reference about Li Chongyuan 李沖元 notes that Li and Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049–1106) and Li Liang’gong 李亮工 were known as Longmian sanyou 龍眠三友. Wang Zicai 王梓材 and Feng Yunhao 馮雲濠, eds., *Song Yuan xuean buyi 宋元學案補遺*, vol. 24 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 2005), 99.443.

24 Concerning the different uses of language by Chan and other Buddhist tradition, Robert Buswell points out that “It was the special place of Ch’an to envision itself as separate from the rest of the Buddhist tradition. “One way to affirm that independence was to express Buddhist doctrines in a new way, using language with the Chinese preference for concrete, laconic description rather than the Indian preference for abstract, periphrastic formulation.” Robert E. Buswell Jr., “The ‘Short-cut’ Approach of K’an-hua Meditation: The Evolution of a Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch’an Buddhism,” in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), 334.
It further demonstrates that some specific symbols became hallmarks that epitomized essential Caodong teaching for both insiders and outsiders. Finally, it shows how Hongzhi used prominent metaphors associated with the doctrine of principle and phenomena to establish it as the definitive core teaching of the Caodong lineage.

The metaphor of brightness and darkness in the “Cantong qi 參同契” (The concordance of difference and sameness), was the archetype from which Caodong monks constructed both metaphorical symbols and imagery to convey the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena.25 “Cantong qi,” attributed to Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790) is a short text that contains five-syllable verses of 220 characters. It first appeared in the biography of Shitou in Zutang ji 祖堂集 (The Anthology of the Ancestral Hall, 960). Because this text conveys the cardinal doctrines of the interfusion of brightness and darkness and the interpenetration of phenomena and principle, Caodong monks regarded it as a source of Caodong teachings.26 In “Cantong qi,” two essential ideas emerge: first, brightness and darkness are used as primordial metaphors to refer to

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25 I adopt Brook Ziporyn’s translation for the title of “Cantong qi.” Brook Ziporyn offers a complete translation of this text. See Ziporyn, “The Use of the Li Hexagram in Chan Buddhism and Its This- Worldly Implication,” 86–88, 91. According to the explanation in The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism, the character “can 参” means to “consider,” “compare” or “differentiate;” the character “tong 同” means “sameness;” and “qi 契” means “tally.” This text is attributed to the famous Daoist master Wei Boyang 魏伯陽 (d.u.). Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., eds., The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 166. According to the explanation in The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion, The Zhouyi Cantongqi 周易參同契 (Concordance of the Three according to the Book of Changes of the Zhou Dynasty) was attributed to Wei Boyang, a legendary immortal. This work is a short treatise in verse and prose that explains the alchemical process regarding the cosmology of the Yi jing, Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1: 323.

26 Yongjue states that “Cantong qi” is the source of Caodong tradition” 洞宗之源也. Yongjue Yuanxian chanshi guanglu, X 72.536a (juan 27). According to the commentary in Zongtong biannian 宗統編年, the text of “Cantong qi” “completely raised the essential point of interfusion of brightness and darkness, and interpenetration of the phenomena and the principle”全提明暗回互，事理相涉之旨. Zongtong biannian 宗統編年, X 86, no. 1600, 153c (juan 12).
phenomena and principle. Second, the term “reversing” (huihu 回互), which denotes mutual interpenetration. Based on these fundamental images and expressions, Caodong monks devised different systems of metaphors and rhetoric to convey the interfusion of the principle and phenomena throughout Caodong literature.

Regarding the brightness-darkness imagery, initially, Shitou denotes the principle as brightness and the phenomena as darkness:

靈源明皎潔，
支派暗流注。
執事元是迷，
契理亦非悟。

The numinous source when it illuminates becomes bright and pure. When it darkens flows into the branches of the stream. Attaching to phenomena is originally delusion. Tallying with the principle is not enlightenment, either.

Through the imagery of the brightness and darkness, Shitou conveys the principle and the phenomena. The bright image of the source refers to the principle, whereas the dark imagery of the stream branches symbolizes the phenomena. In doing so, Shitou makes a point that clinging to either the phenomena or the principle is not enlightenment. The dynamic source refers to the mind, or potential of Buddhahood. When the mind becomes luminous, its clarity can tally with the principle. In contrast, when the mind becomes obscure, it attaches to phenomena like branches of the stream. This is a deluded mind because it recognizes illusory phenomena as truth. These lines, through the parallel between enlightenment and delusion, liken the imagery of brightness and darkness with the concept that relying on delusion or enlightenment will confuse oneself.

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27 Juefan Huihong 覺範暉洪 notes in Linjian lu 林間錄, “the profound words are brightness and darkness. The text only contains over forty phrases; however, in the half of the text, brightness and darkness are used to explicate [teachings].” 易玄要之語為明暗耳，文止四十餘句，而以明暗論者半之. Linjian lu 林間錄 X 87, no.1624, 263b (juan 2).

28 Zutang ji 祖堂集, B. 25, no. 144, 375a (juan 4).

29 According to Yongjue’s commentary, the first line about the numinous source is a state that can tally with the principle. Yongjue Yuanxian chanshi guanglu, X 72.536a (juan 27).
Following the imagery of the brightness and the darkness in the “Cantong qi,” Shitou presents another critical term, “reversing” huihu 回互, which refers to interfusion or interdependence. As noted earlier, this term has a significant place in Caodong literature as it carries the sense of coexistence of duality to portray the interwoven relationship between the principle and the phenomena, the essence and the function. In the “Cantong qi” it reads:

門門一切境， Cognitive faculties and all objects
回互不回互。 turn back toward each other or do not turn back.³⁰
回而更相涉， When reversed toward each other, they interfuse.
不爾依位住。 When not reversed, they abide in their own position.³¹

Employing the images of sense (men 門 refers to geng 根, sense) and object (jing 境 refers to chen 墨, objects), Shitou delineates both the independent and the interdependent relationships among all phenomena. These stanzas explain the interdependence and independence of six cognitive faculties and objects (sense-objects). When they turn back toward each other, the six cognitive faculties and objects interfuse with each other. Their mutual interpenetration makes them inseparable. This indicates that each of the faculties and objects is incapable of retaining its own individual and separate entity. Conversely, when the six are not turned back towards each other, each is independent and stands alone. In other words, due to non-interaction, every faculty or object retains independence and its own individuality. Consider the case of seeing an object. Seeing is a sense faculty and shape is its object. Shape and object are distinct entities. However, when seeing (yangen 眼根) interacts with an object (chen 墨), visual consciousness arises. Visual consciousness entails the interaction of eyes and objects; at the same time, eyes and objects each exist on their own. These stanzas suggest how the interrelationship between

³⁰ I adopt Ziporyn’s translation with slight changes. Ziporyn, “The Use of the Li Hexagram in Chan Buddhism and Its This-Worldly Implication,” 87.

³¹ Zutang ji, B. 25, 375a (juan 4).
principle and phenomena operates. They explain why enlightenment and delusion depicted in the previous stanza. Each can be regarded as an independent entity; nevertheless, they each interpenetrate each other. To put this another way, enlightenment cannot be pursued without delusion. If one abandons phenomena, the principle of empty nature cannot be realized.

After demonstrating the interrelation between sense faculties and objects, Shitou explicates different characteristics of objects of sight and hearing, form and sound. Turning to the example of speech, Shitou reverses this imagery of the brightness and the darkness to symbolize the phenomena and the principle. The lines read:

色本殊質象, Form originally differs in its shape.
聲元異樂苦. Sound initially differs in happiness and suffering.
暗合上中言, In darkness, words accord with high or middling capacities.
明明清濁句. In brightness, the clarity and turbidity of the sentences distinguish each other.\(^{32}\)

From the perspective of conventional truth, all phenomena manifest distinctly, such as forms that take on different shapes, and sound that can be heard in joyful or painful ways. At this pivotal point, Shitou reverses the imagery of brightness and darkness to symbolize phenomena and principle. From the perspective of principle, everything is empty. Here darkness conveys the sense of obscurity or hiddenness that connotes the principle hidden behind phenomena; thus, darkness symbolizes principle. Thus, the third line means that from the principle of empty nature, the levels of the teachings are adjusted according to people’s varying capacities to understand concepts. On the other hand, the principle of non-self manifests in different teachings contexts to cater to individuals with discrete aptitudes. Turning to the perspective of phenomena or function,

\(^{32}\) In addition to the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA), I have surveyed both Chinese and Japanese scholarship on the commentaries and translation of these key lines to explain the symbol of brightness and darkness, but they either did not properly translate or just directly arrived at the equivalences: brightness represents phenomena or function while darkness represents principle or essence. Therefore, I could not find an appropriate translation or commentary concerning these lines as pivot to reverse the meanings of bright and dark imagery for phenomena and principle.
individual reception of teachings appears as either wisdom or vexation. Clarity represents wisdom, while turbidity represents delusion.

Then, after delineating the relationship between the phenomena and the principle using examples of the four elements, sense faculties, and objects, Shitou illuminates the central theme of the integration between the brightness and the darkness:

當明中有暗，
勿以明相遇。

當暗中有明，
勿以暗相覩。

When there is darkness in brightness,
do not regard it as encountering brightness.

When there is brightness in darkness,
do not look at it as facing darkness.33

Through the bright-dark imagery, Shitou makes an important point that there is neither absolute brightness nor absolute darkness due to coexistence—the interpenetration of brightness and darkness. There is no absolute duality between brightness and darkness; brightness and darkness are interfused with each other. Taking the imagery of brightness and darkness, these stanzas imply that phenomena are within the principle and the principle is within phenomena.

Furthermore, through the coexistence of brightness and darkness, these lines might also convey the cardinal point that delusion intrinsically does not exist and that enlightenment does not exist either in the opening verse of the text.34 Building on the concept of brightness-darkness imagery, Caodong masters devised abundant metaphors to convey the teaching of the principle and phenomena throughout Caodong tradition.35

Aside from constructing metaphors based on bright-dark imagery first seen in Shitou’s “Cantong qi,” Caodong monks drew ideas from Chinese indigenous traditions to create

33 Zutang ji, B 25.375a (juan 4).
34 Yongjue chanshi guanglu, X 72.536b (juan 27).
35 One of the most prominent uses of bright-dark imagery is the moon-night or dawn-night imagery in Dongshan Liangjie’s “Verse on Five Positions.” See Ziporyn, “The Use of the Li Hexagram in Chan Buddhism and Its This-Worldly Implication,” 111–119.
metaphors. Among the indigenous elements, the dual symbols of adjunct (pian 偏) and proper (zheng 正) from hexagrams of the Yijing stand out most prominently for the dyad of the phenomena and principle throughout Caodong writings. These dual symbols, appear first in the “Baojing sanme ge” 寶鏡三昧歌 (The Samādhi of Jeweled Mirror Song). “Baojing sanme ge,” a four-syllable poem of 292 characters, is commonly attributed to Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价; however, it was originally found in the biography of Caoshan Benjin in Juefan Huihong’s 覺範惠洪 (1071–1128) Chanlin Sengbao zhuan 禪林僧寶傳 (1123). Schlütter argues that this text was probably produced during the Song dynasty, since it did not appear prior to Senbao zhuan and its style was different from the early Caodong writings. A legendary tale relates that this work was compiled to establish principal teachings for the Caodong tradition. It also points out that the pivot of this text was the articulation of the adjunct and the proper. The dual symbols of the adjunct and the proper provide the structure of the Five Positions (Wuwei 五位), a central Caodong teaching that elucidates five stages of the relationship between the principle and the phenomena. Dongshan diagrams this point as follows:

重離六爻，偏正回互。疊而為三，
It is like the six lines of the double li [hexagram], In which proper and adjunct transpose. They stack up into three,


37 Schlütter, How Zen Became Zen, 158.

38 According to Jieliu Xingce 截流行策 (1628–1682), “in the text, several words regarding six lines of the li hexagram, proper and adjunct reverse each other and are the pivot in this text” 於中如離六爻偏正回互數語，為一篇之樞鈕. Baojing sanme benyi 寶鏡三昧本義, X 63, no.1237, 216b.
And all their permutations come to five.  

Before delving into a close reading of these lines, a consideration of Yijing usage will improve our understanding of the possible reasons why Caodong monks employed ideas from Yijing. The usage of terminology from Yijing aligns with Chan assertions of the problems of language, “not dependent on words and letters” (boli wenzi 不立文字). Chan monks consider ultimate truth to be ineffable, so it cannot be conveyed through conventional means such as language. This concept overlaps with the idea of using trigrams in the Yijing—that words are inferior to trigrams when conveying the mystery of cosmological changes.\(^{40}\) The Yijing’s usage of images might have inspired Chan monks to use hexagrams to transmit ultimate truth, as they are beyond words. In addition, Lai indicates that new Yijing interpretations during the Song dynasty may have influenced Chan monks to turn to the Yijing.\(^{41}\) Aside from the Yijing’s influence, the usage of Yijing symbols in this text were probably a self-reference to concepts embedded in “Baojing sanme ge.” This poems explains that ideas cannot be expressed through words, and one line reads, “To portray it in any literary form is already to defile it” 但形文彩即屬污染.\(^{42}\) These lines reflect the Chan position of eschewing any literary description of ultimate truth.

Having suggested some possible reasons behind the usage of Yijing terms, I now turn to the above lines concerning the symbols of the proper and the adjunct. I only focus on the dual symbols of the proper and the adjunct rather than analyzing the hexagram configuration of five


\(^{40}\) Lai, “Sinitic Maṇḍala,” 229.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 232.

\(^{42}\) I use Ziporyn’s translation. Ziporyn, “The Use of the Li Hexagram in Chan Buddhism and Its This-Worldly Implication,” 93.
patterns in relation to the Five Positions. The interpretation correlating hexagram analysis with the formation of the Five Positions has led to very broad and complicated interpretations, and I will set that aside here.\(^{43}\) Turning to the images of proper and adjunct in *Yijing*, “proper position” (zheng 正) means that a solid yang 阳 line (—) is in a yang position and a broken yin 阴 line (—) is in a yin position. In a hexagram, from bottom to top, the lines of odd numbers are called yang positions while the lines of even numbers are yin positions. In contrast, if a yang line is in the position of the yin or a yin line is in the position of the yang, then these lines would be in the adjunct (pian 偏) proposition.\(^{44}\) In addition to the proper and the adjunct, there is another term, “hu” 互 in the compound “huihu 回互” which appears in “Cantong qi”; hu also has a technical connotation in the hexagram interpretation, huti 互體. Huti refers to using five embedded lines in a hexagram to create two other hexagrams.\(^{45}\) Throughout the Caodong tradition, Caodong masters employed pian to symbolize the phenomena while zheng refers to the principle. Caoshan Benji 曹山本寂 (840–901) explains more fully the meanings of the dual symbols, the proper and the adjunct:

The proper position is the empty realm, where there is originally nothing. The adjunct position is the realm of forms, where there are myriad phenomena and forms. The adjunct within the proper is to forsake the principle to approach phenomena. The proper within the adjunct is to discard phenomena to enter the principle. Congruence of both is to obscurely respond to myriad conditions without falling into existence. It is neither defiled

\(^{43}\) Several primary and secondary sources have discussions that correlate hexagram analysis with the formation of the Five Positions. See, for example, *Yongjue Yuanxian chanshi guanglu*, X 72.537c (juan 27), Jieliu Xingce 截流行, *Baojing sanme benyi 寶鏡三昧本義*, X 63, no.1237, 217a–218b, and Jingna 淨訥, *Baojing sanme yuanzong bianmiushuo 寶鏡三昧原宗辨謬說*, X 63, no. 1238. For secondary sources, see Brook Ziporyn, “The Use of the Li Hexagram in Chan Buddhism and Its This-Worldly Implication.” Also see Chen Rongbo 陳榮波, “Yijing li gua yu Caodong Chan 易經離卦與曹洞禪,” *Huagang foxue xuebao 華岡佛學學報* 4 (1981): 224–244.

\(^{44}\) Ziporyn, “The Use of the Li Hexagram in Chan Buddhism and Its This-Worldly Implication,” 101–102.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 106.
nor pure. It is neither proper nor adjunct. Therefore, it is called the empty and profound great path, the non-abiding true tenet.

正位即空界，本來無物。偏位即色界，有萬象形。正中偏者背理就事，偏中正者舍事入理，兼帶者冥應眾緣不墮諸有。非染非淨，非正非偏，故曰虛玄大道無著真宗。

Caoshan clearly explains the valence of the proper position and the adjunct position. The proper position signifies emptiness that is the absolute and the principle; the adjunct position symbolizes form that is relative and phenomenal. Realizing either “phenomena within principle” or “principle within phenomena” is not perfect realization. Caoshan indicates that the true teaching is realizing the congruence of principle and phenomena. “Phenomena within the principle” means an experience of reality in which all phenomena is empty. People in this state should engage with phenomena by relinquishing absorption of emptiness, the principle. In contrast, “principle within phenomena” signifies an experience of reality in which the ultimate truth of emptiness manifests in all phenomena in the conventional world. Those who realize this state should turn to the realm of emptiness because of their tendency to become attached to worldly phenomena. The term “congruence of both” has the same semantic sense as *huihu 回互* in the “Cantong qi.” This term conveys the meaning of “interfusion.” Those who are in the state of interfusion of the principle and phenomena can respond to any condition without being attached to phenomena. Because they are not trapped by dualities such as perceiving pure principle vs. defiled phenomena, they can attain non-dual thinking.

The symbols of the proper and the adjunct became dominant metaphors not only in Caodong writings, but also in other Chan texts. These dual symbols were often used to define the

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46 *Fuzhou Caoshan Benji chanshi yulu* 撫州曹山本寂禪師語錄, T 47, no. 1987B, 536c (juan 1).
Caodong monks also constructed alternative metaphors by correlating proper and adjunct with other symbols and imagery to convey a doctrinal message.\textsuperscript{47}

Aside from elements from indigenous Chinese traditions, the Caodong masters drew on ideas from other Buddhist sources to create their metaphors. The metaphors of the paradox between inanimate images and activity are very prevalent in the Caodong writings. The inanimate images symbolize the principle or the essence while the activity represents the phenomena or the function arising from the principle or the essence. This imagery probably originated from a stanza in the “The Samādhi of Jeweled Mirror Song,” “When the wooden man sings, the stone woman begins to dance” 木人方歌，石女起舞.\textsuperscript{48} The images of the wooden man and the stone woman are commonly seen in Caodong texts. In \textit{Yōkaku zenji Tōjōkotetsu kuben} 永覺禪師洞上古轍上口辨, Taihaku Kokusui 太白克酔 (d. 1700) indicates that earlier usages of these images had a different meaning. In the \textit{Treatise of the Great Wisdom} 大智度論, “In the Dharma that the Buddhas of the ten directions speak, there is neither self nor self-possession. However, all dharmas unify and harmonize through false designations and sentient beings. They are like the mechanism of a wooden man. Although they can move, they are not the masters of their bodies” 十方諸佛所說法, 皆無有我亦無我所, 但諸法和合假名眾生, 如機關木人, 雖能動作, 內無有主身亦如是.\textsuperscript{49} However, the wooden man in “The Samādhi of

\textsuperscript{47} Caoshan correlated proper and adjunct with the lord and the minister, the first relation of Three Mainstays (sangang 三綱), the three ethical relationships in Confucianism. Based on this paradigm, there are other symbols, such as host and guest, father and son. The lord, host, and father are symbols for the proper, the principle; the minister, guest and son refer to the adjunct and phenomena. Caoshan explained lord-minister metaphors in detail in his recorded sayings. See \textit{Fuzhou Caoshan Benji chanshi yulu} T 47.536c. In addition, the proper-adjunct symbol was aligned with black-white imagery. Black imagery represents the proper, the principle; white imagery symbolizes the adjunct, the phenomena. See Danxia’s explanation in \textit{Rentian yanmu}, T 48.314c (juan 3).

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ruizhou Dongshan Liangjie chanshi yulu}, T 47.525c–526a.

\textsuperscript{49} Taihaku Kokusui has indicated that the metaphor of a wooden man may have originated from \textit{Dazhidu lun} 大智度論. Taihaku Kokusui 太白克酔, \textit{Yōkaku zenji Tōjōkotetsu kuben} 永覺禪師洞上古轍上口辨 (manuscript dated in
“Jeweled Mirror Song” has a different meaning. Taihaku states that since both the wooden man and the stone woman symbolize no mind (wuxin 無心), the state of nondual-thinking, both connote the proper. Singing and dancing seem to have mind; as a result, they symbolize the adjunct, and refer to the marvelous function emerging from no mind: non-thinking.\(^{50}\) The imagery of the paradoxical action of insentient objects symbolizes that the non-thinking mind is the essence from which great function arises.\(^{51}\) Building on this conception, Caodong masters constructed similar metaphors to elucidate the interfusion of the principle and phenomena.\(^{52}\)

**Defining the Essence of the Caodong Tradition**

We have seen that Caodong masters devised varied metaphorical systems to create metaphors in order to convey the teachings of the principle and the phenomena. Now I will show that not only monks within the Caodong lineage, but also those outside of it employed these metaphorical symbols to characterize the essential teachings of Caodong to define Caodong sectarian identity.

As an insider, a Guangjiao Jingyun 廣教景雲 (d.u.), a disciple of Fushan Fayuan 浮山法遠

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1683 held by Komazawa University Library, Tokyo), 33a. *Dazhidu lun* 大智度論, T 25.281a (juan 30). According to *Zengaku daijiten*, 木人 refers to a wooden marionette; 石女 refers to a stone statue of a woman or a barren wife. *Zengaku daijiten*, 656a, 1148d.

50 Taihaku, *Yōaku zenji Tōjōkotsu kuben*, 33a.

51 In “Dongshang guche” 洞上古轍, Yongjue comments, “this exactly illuminates the true and marvelous function that cannot be reached by intelligence” 此正明天真妙用，非智力所及, *Yongjue Yuanxian chanshi guanglu*, X 72.538c (juan 27).

52 For example, the images of the clay ox and wooden horse are also very prominent in the Caodong writings. The Verse on the Diagram of the Five Positions has, “The clay ox roars on the water. The wooden horse neighs into the wind 泥牛吼水面, 木馬逐風嘶.” *Fuzhou Caoshan Benji chanshi yulu*, T 47.536c (juan 1). In “Dongshang guche,” according to Yongjue, “the clay ox and the wooden horse represent the proper position while ‘roaring on the water’ and ‘neighing into the wind’ represent the adjunct. They show the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, and the interfusion of the adjunct and proper.” *Yongjue chanshi guanglu*, X 72.538c (juan 27).
of the Caodong tradition, composed a poem titled “The Profound Teachings of the Caodong” (Caodong xuanzhi 曹洞玄旨) as follows:

然燈那畔祖師行，
信是無功道自呈。

石女拈華千界動，
木童汲水萬波傾。

金田有樹雲生葉，
玉洞無燈日照明。

Before Dīpaṃkara Buddha and patriarchal masters practiced, it is believed that the Way would manifest itself without efforts. [When] the stone girl picks a flower, a thousand realms move. [When] the wooden boy draws a water, myriad waves flow toward him.

In a golden field there are trees, leaves emerge from clouds. In a jade cave there is no light while the sun is shining.

As a Caodong monk, Guangjiao used abundant metaphors associated with principle and phenomena to portray his tradition’s cardinal teaching. His usage of metaphors reflects a view that this doctrine is the core teaching of the Caodong tradition. The verse opens by portraying that, from Dīpaṃkara Buddha to the patriarchs, complete realization can be attained through effortless practice. When one realizes this true enlightenment, one is free from any obstruction caused by clinging to any phenomena. As previously discussed, the inanimate images of the stone girl and the wooden boy were usually linked to vibrant activity to portray the wondrous function that emerges from the essence—the non-thinking mind. In the second couplet, “thousand realms” parallels “myriad waves.” Both of these images of movement symbolize myriad phenomena; in contrast, the stone girl and the wooden boy represent the unmoving principle or essence. These paradoxical imageries of insentient images and actions symbolize the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. It depicts that, when one realizes the truth—the non-self nature of emptiness or the principle—one responds properly to phenomena rather than

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53 Dīpaṃkara Buddha was the Buddha who assured Śākyamuni would become a Buddha. According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, Dīpaṃkara Buddha appeared when the Buddha expounded the themes of the Lotus Sūtra. Regard the meaning of napan 那畔, in Foguang dacidian, when it explains the term weiyin napan 威音那畔, it means before the Majestic Voice Buddha. Foguang dacidian, 3770.

54 Jianzhong jingguo xuedeng lu 建中靖國續燈錄, X 78, no. 1556, 819b (juan 29). There are eight couplets in this verse, and I have only selected the opening four couplets.
remaining attached to the stillness of emptiness. In the same vein, the final couplet presents “there are” (you 有) as parallel to “there is no” (wu 無) to refer to the existence of phenomena and non-existence that is emptiness. Furthermore, “clouds” are parallel to the “sun.” This might be analogous to phenomena and principle as clouds are usually associated with vexation while the sun is associated with enlightenment. The final couplet describes a realm in which one neither clings to emptiness nor relinquishes attachment to phenomena and the mundane world. This is a state in which phenomena merge with principle. In short, this verse reflects Guangjiao’s thinking that the doctrine of the principle and phenomena represent the essence of his Caodong lineage. His usage of metaphors related to this doctrine to depict the profound Caodong teaching make this clear.

Monks outside of the Caodong tradition also employed particular metaphors to represent the Caodong tradition. Tanying Daguan 曇穎達觀 (989–1060), a Linji monk, delineates the distinctive features of the five lineages’ teaching style in his “Five Schools of the [Chan tradition]” (“Zongmen wupai” 宗門五派) compiled in Xuedeng lu 續燈錄 (1103). With respect to the Caodong tradition, he has:

偏正互縱橫，
The proper and the adjunct are mutually interwoven,
迢然忌十成，
and they completely avoid [keeping] a distance.
龍門須要透，
The dragon gate should be penetrated;
鳥道不堪行。
The bird path cannot be tread upon.
石女霜中織，
The stone women weaves in the frost.
泥牛火裏耕。
The clay ox plows in the fire.
兩頭如脫得，
If both sides could be dropped,
枯木一枝榮。
it would be like the flourishing of a branch of withered wood.55

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55 Jianzhong jingguo xuedeng lu, X 78.821c (juan 29).
This poem is teeming with abundant metaphors related to the principle and phenomena. Through these metaphors, Tangying delineates the characteristic Caodong style as the doctrine of the principle and phenomena. The first couplet depicts the mutual inclusion of the principle and phenomena—neither can exist without the other. The dragon gate in the third line might be an analogy for the state of realizing emptiness, indicating principle.\(^{56}\) This line asserts that one has to penetrate the realm of principle—of emptiness—instead of just abiding in it. The bird path might refer to changing and illusory phenomena if one understands that when a bird flies it leaves no trace of its route. Because the bird’s path is traceless it cannot be tread upon. This also suggests that one should not become attached to phenomena. In the third couplet, Tanying likens the non-duality between the principle and phenomena to the paradoxical imagery between inanimate images and dynamic action. The stone woman parallels the clay ox, and “weaves in the frost” parallels “plows in the fire.” The final couplet depicts how proper and adjunct meld together without falling into either one. In other words, by relinquishing duality, one can transcend duality to reach non-duality. The paradoxical imagery of a withered piece of wood becoming invigorated again conveys a sense that true enlightenment leads to great function. In other words, a non-thinking mind can vividly respond to active phenomena. Tanying’s characterization of the Caodong tradition draws freely from prominent Caodong imagery that symbolizes the doctrine of the principle and phenomena. Through these Caodong metaphors, Tanying defines Caodong’s sectarian identity.

Both insiders and outsiders of the Caodong tradition delineate the Caodong cardinal teaching through metaphors associated with the doctrine of the principle and phenomena. Indeed,

\(^{56}\) The term “dragon gate” is from *Shujing zhu 水經注*. It describes that once carps jump over the dragon gate, they will transform into dragons. Here “dragon gate” connotes that one transforms after attaining realization, one transforms. Li Daoyuan 酈道元, *Shujing zhu 水經注*, in *Jingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu 景印文淵閣四庫全書*, vol. 573 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1983), 4.60b–61a.
Caodong position could be recognized through metaphors associated with the Caodong tradition. In the same way, Hongzhi also employed metaphors of the principle and the phenomena to characterize the particular brand of his own Caodong lineage. In doing so, Hongzhi created a clear Caodong profile through reference to the doctrine of the principle and phenomena as the definitive core of the Caodong teaching. On several occasions, when students asked Hongzhi to define the representative teaching of the five traditions, Hongzhi expressed the doctrine of the principle and phenomena as the distinguishing characteristic of the Caodong teaching style by employing metaphors to refer to this doctrine. For example, in a public sermon, a student asked, “What is Caodong’s essential teaching?” Hongzhi said, “A black dog with shiny silver hooves. A black person rides on a white elephant.” This phrase comes from the eulogy for Taiyang Jingxuan 太陽警玄 (943–1027) written by Fushan Fayuan 浮山法遠 (991–1067). Hongzhi employed black and white imagery to refer to the proper and the adjunct, thereby defining the central teaching of the Caodong tradition. According to Record of Pointing to the Moon through a Finger (Zhiyue lu 指月錄, 1602), a compilation of Chan records, attributed to Qu Ruji 瞿汝稷 (1548–1610), the phrase about a black dog means there is an adjunct position within the proper position; the black dog symbolizes the proper position while silver hooves represent the adjunct position. “A black person riding on a white

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57 *Hongzhi lu*, 1.8b9; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48. 2a-b (juan 1). Although “kunlun” 昆崙 or 崑崙 generally is a place name or a name for the people who come from that place, in this context of Caodong imagery, kunlun refers to “black people,” according to Menzan Zuiho’s 面山瑞方 (1683–1769) commentary.” Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方, *Wanshi zenji kōroku monge* 宏智禪師廣錄聞解, in *Wanshi roku* 宏智錄, ed. Ishii Shūdo 石井修道, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Meicho Fukyūkai, 1984), 18a. In addition, according to *Hanyu dacidian*, a biography of a queen (*Xiaowuwen Li Taihou* 孝武文李太后) in *Jing shu* 晉書 describes that in the palace, people who worked for weaving looms were black and called *kunlun* 崑崙. *Hanyu dacidian*, vol. 3 (Shanghai: Hanyu Dacidian chubanshe, 1987), 834. Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, *Jing shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974 ), 32.981.

58 *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元, X 80, no. 1656, 288c (juan 14).
elephant” suggests there is a proper position in the adjunct proper position. These two lines make the point that “the proper and the adjunct do not mutually obstruct each other” 於斯二無礙. It conveys the idea of “not falling into either existence or non-existence” 不墮有無二邊. 59

Phenomena exist in the midst of the principle; principle exists in the midst of the phenomena. Principle is inseparable from the phenomena, and the phenomena are inseparable from principle. In other words, the true realization means always perceiving empty nature while simultaneously remaining engaged with changing worldly phenomena. In addition, in Caodong writings, black-white imagery evolved from symbols of darkness and brightness. Based on the black-white metaphorical system, Caodong masters constructed varied black-white imagery to refer to the teaching of the principle and phenomena. By employing these black-white imageries and other Caodong prominent metaphors made by his Caodong predecessors, Hongzhi created the Caodong position through the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena as the Caodong core teaching. 60

59 Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方, Wanshi zenji kōroku mōge: tai ichi kan 宏智禪師廣録聞解：第 1 巻 (manuscript dated 1804–1818 held by Komazawa University Library, Tokyo); Menzan, Wanshi zenji kōroku mōge, 18a. Zhiyue lu 指月録 (Record of Pointing to the Moon through a Finger) is a compilation of Chan records of the past seven Buddhas, Chan patriarchs, and masters up to Dahui Zonggao; it is attributed to Qu Ruji 瞿汝稷 (1548–1610). This commentary appears in the section of the essential recoded sayings of Dahui Zonggao. Zhiyue lu 指月録, X 83, no.1578, 760b9 (juan 32).

60 In an informal sermon, Hongzhi also defined the Caodong core teaching as the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena through the typical imagery of darkness and brightness, namely the dual metaphors for the principle and the phenomena. A student asked Hongzhi, “What are the essential teachings of the Caodong tradition” 如何是曹洞宗? Hongzhi replied, “In the darkness, one distinguishes turning back toward each other. Yet in the brightness, one turns back [to darkness]” 暗裏分回互, 明中却轉身. As previously discussed, the darkness represents the principle while the brightness refers to the phenomena. Here Hongzhi also uses the term huihu 回互, the concept of interdependence initiated in the “Cantong qi.” Hongzhi looked at the interfusion of the principle and phenomena as the essential Caodong teaching. Hongzhi’s portrayal articulates that when one realizes the principle of emptiness, one also recognizes different independent entities of everything; however, all phenomena mingle together due to the same non-self nature. In contrast, when one stays in the mundane phenomena, one moves to enter the state of realizing emptiness. Thus, the perfect realization entails both realms of emptiness and phenomena without interfering with the duality of principle and phenomena. Hongzhi lu, 4.278a1–2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.68b (juan 5).
Aside from using metaphors created by his predecessors, Hongzhi alluded to secular literature to innovate metaphors to define the hallmark of his Caodong patriarchal heritage. Thus, his approach of metaphorical usage is different from his Caodong predecessors. For example, in an informal sermon, he asked students, “What is the particular house teaching specific to Caodong?” 作是生是曹洞家法. He himself replied, “The long whale exhausts all the water of the great ocean. A black person embraces coral branches” 長鯨飲盡滄溟水，昆侖抱得珊瑚枝.\(^{61}\) The imagery of the whale and coral branches are from a Tang poem attributed to Han Xi 含曦 (d.u.), “Response to Lutong’s Visit without Meeting” (“Chou Lutong jianfang buyu tibi” 酬盧仝見訪不遇題壁).\(^{62}\) The poem reads: “[When] the whale completely swallows the ocean, coral branches emerge” 鯨吞海水盡，露出珊瑚枝. Hongzhi uses the long whale to indicate the principle while symbolizing the phenomena with the great ocean. He uses black-white imagery to convey the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. The black whale refers to the principle; coral branches represent phenomena because they are white. In addition, Hongzhi uses two verbs, “swallow” and “embrace” to convey the sense of interfusion of the principle and phenomena. In this portrayal of the Caodong House instruction (曹洞家法), Hongzhi not only uses typical Caodong black-white imagery but also incorporates literary expressions from secular poetry to define the Caodong doctrinal position with the teaching of the principle and phenomena. Hongzhi’s usage of references from secular literature is a striking feature that distinguishes his writings from his predecessors. In constructing metaphors to articulate the Caodong cardinal tenet, his predecessors tended to draw elements from earlier symbols. In contrast, Hongzhi took

\(^{61}\) *Hongzhi lu*, 4.294b6–7; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.72b (juan 5).

\(^{62}\) This poem is in *Quan Tang shi*, 823.9357.
ideas not only from Caodong writings but also from secular sources. I will return to this issue when analyzing his gong’an work.

While delineating the distinctive features of his own particular brand of Chan practice, Hongzhi employed metaphors associated with the doctrine of the principle and phenomena to define his lineage’s identity. He viewed this teaching as the Caodong core teaching. Thus, Hongzhi created a distinct identity within the broader Chan tradition through the usage of this doctrine as the core teaching. By employing metaphors, Hongzhi presented this teaching as the core for the self-definition of Caodong and, in doing so, shaped a particular image of the Caodong Chan.

**Portraying the Caodong Identity in Gong’an Commentaries**

Having examined how Hongzhi created the Caodong position through the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena as the Caodong representative teaching, I will now explore how Hongzhi established the Caodong sectarian position through his gong’an writings. As previously discussed, prior to Hongzhi, Caodong masters used gong’an commentaries as an important way to show their sectarian identity. Receiving this legacy from his predecessors, Hongzhi establishes the Caodong position in his gong’an commentaries through the metaphors of the pivotal Caodong doctrine of the principle and the phenomena. This section examines the external contexts and internal condition that caused Hongzhi to create a distinct Caodong profile in his gong’an works, and it further examines how Hongzhi created a position that could be identified as Caodong through a variety metaphors linked to the definitive Caodong core teaching.

Hongzhi’s establishment of the Caodong identity through his gong’an writings was significant not only within the larger religious milieu but also within the context of his revival of
the Caodong tradition. Hongzhi wrote his *gong’an* commentarial verses during his early career when he had just initiated his abbacy at Puzhao Monastery (1124–1127). Recognizing the broader religious context of his first abbacy is instructive. Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r.1100–1126) supported Daoism and was the only anti-Buddhist Song emperor. Although Hongzhi did not encounter repression during his career as an abbot, Buddhism was still less favored by the court when Hongzhi began his abbacy. During his first abbacy at Puzhao Monastery, half of the property of the monastery was owned by Shenxiao Temple (*Shenxiao gong* 神霄宮), a Daoist establishment. Considering that Daoism dominated the religious landscape during his first abbacy, Hongzhi may have considered compiling *gong’an* commentaries as a crucial way to distribute Chan teachings to reach a broader audience. Because his first abbacy occurred when interest in his tradition was growing, he may have regarded composing *gong’an* collections as an important way to express sectarian identity in order to facilitate the resurgence of his tradition.

63 According to Ishii Shūdō, Hongzhi compiled his *gong’an* commentarial verses between the age of 34 and 37 (1124–1127) during his abbacy at Puzhao Monastery. Hongzhi wrote his *niangu* commentary from the age of 38 to 39 (1128–1129) during his abbacy at Changlu Monastery. Ishii also indicates these two *gong’an* commentaries represent Hongzhi’s work in the earliest stage of his career. See Ishii, “Wanshi roku no rekishi teki seikaku: Wanshi juko nenko o chūshin toshite,” 105. In introducing the collection of Hongzhi’s recorded sayings, Schlüter points out that Hongzhi’s commentarial verses and proses were published as one collection in 1129, with a preface dated 1120 attributed to Hongzhi’s prominent disciple, Xuedou Sizong 雪竇嗣宗 (1085–1153), and it was reprinted in 1134 with a postscript written by Xian Ziyin 向子諲 (1085–1152). Schlüter, “The Record of Hongzhi,” 190–191.

64 In presenting the political context of Chan tradition under the supervision of the Song court, Schlüter notes that Buddhism was repressed by the only anti-Buddhist Song emperor Huizong in the beginning of the twelfth century. Schlüter also indicates that Huizong’s anti-Buddhist policies culminated in 1119 as he ordered a series of decrees to force Buddhism to be assimilated into Daoism. Schlüter, *How Zen Became Zen*, 51.

65 Hongzhi’s biography describes that Hongzhi led the assembly of Puzhao Monastery to greet emperor Huizong when he inspected the southern of China and requested emperor Huizong to return a half of the property of the monastery, owned by Shenxiao Temple. See *Hongzhi lu*, 318a7–8; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.120a. In addition, in discussing Song emperor Huizong’s support of Daoism, Schlüter points out that “in 1117, Huizong established a network of Shenxiao [神霄] (Divine Empyrean) Daoist temples. Many Shenxiao temples were existing Daoist temples that had been renamed, but where no suitable Daoist temples that had been, the local authorities were instructed to take over Buddhist monasteries and to convert them into Shenxiao temples.” Schlüter, *How Zen Became Zen*, 51.
Hongzhi reveals his reasons for reviving the Caodong teaching through *gong’an* commentaries when he wrote the preface for his teacher’s *gong’an* work, *Danxia songgu*:

[My teacher] lamented that the style of our tradition is going to decline. Therefore, he picked and collected encounter dialogues. From the first, Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思, to the last, Baoshou 保壽, there are one hundred cases. He collected them and wrote verses so that the ultimate way will be passed down to benefit future generations. The way he illuminated the essential teaching of our tradition is to submerge and penetrate what was before the sign of existence (the state of non-duality). The way he established the essential teachings is to correspond closely with the state that is after non-effort.

Hongzhi indicates that when Caodong was in decline, Danxia compiled commentarial verses to “illuminate the essential teachings of his tradition” (*mingzong* 明宗) and “establish the seminal teachings of his tradition” (*lizhi* 立旨) to make sure that followers of future generations can recognize their cardinal teachings. Evidence that Danxia advocated for his own tradition can also be found in his selections of cases: he only included cases from masters in the Caodong lineage or those of “neutral” monks from Qingyuan Xingsi’s (d. 740) descendants. Differing from his teacher’s approach, Hongzhi culled cases from a variety of lineages. Despite commenting on cases involving discrete lines, Hongzhi’s descriptions of the Caodong identity still emerge through his comments, sustaining the way in which his teacher had expressed the Caodong identity through commentarial verses. This is particularly true of cases involving Caodong masters. It is also significant for Hongzhi that his collection of *gong’an* commentarial verse and

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66 According to *Zengaku daijiten*, the term *weizhao* 未兆 means the state before the existence of all phenomena. It is also equal to the state before the birth of parents. Therefore, *weizhao* conveys the absolute state of non-duality. *Zengaku daijiten*, 1183c. According to *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, it means “before signs of existences appear.”

67 According to *Zengaku daijiten*, the term *wugong* 無功 means no effort. *Zengaku daijiten*, 1202d.

68 *Sijia lu*, D 49, no. 8942, 247a (*juan* 4).

prose was his first publication. Hongzhi may have been attempting to reach larger audiences by aiming to gain recognition of his tradition through his gong’an works. In doing so, Hongzhi promoted his lineage in the face of the decline and the less favorable position of Buddhism within the imperial state during Huizong’s recent reign.

The theme of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena appears prominently in his commentary on gong’an cases. Take, for example, his remarks on a case about a dialogue between Dongshan and his teacher Yunyan. By explicating crucial points of Yunyan’s saying, “Just this is it,” Dongshan conveys the doctrinal point of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Hongzhi’s commentarial verse reads:

爭解恁麼道？
五更雞唱家林曉；
爭肯恁麼道？
千年鶴與雲松老。
寶鑑澄明驗正偏，
玉機轉側看兼到。
門風大振兮規步綿綿，

How could he know to say thus?
At the fifth watch when the rooster crows, the day breaks in the woods of home.
How could he be willing to say thus?
The thousand-year crane and the pine amidst the clouds grow old together.
The jeweled mirror, clear and bright, examines the proper and adjunct.
The jade loom turns to the sides and sees the arrival of the congruence of both [proper and adjunct].
The style of the tradition is greatly revived and proper steps continued without breaking.

Dongshan made an offering to the portrait of Yunyan. Then, he raised early dialogues [between him and Yunyan] about a portrait. A monk asked, “Yunyan said ‘just this is it.’ What is the essential message?” Shan said, “At that time, I almost misunderstood my late master’s intent.” The monk said, “Did Yunyan know that [reality]?” Shan said, “If he did not know it, how could he know to say thus? If he knew it, how could he be willing to say thus?”

Hongzhi lu, 2.100a7–b1; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48. 23a (juan 2). This dialogue of confrontation addresses the relationship between the principle and the phenomena. Dongshan illuminates that if one was attached to the phenomena, just like Dongshan’s response, one cannot realize the principle. According to Wansong’s commentary, Dongshan’s final two answers demonstrate Huayan’s teaching: the principle is perfect and speech is partial. When speech emerges, the principle is lost. The principle and the phenomena should mutually unite and penetrate each other. Congrong lu, T 48.258a (juan 3). In Dongshan’s recorded sayings, there are two anecdotes about the encounter dialogue between Dongshan and Yunyan. Ruizhou Dongshan Liangjie chanshi yulu, T 47, 519b. For an English translation, see Powell, The Record of Tung-shan, 27–28.
Father and son adapted to circumstance and their fame became vast.  

Hongzhi deploys dominant Caodong symbols, the proper and the adjunct, to deliver the doctrinal import of the principle and the phenomena. According to Tianqi Benrui’s 天奇本瑞 (d.1508) comments in *The Elder Qiongjue Tianqi’s Direct Commentary on the Commentarial Verses on Old Cases of Monk Tiantong Jue (Qiongjue Laoren Tianqi zhishu Tiantong jue heshang songgu 燦絶老人天奇直註天童覺和尚頌古)*, the rooster’s crowing symbolizes the profound teachings revealed by Dongshan. The first couplet illuminates the adjunct amidst the proper 正中之偏, which represents phenomena in the midst of the principle. At this stage, one turns one’s back on the principle to approach phenomena. In other words, one departs from absorption in emptiness to engage in the phenomenal world. In the following couplet, the imagery of a thousand-year crane represents the proper position, and the pine amidst clouds connotes phenomena. This couplet illustrates the proper amidst the adjunct 偏中之正, which represents the principle amidst the phenomena. In this stage, one discards phenomena to enter the principle. In this state, one is not tied to phenomena while realizing the principle of emptiness. The third couplet symbolically conveys the doctrine of the interfusion of the proper and adjunct that entails the mutual inclusion of the principle and phenomena. The jeweled mirror likely alludes to “The Samādhi of Jeweled Mirror Song”; the images reflected in the mirror symbolize phenomena, and the mirror represents the principle. Because a loom remains motionless while the shuttle crosses between its two sides to create a weaving, the loom and the shuttle are typical metaphors for the proper and the

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71 Hongzhi lu, 2.100b2–4; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.23a (juan 2).

72 Qiongjue Laoren Tianqi zhishu Tiantong jue heshang songgu, X 67.453c (juan 1).

73 For references to “The Samādhi of Jeweled Mirror Song,” see my earlier discussion on page 139 in this chapter.
adjunct. The loom and shuttle portray vertical and horizontal threads interweaving. This interwoven imagery is equivalent to the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Further, the expression *jiandao* 兼到 might be an abbreviation of *jianzhongdao* 兼中到, a term that represents one of the Five Positions. This particular position represents experiencing the reality by letting go of both the principle and phenomena. By doing so, one transcends duality of the principle and phenomena to reach the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Hongzhi concludes the verse by indicating the significant contributions of Yunyan and Dongshan to the Caodong tradition. As pioneers, they both helped the Caodong teaching become prominent and further transmitted it to future generations. In addition to drawing on the Caodong typical metaphors including the dual symbols of the proper and the adjunct, the imagery of the mirror and the loom, Hongzhi employs poetic imagery of the crane and the pine to point to the core Caodong teaching.

Hongzhi portrayed the Caodong image through metaphors that refer to the doctrine of the unity of the principle and phenomena. In conveying this fundamental Caodong teaching, he not only used salient Caodong metaphors constructed by past Caodong masters but also created imagery by drawing elements from secular literature. Building on the metaphorical language set in place by earlier Caodong masters, Hongzhi incorporates elements from secular sources to devise metaphorical images in his conceits. Hongzhi’s eagerness to draw on secular sources distinguishes him from his predecessors, since they tended to only employ typical Caodong

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74 Hongzhi often used the images of a loom and a shuttle to connote the proper and the adjunct. For example, in a public sermon, he said, “When the jade loom is turned to the side, who can distinguish the thread on the shuttle?” 玉機轉側，梭頭絲路誰分？*Hongzhi lu*, 1.17b5; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.4b26 (juan 1). In addition, in commenting this Hongzhi’s line, Tianqi commentary reads: “Vertical and horizontal threads are interwoven. Proper and adjunct mutually penetrate” 綢繆交織，正偏通貫. *Qiongjue Laoren Tianqi zhishu Tiantong jue heshang songgu*, X 67.453c (juan 2).

75 Powell, *The Record of Tung-shan*, 12.
metaphors. For example, Hongzhi employs poetic imagery from secular poetry to comment on a case about the dilemma of encountering a dead snake. By offering a response to confronting a dead snake, Qinglin Shiqian (d. 904) conveyed the doctrinal message that one should not fixate on either emptiness or phenomena. Qinglin told a monk when encountered a dead snake, the monk should neither confront the dead snake nor go to the grass land. The dead snake is a metaphor for the principle which represents the state of realizing emptiness. Taking the analogy of not confronting a dead snake, the metaphor expresses non-abiding in the realm of emptiness. The grass is associated with vexation, thereby it symbolizes the phenomena, i.e., dual thinking. This case illuminates the point that one should involve mutual inclusion of the principle and the phenomena. Hongzhi’s commentarial verse reads:

三老暗轉柁，

In darkness, three helmsman turn the rudder.

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76 The case reads: A monk asked Qinglin, “What would happen when students go directly?” Lin said, “A dead snake blocks the great road. I urge you not to confront it.” The monk said, “What would happen if [I] confront it?” Lin said, “You would lose your life.” The monk asked, “What would happen if I do not confront it?” Lin said, “There is not a place where you can escape it, either.” The monk asked, “What would happen at that time?” Lin said, “You would lose.” The monk asked, “I do not know where I should go?” Lin said, “The place where grass is deep and one cannot be found.” The monk said, “Master, [you] should also begin to take precautions. Lin clapped his hands and said, “It is the same as noxious vapors.” 僧問青林: 「學人徑往時如何?」林云: 「死蛇當大路, 勸子莫當頭。」僧云: 「當頭時如何?」林云: 「喪子命根。」僧云: 「不當頭時如何?」林云: 「亦無回避處。」僧云: 「當處茲時如何?」。林云: 「却失也。」僧云: 「未審向什麼處去也?」。林云: 「草深無見處。」僧云: 「和尚也須隄防始得。」林撫掌云: 「一等是箇毒氣。」 Hongzhi lu, 2.104a6–b2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.23c (juan 2). The case demonstrates the nonduality between the principle and the phenomena and conveys the doctrinal message that one should not fixate on either emptiness or phenomena. According to Menzan’s comments, “when the guest confronts the host, the guest is not the guest. When the host confronts the guest, the host is not the host. Both the host and the guest are forgotten,” 賓見主時賓不是賓，主見賓時主不是主，賓主相忘. The host and the guest are alternative symbols for the proper and the adjunct. Menzan’s interpretation highlights interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方, Wanshi kobutsu jiyuko hiyakusoku monge 宏智古仏頌古百則聞解, in Wanshi roku 宏智錄, ed. Ishii Shūdo 石井修道, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Meicho Fukuūkai, 1984), 316b. Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方, Wanshi kobutsu jiyuko hiyakusoku monge 宏智古仏頌古百則聞解 (undated manuscript held by Komazawa University Library, Tokyo). Yongjue Yuanxian chanshi guanglu, X 72. 543a (juan 27).

77 When Yuanwu comments on a case about Dongshan in Biyan lu, Yuanwu states that in the Caodong tradition, there are images of a stone woman, a wooden horse, a bucket without a bottom, night-bright curtains, and a dead snake. All of these images illuminate the proper position. Biyan lu, T 48.180c (juan 5).

78 The term, helmsman (三老 sanlao) is from Du Fu’s 杜甫 poem, “The Song of Kuizhou” (Kuizhou ge 蠻州歌).”Kuizhou was a county name during Tang dynasty, present-day Chongqing in Sichuan. Hongzhi alludes to Du
孤舟夜回頭。  
蘆花兩岸雪，  
煙水一江秋。  
風力扶帆行不棹，  
笛聲喚月下滄洲。  

At night, a single boat turns back.  
Reeds grow along the two snowy banks;  
Misty water on a river in the autumn.  
The force of the wind supports the sail, moving without oars.  
The sound of the flute beckons the moon, traveling to the land of reclusion.

The verse poetically portrays the relationship between the principle and phenomena. Hongzhi employs typical Caodong imagery of bright-dark and images based on the dialectic of sameness-difference, that is within sameness, there is difference while within difference, there is sameness同中有異，異中有同. In addition to these Caodong uses other prominent metaphors, and he draws on expressions from secular literature to construct these metaphors. The first couplet implies the adjunct within the proper (zheng zhong pian 正中偏). It metaphorically expresses that one should not get stuck in the realm of emptiness and should return to the realm of phenomena. The images of darkness and night symbolize the proper position that is the state of realizing the nature of emptiness while the imagery of “turn the rudder” (zhuanduo 轉柁) and “turn back” (huitou 回頭) suggest turning to the adjunct position, returning to the mundane world, the phenomenal realm. In the second couplet, Hongzhi uses images based on the conception of sameness-difference that originates in “The Samādhī of Jeweled Song” to portray the state of emptiness in which everything is the same because the emptiness of nature, yet they manifest different forms. Hongzhi depicts interwoven qualities through merging his images of

Fu’s lines, “Within the songs of helmsman and boatman, during daytime gamble games that were played amidst high waves”長年三老長歌裏，白晝攤錢高浪中. Quan Tang shi, 229.2057.

79 Hongzhi lu, 2.104b3–4; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.23c (juan 2).

80 Taihaku, Yōkaku zenji Tōjōkōtetsu kuben, 59b (juan 6).

81 This usage is from the verse in “The Samādhī of Jeweled Mirror Song” as it reads: “Like snow in a silver bowl, an egret hidden in the bright moon. Categorized together, they are not the same; When merge together, their own
reeds and snow, misty water, and river to symbolize their shared nature of emptiness. However, within this undifferentiated emptiness, these images manifest distinctly. The snow and the autumn represent the proper, the principle, while reeds and misty water refer to the adjunct, phenomena. The second couplet suggests the proper within the adjunct position (*pian zhong zheng* 偏中正). In this state, one realizes that all phenomena manifest distinctly while there is the same emptiness of nature shared by all different phenomena. The final couplet portrays the state where the principle and the phenomena merge mutually. The imagery of wind and the sound of the flute refers to phenomena—the mundane world, and the image of the moon symbolizes principle. The expression, the land of reclusion “*canzhou* 滄州” is from Xie Tiao’s 謝朓 (464–499) poetry and perhaps symbolizes true enlightenment. The verse concludes with an assertion that within the state of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, one forgoes practice effortlessly as if moving in a boat without the need of oars. Furthermore, one becomes involved in the mundane world and responds to conditions spontaneously in a way that is like following the wind while pursuing true enlightenment. In this verse, Hongzhi incorporates

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82 Taihaku, *Yōkaku zenji Tōjōkotsu kuben*, 59b (juan 6).

83 “Xie Tiao’s poetry entitled “Going to Xuan city, from Xinlinfu to Banqiao” 之宣城出新林浦向板橋. The lines, “although I joyfully embrace the feeling of prosperity, how can this feeling run parallel with the joy of staying in reclusive land 既懷懷祿情，復協滄州趣. Xiao Tong 蕭統, (501–531), ed., *Wen xuan* 文選, annot. Li Shan李善 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1986), 27.1259.

84 My interpretation of this commentarial verse makes reference to Tianqi’s comments in *Qiongjue Laoren Tianqi zhizhu Tiantong jue heshang songgu* and Taihaku’s comments in *Yōkaku zenji Tōjōkotsu kuben. Qiongjue Laoren*
elements from secular literature to create imagery to deliver the pivotal Caodong doctrine. His use of secular sources probably aimed to impress literati with his eloquent writing. Thus, in an innovative way Hongzhi promotes Caodong identity through creative metaphorical language associated with the lineage’s cardinal teachings.85

In the same way, another commentarial verse demonstrates Hongzhi’s mastery of using allusions from secular sources to construct symbols related to core Caodong doctrines to create the Caodong identity in a poetic meditation commenting on a case. This case conveys the important point that complete realization comprises the congruence of principle and phenomena through the images of a head and a tail.86 In this case, a monk asks Jiufeng 九峰 (d. u.) about the state of having either a head or a tail and having both. The head represents the proper, the principle, and the essence, while the tail symbolizes the adjunct, phenomena, and function.87 Through the metaphors, Jiufeng makes a point of that having either a head or a tail is only an incomplete realization. Jiufeng points out that having both a head and a tail is a perfect practice.

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85 For example, commenting on the same case, Hongzhi’s teacher, Danxia’s verse reads: “The long river, clear and luminous, reaches the moonlight./Pure light fills eyes but it is not home./May I ask where the fishing boat is going?/The night is deep; one stays overnight among the reed flowers”長江澄澈即蟾華/滿目清光未是家/借問漁舟何處去/夜深依舊宿蘆花. Danxia uses the bright imagery of light and the dark imagery of night to convey phenomena and the principle. In the first line, the river symbolizes phenomena whereas the moonlight connotes the principle. The imagery of merging the river with the moonlight conveys the state of interfusion of the principle with phenomena. Then, Danxia employs “the light” to refer the phenomena. The image of “home” is often associated with enlightenment. Thus, the second line means that involvement in the phenomenal world is not enlightenment. By using the dark and black imagery of night to express the principle as well as the white imagery of reed flowers to indicate phenomena, the ending line illuminates the state of mutual fusion of the principle with phenomena. In this verse, Danxia employs the typical Caodong metaphors including brightness-darkness and white-black imagery to convey the Caodong core teaching. Danxia Zichun chanshi yulu 丹霞子淳禪師語錄, X 71, no.1425, 766c.

86 The metaphors of a head (tou 頭) and a tail (wei 尾) also connote the opening and the ending.

87 According to the entry of “Jiufeng touwei”九峰頭尾 in Foguang dacidian, the head symbolizes the realization that all dharmas are ultimately empty; whereas the tail represents the transcendence of myriad phenomena in the mundane world to manifest a marvelous function at ease.頭者, 見證一切諸法畢竟空寂之意; 尾者, 更出世間森羅萬象, 而顯現自在之妙用. Foguang dacidian, 143.
that can lead to realize the fusion of the principle and phenomena. Hongzhi’s commentarial verse reads:

規圓矩方，
A compass makes a circle; a quadrature makes a square.

用行舍藏。
One moves forward when one is employed; one holds oneself in reserve when one is removed from office.

鈍躓棲蘆之鳥，
A bird resting in the reeds is dull and staggering.

進退觸藩之羊。
A ram butting against a hedge can neither move forward nor step backward.

喫人家飯，
One eats others’ rice.

臥自家床。
One lays on one’s own bed.

雲騰致雨，
Clouds fly to make rain.

露結為霜。
Dew freezes to become frost.

玉線相投透針鼻，
Jade threads mutually match through the hole

88 The complete case reads: “A monk asked Jiufeng, ‘What is the head?’ Feng said, ‘Open eyes without being aware of dawn.’ The monk asked, ‘What is the tail?’ Feng said, ‘Do not sit on a ten-thousand-year bed.’ The monk asked, ‘What would it be when there is the head without the tail?’ Feng said, ‘Ultimately it is not noble.’ The monk asked, ‘What would it be when there is the tail without the head?’ Feng said, ‘One becomes full but gains no strength.’ The monk asked, ‘What would it be when the head and the tail are congruent?’ Feng said, ‘Sons and grandsons gain strength. [Nobody] knows [congruence of the head and the tail] in the quarter.’” Hongzhi lu, 2.106b4–8; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.24b (juan 2).

Realizing emptiness of all phenomena is equivalent to having a head. Thus, having a head means to immerse in emptiness as if one opens ones eyes without knowing dawn. Here the imagery of a bright dawn denotes the phenomena. Conversely, involving oneself in phenomena is equivalent to having a tail. Thus, having a tail means to engage in the phenomenal realm without realizing the non-self nature behind phenomena; it is as if one does not sit on a myriad-year bed. The image of a myriad-year bed connotes realizing emptiness, since the mind experiences timelessness that transcends time. Having either a head or a tail is ultimately incomplete. Having both a head and a tail means to attain complete enlightenment—the state where the principle and phenomena mutually fuse. In this state, one realizes every phenomenon is emptiness without engaging in the mundane world as if one opens ones eyes without knowing dawn. Here the imagery of a bright dawn denotes the phenomena. Conversely, involving oneself in phenomena is equivalent to having a tail. Thus, having a tail means to engage in the phenomenal realm without realizing the non-self nature behind phenomena; it is as if one does not sit on a myriad-year bed. The image of a myriad-year bed connotes realizing emptiness, since the mind experiences timelessness that transcends time. Having either a head or a tail is ultimately incomplete. Having both a head and a tail means to attain complete enlightenment—the state where the principle and phenomena mutually fuse. In this state, one realizes every phenomenon is emptiness, which is an intrinsically enlightened condition without being revealed; it is as if one stays in a room without being noticed. According to Wansong’s commentary, the line “Sons and grandsons gain strength” is a metaphor extended from an earlier analogy, that “one becomes full and gains no strength.” Yet here descendants not only become full but also gain strength. Thus, this metaphor expresses that having both the head and the tail is a whole practice. It means that perfect realization is the fusion of the principle and the phenomena. Wansong comments on, “sons and grandsons gain strength,” they get full as well as gain strength. Congrong lu, T 48.268a22 (juan 4).

89 This line alludes to Analects. I use Edward Slingerland’s translation with minor changes. Slingerland’s translation: “The Master [Confucius] remarked to Yen Hui [Yuan], it is said, ‘When he is employed, he moves forward; when he is removed from the office, he holds himself in reserve.’ Surely this applied only to you and me?” Chen Shude, ed., Lunyu jishi 讀語集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 13.450. Edward Slingerland, trans., Confucius Analects: with Selections from Traditional Commentaries (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), 67.

90 These two lines allude to Thousand Character Classic (Qianziwen 千字文, attributed to Zhou Xingsi 周興嗣, dated 507-521), according to Francis W. Paar’s translation, in this text it reads: “Heaven and earth, dark and yellow;
錦絹不絶吐梭腸。  
絲織不斷吐梭腸。  
石女機停兮夜色向午，  
The stone woman stops the looms as the night scene advances toward noon.  
木人路轉兮月影移央。  
The wooden man turns on the road as the shadow of the moon moves to the center.  

In this verse, in addition to Caodong metaphors, Hongzhi not only uses poetic expressions from secular literature but also vernacular expressions from the original case to create his metaphorical conceit. Through these abundant metaphors, Hongzhi echoes the essential message in the initial case in a more refined way: complete realization entails the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, or the fusion of the essence and function. The verse opens by pointing out that a head and a tail have their own important place. Having both a head and a tail is as if a compass makes a circle and a quadrature makes a square. Hongzhi makes use of these allusions from *Zhuangzi*. The images of a compass and quadrature carry the sense of the essence or the principle, whereas a circle and a square connote the function or the phenomena. The first line means that essence manifests in function; function manifests through essence. In the second line, by employing an allusion from *Analects*, Hongzhi depicts the defects of having solely a head or a tail. That means to dwell either in the principle or the phenomena.


93 According to Tianqi’s commentary, Hongzhi uses the phrase, “One moves forward when one is employed” to illuminate that one should respond to conditions without merely dwelling in the proper position, the principle, and the realization of emptiness. This just is like only having a head, a metaphor for merely immersing in emptiness
Hongzhi makes a reference from *Baozang lun* 寶藏論 to illuminate the condition about the tail without the head (*wu tou zhi wei* 無頭之尾).\(^{94}\) This state is like a dull bird which nests on a reed and is unable to fly because it does not know how to survive in the forest. In contrast, Hongzhi employs an allusion from *Zhouyi* 周易 to delineate the status of a head without a tail (*wu wei zhi tou* 無尾之頭). That is like a ram in a dilemma because its horns get caught by a hedge.\(^{95}\) These two lines make the point that fixing either in mere absorption of emptiness or involvement in phenomena cannot actualize perfect enlightenment, as if one with either a head or a tail cannot function fully. Through vernacular expressions of both a bed and rice in the original encounter dialogues, the third couplet illuminates that having a head should eat other meals to gain strength whereas having a tail should sit on a bed. By using imagery of natural phenomena from *Thousand Character Classic* (*Qianziwen* 千字文), the fourth couplet depicts that the mind of duality either suddenly goes to the phenomenal world or suddenly enters the emptiness realm without being able to freely involve in the two realms. Clouds are a frequent metaphor for the changing nature of the phenomenal world, and frost represents the frozen mind that is

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\(^{94}\) The reference to “The birds resting on the reed” is from *Baozang lun* 寶藏論. According to Sharf’s translation, “In advancing along the Way, one comes across a myriad stray paths. A fish in distress will pause in a small puddle. A sick bird will rest on a reed. These two know not of the great sea nor of the dense forests. People hastening about their petty tasks are just the same”夫進道之由，中有萬途。困魚止澗，病鳥棲蘆，其二者不識於大海，不識於叢林，人趨乎小道其義亦然. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 162. *Baozang lun* 寶藏論, T 45, no.1857,144a (*juan 2*).

\(^{95}\) According to Edward L. Shaughnessy’s translation, “A ram butts a fence, is not able to retreat and not able to follow; there is no place beneficial; difficult but then auspicious 羚羊觸藩，不能退，不能遂，無攸利.” Edward L. Shaughnessy, trans., *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, Translated with an Introduction and Commentary (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 89. Huang Shouqi 黃壽祺 and Zhang Shanwen 張善文, ed. and annot., *Zhouyi yizhu* 周易譯註 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1989), 284.
motionlessly absorbed in emptiness. This elucidates that one become lively while suddenly realizing formlessness, instead of only remaining immersed in mundane phenomena. In other words, one should maintain the state of realizing the fusion of the principle as well as phenomena to attain perfect enlightenment without merely adhering to either side. Hongzhi concludes the verse by explicating that complete realization entails constant union of the principle and phenomena, through salient Caodong metaphors. By using such imagery as a thread matching a needle’s hole and the image of threads from a shuttle, Hongzhi points to the importance of the seamless unity between the principle and phenomena. In the ending couplet, in addition to the bright-dark symbols, Hongzhi employs the paradoxical imagery of insentient beings with action to explicate the mutual inclusion of the principle and phenomena: in the principle, there are phenomena; in phenomena, there is the principle. While realizing the state of merging the principle and phenomena, one transcends the duality of the principle and phenomena. Through these Caodong-style images, the final couplet conveys the perfect

96 According to Tianqi’s commentary, “Clouds fly to make rain” means that “one should not abide in the proper [emptiness]; otherwise, upon going to the phenomena world, one suddenly becomes thriving” 須不守正出則乍興. This expresses the state in which one is suddenly thriving while still involved in the phenomenal world, rather than staying in mere stillness of emptiness. In the oppositive perspective, “Dew freezes to become frost” is equivalent to a state that “one should not indulge in the worldly phenomena; otherwise, once entering the realm of emptiness, one suddenly declines.” 須不戀偏入則乍廢. Qiongjue Laoren Tianqi zhizhu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu, X 67.456a (juan 2).

97 The concluding couplet can be read from two structures of parallels to interpret the doctrinal message of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. First, according to the original structure, Tianqi comments, “The loom stops and night scenes toward moon” means not to abide in the adjunct position, phenomenal realm. 機停向午不住偏方 while “turn on road and move to the center” 路轉移央不居正位 means not to dwell in the adjunct, the realm of emptiness. Second, in accordance with alternating parallel structure (gejudui 隔句對), the final two lines can be read as one line: when the stone woman stops the loom, the wooden man already turns on the road; while the scene advances toward noon, the shadow of the moon already moves to the center. The imagery of stopping looms indicates realizing non-self, whereas “the wooden turns on a road” means one turn to the mundane world from the realm of contemplating emptiness. When the night moves toward the noon, the moon moves to the center. In the same vein, through the merging bright-dark imagery, the brightness of “the noon” as well as darkness of “the shadow of moon” connotes that from the mundane world, one moves to the empty state. In a poem of four lines, alternating parallel structure (gejudui 隔句對) refers to having the first line parallel to the third line as well the second line parallel to the fourth line. This kind of parallelism might involve antithesis or pairing, as well, the lengths of these lines may differ. Qiongjue Laoren Tianqi zhizhu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu, X 67.456a (juan 2).
realization of the congruence of the head and the tail, which is equivalent to the unity of the principle and phenomena. In this state, one can actively involve oneself in any phenomenon with a non-self mind. In short, in his commentary, Hongzhi not only creatively installs references from secular literary writings with doctrinal import, he also imubes vernacular expressions from the initial case with doctrinal meanings. He innovatively creates distinctive metaphors from mainstream Caodong symbols. By using varied elements from broad sources, Hongzhi presents the Caodong image in his commentarial verse. His usage of discrete references from a wide scope of sources might attempt to appeal to larger audiences, especially the literati. With the purpose of sectarian promotion in mind, it may be the case that Hongzhi aimed to help the Caodong identity gain recognition among a broader readership through his *gong’an* verses.

This section began by considering how the larger religious milieu and immediate conditions shaped Hongzhi’s portrayal of Caodong identity in his *gong’an* commentaries. During his first abbacy was also when he compiled *gong’an* commentaries. At this time, Buddhist institutions continued to suffer in the aftermath of Buddhist repression perpetrated by Emperor Huizong. Under Huizong, the state did not support Buddhism. This might have been a factor behind Hongzhi’s effort to illustrate Caodong identity through his *gong’an* works. Aside from the inferior status of Buddhism under the imperial state, state of revival of the Caodong tradition during the Song period might have been a driving force behind Hongzhi’s promotion of the Caodong perspective through *gong’an* commentaries. For Hongzhi, compiling *gong’an* commentaries was an important way to assert sectarian identity and to revitalize his own tradition. After discussing the major reasons for Hongzhi’s showcasing of principal Caodong teachings in his *gong’an* writings, this section has demonstrated that Hongzhi emphasized the core teaching of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena through a variety of metaphors.
and imagery in his *gong’an* commentarial verses. Indeed, he embeds core Caodong teachings through the metaphors used in his commentarial verses. However, Hongzhi uses metaphors in a way that differs from how his predecessors used them. His predecessors tended to use typical Caodong metaphors, whereas Hongzhi not only employs Caodong symbols, but also draws on a variety of elements from diverse and wider secular sources to create innovative metaphors to present the Caodong image. To revive his tradition, he displays the emblem of Caodong identity through abundant and fresh images in his *gong’an* writings. His strategy of constructing diverse metaphors to create commentary may have been a way to appeal to a larger audience in order for the Caodong lineage to gain broader recognition. That Hongzhi wrote commentarial verse to express Caodong identity early in his career as abbot suggests that his initial focus was on revitalizing Caodong. When Caodong Chan rose to prominence, it was within the context of increased sectarian rivalry; as a consequence, Hongzhi defended his lineage through sermons responding to criticisms of Caodong teachings.

**Responding to Criticism of Caodong by Discussing the Caodong Perspectives in Sermons**

The criticism of the Caodong Chan emerged during a period of increasing sectarianism. Awareness of this atmosphere is crucial to understanding Hongzhi’s effort to distinguish the Caodong position in his sermons. In particular, Hongzhi had a strong contemporary Linji counterpart, Dahui. It is well known that Dahui attacked Silent Illumination, a Chan approach that the Caodong tradition promoted. Because Silent Illumination was very successful in appealing to literati, Dahui’s criticism could be seen as a response to competition for literati patronage. In addition, increased sectarian rivalry emerged within the wider socio-political

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context. Dahui’s condemnation of Caodong Chan occurred during the transition into the
Southern Song (1127–1279). During this period, state policies became less favorable toward
Buddhism. The state also began to withdraw from the local government, which allowed local
literati to increase their engagement in local affairs. This situation resulted in sectarian
competition as Buddhist groups vied for local support from the increasingly powerful local
literati.\footnote{Ibid., 177.}

Dahui’s criticism of Silent Illumination Chan began around 1134 during Hongzhi’s
abbacy at Tiantong Monastery (1129–1157).\footnote{Hongzhi resided at Tiantong Monastery for a long time (1129–1157). Although he took the abbacy at Lingyin
Monastery in Hangzhou in 1139, he transferred back to Tiantong Monastery in the same year. See Introduction, 38.
Hongzhi’s sermons during his Tiantong abbacy only cover the period from 1129 to 1138. See Schlütter, “The
Record of Hongzhi,” 192.} Throughout Hongzhi sermons (1129–1138) during his abbacy at Tiantong, he never seems to have addressed Dahui’s attack on Silent
Illumination directly; as Schlütter notes, there is no evidence to suggest that Hongzhi replied to
Dahui’s attacks or that he was even informed about them.\footnote{Schlütter states, “Although Dahui frequently and fiercely attacked Silent Illumination, there is no evidence that
Hongzhi ever responded to these attacks or even that he was aware of them.” Schlütter, How Zen Became Zen, 122.}

Nevertheless, in a sermon, Hongzhi mentions people’s negative view of Caodong Chan as silence, and he responds to the criticism through identifying Caodong with the core teaching of the principle and phenomena. Even though Hongzhi did not specially give sermons to explicitly respond to the negative comments, in several sermons, Hongzhi seems to address crucial points concerning the criticism of the Caodong Chan and the Silent Illumination approach. By examining these sermons, I will explore how Hongzhi responded to criticism by utilizing Caodong’s cardinal teaching of the principle and phenomena. This allowed him to stress the dynamic aspect of the Caodong Chan in response to the accusation that it was static and silent. By correlating of Caodong’s core teaching with Silent Illumination Chan, he presented two sides of the Caodong position: Caodong core
teaching represented the doctrinal side, and Silent Illumination meditation practice represented the practical side. In addition, Hongzhi demonstrated the Caodong brand Chan as an efficient way to treat common defects in practice.

It is significant that in one sermon Hongzhi did acknowledge people’s negative view of Caodong Chan. In his entire collection of recorded sayings, this is his only direct response to his critics. This one instance appears in an informal sermon during his abbacy at Tiantong Monastery and might have been delivered after Dahui denounced Silent Illumination Chan. In this sermon, Hongzhi points out the general negative impression of Caodong Chan while clarifying realization of the original nature:

If you recognize the original head, all minds are a single mind. All dharma is a single dharma. They are clearly equal and exactly complete. Then you will know that the attained state is perfect, and Bodhi is complete. When flowers blossom, the world arises. If you can thus realize completely, you would be such a good Chan practitioner. However, today, people say, “Caodong Chan doesn’t have many words; it’s just being silent.” I would then say that you are being hasty now. I know you would try to guess. Yet you hardly realize that [the Caodong Chan] is void but numinous, empty but marvelous.

若識得本來頭，一切心皆是箇心，一切法皆是箇法。坦然平等，恰恰具足，便知道果滿菩提圓，花開世界起。若恁麼十成時，好箇禪和子。而今人卻道：「曹洞禪沒許多言語，默默地便是。」我也道儞於箇時莽鹵，我也知儞向其間卜度，殊不知虛而靈，空而妙。102

The key point of criticism here is that Caodong is merely silent without many words. In responding to this passive aspect of the Caodong Chan, Hongzhi singles out the lively aspect of the Caodong Chan. He uses “numinous” and “marvelous” to highlight the dynamic quality of the Caodong practice. He employs “void” and “empty” to connote the empty nature of the principle or the essence and pairs this with “numinous” and “marvelous” to delineate the dynamic aspect of the Caodong Chan, the phenomena and the function. His portrayal is still elusive and poetic.

Hence after this abstract depiction of Caodong Chan, Hongzhi turns to the definitive core

102 Hongzi lu, 4.241b10–242a4; Hongzi chanshi guanglu, T 48.58b (juan 5).
teaching of Shimen Xianyun 石門獻蘊 (d.u.; disciple of Qinglin Shiqian 青林師虔 d.904) to clarify the lively aspect of the Caodong Chan practice:

Haven’t you read that a monk asked Shimen, “What is the master’s teaching style?” Shimen answered, “Outside of things (phenomena), one alone rides a thousand-mile elephant. Under a ten thousand-year pine, one strikes a golden bell.” How can you practice it? How can you thoroughly penetrate it? Do not soak in dead water. Didn’t you see that a monk asked Liangshan, “Do you (the master) have a place to settle down and establish your pursuit? Shan said, “The dragon does not hide in dead water.” The monk asked, “How could there be a dragon in flowing water? Shan said, “[The dragon stays] in the blue lake without spitting mist.” If you can understand it, you will be a living man when dying. If you can comprehend it, you will be a dead man when living. You should be awake while approaching silent place. You should be clear while staying at a noisy place. Then you know that one lives while dying and cannot be hindered by emptiness. One dies while living and one cannot be obstructed by phenomena. Existence is not non-existence. Non-existence is not non-existence.

The poetic depiction of Shimen’s representative teaching explains that function arises from essence. “Outside of phenomena” symbolizes essence whereas “a thousand-mile elephant” refers

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103 “Stagnant water” seems to imply a criticism of silence, a deaden silence or a static state that refers to a state where one merely immerses oneself in contemplating the nature of emptiness without actively engaging in the phenomenal world.

104 In the recorded saying of Mian Xianjie 密庵咸杰 (1118–1186), The Recorded Sayings of Monk Mian 密菴和尚語錄 (1188), there is a reference to the dragon. In a sermon, a monk raised an old case related to Liangshan. The encounter dialogues read: “A monk asked Liangshan, ‘Do you (the master) have a place to settle down and establish your pursuit?’ Liangshan said, ‘The dragon does not hide in dead water.’ The monk asked, ‘how is the dragon in flowing water?’ Shan said, ‘it gives rise to clouds without spitting mist.’” Mian heshang yulu 密菴和尚語錄, T 47, no. 1999, 959b (juan 1). As Mian’s life (1118–1186) overlapped with Hongzhi’s (1091–1157), Hongzhi might be referring to the same old case associated with Liangshan. Yet, Hongzhi used “[The dragon stays] in the blue lake without spitting mist” rather than “[the dragon] gives rise to clouds without spitting mist. Hongzhi seems to have chosen the word he wants to use to convey the state of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena in different occasions and settings. I have discussed this problem in the main text.

105 Hongzhi lu, 4.242a4–8; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.58b14 (juan 5).
function arising from the essence. “Under a ten thousand-year pine” is a metaphor for the essence; the imagery “striking a golden bell” indicates function. Therefore, Shimen’s core teaching is equal to the Caodong central doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, or the fusion of the essence and function. Through this portrayal of Shimen’s teaching, Hongzhi articulates how Caodong Chan entails both silent and dynamic aspects. The silent aspect refers to the principle or the essence that conveys the state of contemplating emptiness. Conversely, the dynamic aspect denotes the great function arising from the essence, or vivid phenomena are manifested through principle. In addition, in response to the criticism of passive silence, he further urges people to avoid only engaging in the silent aspect by using metaphors associated with death to connote static silence.

Regarding the description of the representative teaching of Shimen, according to Daichi’s commentary on Hongzhi’s informal sermons, Tendō shōsanshō 天童小參抄, Daichi indicates that Hongzhi uses Shimen’s representative teaching to explain his earlier portrayal of the dynamic aspect of the Caodong Chan. Daichi explains that “Outside of phenomena” indicates the proper position; whereas, “a thousand-mile elephant” is thriving function arising from the proper position. He comments that the phrase of “under a ten thousand-year pine” refers to the place of great rest while “striking a golden bell” means that the pivot of the empty eon does not falls. The phrase, “a place of great rest” means non-thinking mind as if the mind rests without arising any thoughts, so it is equivalent to the essence or the principle. “The pivot of empty eon does not fall” connotes the function arising from this pivot because empty eon means the non-duality thinking. Thus Daichi’s commentary outlines that Shimen’s seminal teaching embodies the unity of the principle and the phenomena or the mutual inclusion of the essence and the fusion.

There is another reference to Shimen’s teaching in one of Hongzhi’s public sermon. It reads: “Empty essence has illumination. Even when not facing an object, the mirror always reflects. Constant functioning needs no effort. It is as if a pearl is placed in a plate, it turns by itself. Conditions cannot be linked to each other. Life and death cannot move each other. Therefore, it is said, ‘In the midst of brightness, there is darkness. Do not take on darkness when confronting [darkness]. In the midst of darkness there is brightness. Do not take on brightness to confront. Brightness and darkness correspond. They are like one step following another.’ What can one do in accordance with this? After a long while, he says, ‘Outside of things (phenomenon), one alone rides a thousand-mile elephant. Under a ten thousand-year pine, one strikes a golden bell.’” In this sermon, Hongzhi uses a variety of Caodong metaphors to convey the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. The metaphors include bright-dark imagery from “Cantong qi” as well as symbols of function and effort to refer respectively to principle and phenomena, or function and essence. That is Caodong’s core teaching as well as the essential teaching of Shimen. See Hongzhi lu, 3.176a11–b3; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.41b21 (juan 4). In addition, in the commentary of Danxia songgu, Linquan林泉 offers the context in which the monk asked about Shimen’s representative teaching. Before Shimen stated the above phrases to define his own teaching, Shimen instructed the monk to practice Shimen’s teaching. Shimen said, “You continue to possess true eyes whenever you
Hongzhi asserts that the key point in practicing Shimen’s teaching is not to soak in the dead water of a stagnant state; concretely, this means not to become immersed in contemplating emptiness. “Dead water” might imply criticism of passive silence (momo 默默). The metaphor “soaking in dead water” connotes a deadening static state during which one is immersed in the realm of emptiness and one has an undiscriminating mind that lacks the capacity to simultaneously engage in the phenomenal world. To clarify “avoiding stagnation,” Hongzhi employs the imagery of the energetic dragon in flowing water to express either the dynamic function emerging from essence or the vivid phenomena manifest in the stillness of emptiness. Hongzhi uses the simile of “the dragon does not hide in dead water” to express that one cannot dwell in the stillness of emptiness. He also takes the analogy of the dragon in a serene lake without spitting mist to convey the perfect realization that entails being involved in the phenomenal world with a mind that has the stillness of emptiness. The blue lake connotes the sense of serenity of flowing water that representing the dynamic mind in stillness of emptiness. The dragon without spitting mist symbolizes the capacity to actively engage in all phenomena in the mundane world without being influenced by any phenomena. Hence the enlightened mind maintains stillness like a serene lake; at the same, the mind is able to vividly respond to all phenomena just like the vitality of the dragon. This is the state of interfusion of silent and vital aspects of Caodong practice. In other words, Hongzhi uses this imagery to depict both the still and vivid aspects of Caodong Chan. The tranquil lake is likened to the silent essence or principle,
and the dragon’s vigor is likened to the dynamic phenomena or function. In the end, Hongzhi employs the imagery of living and dying as well as silent and noisy places as metaphors for the principle and phenomena in order to showcase the silent and vital aspects of Caodong Chan. By using these metaphors, Hongzhi elucidates how perfect practice is neither obstructed by emptiness nor hindered by phenomena. His cardinal point is that Caodong Chan is not attached either to existence or to non-existence. In other words, one should neither cling to phenomena nor become attached to emptiness.\footnote{Regarding the living and dying imagery, Menzan Zhuihō 面山瑞方 comments that one lives while dying and one cannot be hindered by emptiness; one dies while living and one cannot be obstructed by phenomena. This demonstrates that there is the proper within the adjunct and there is the adjunct within the proper, according to Menzan. Two critical words regarding the proper and the adjunct refer to the principle and the phenomena: “emptiness” and “phenomena.” Thus, Menzan’s commentary conveys the doctrinal message of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena without being obstructed by each other. Menzan Zhuihō 面山瑞方, Tendōzan Kaku oshō shōsanroku monge 天童山覺和尚小參錄聞解 (manuscript dated 1804–1818 held by Komazawa University Library, Tokyo).} He goes on to explain that a silent place refers to the principle or the essence as it has the connotation of realizing the state of stillness empty; in contrast, a noisy place expresses the state of the phenomenal world; as such, it is a metaphor for phenomena or function. The depiction about existence and non-existence makes a point that existence of phenomena and non-existence of the entity of self are non-dual. This illuminates the interpenetration between the principle and phenomena. In summary, in response to the criticism of passive silence, Hongzhi highlights the dynamic aspect of the Caodong Chan. He points out the Caodong practice places equal emphasis on both realizing stillness of emptiness and vividly engagement with all phenomena. That is the state of the merging of emptiness and phenomena, as well the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. In addition, by using an expression associated with deadening silence, Hongzhi urges people not to fall into a static silence.

As mentioned above, except the one case just discussed Hongzhi’s sermons do not provide any explicit references to his response to criticisms. Nevertheless there are sermons in
which Hongzhi expounds on the theme of silence and correlates silence with the doctrine of the principle and phenomena to highlight the overlooked dynamism of Caodong Chan. By using silence as the central theme in his sermons, Hongzhi might state an implicit response to the criticism of passive silence. It is significant to consider two important points concerning Hongzhi’s use of reduplicative (momo 默默) in his sermons. First, as noted earlier, “momo” is the same expression that appears in criticisms of Caodong Chan to claim that it “is just being silent” 默默地便是. Second, it is significant that throughout Hongzhi’s sermons, he rarely uses the reduplicative momo 默默 (silence) as the central theme in his sermons. In his public sermons during his abbacy at Tiantong, in addition to this sermon, there are only two other sermons in which he employs momo as a main topic. Moreover, in sermons from his earlier career prior to his Tiantong abbacy—also the time before Dahui’s criticism—“momo” never appears as a theme in his sermons. Bearing these facts in mind supports my observation that the sermon I am going to examine now might have indirectly served as a response to criticism of Caodong Chan. This sermon reads:

It [The mind] is silent, but numinous and marvelous without involving traces. It is subtle and everlasting while functioning. It responds without following faculties. In a

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109 One of these two sermons addresses the moment when Śākyamuni Buddha extends silent transmission to Mahākāśyapa; the other uses metaphors to explicate silence and illumination. I have searched Hongzhi’s public and informal sermons through the CBETA site, using the phrase, “momo 默默.” “Momo” appeared six times in his public sermons at Tiantong abbacy. There are only three sermons in which Hongzhi uses momo as the chief theme. In addition to discussed one. It reads: 上堂世尊無說說，迦葉不聞聞。默默到時良自慶，家山元在白雲根。in Hongzhi lu, 3.202b2–3; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.48b20 (juan 4). 上堂默默相投時節，燈燈不斷光明，其間著脚渾無地，望盡玉壺連底清。in Hongzhi lu, 3.215b6–7; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.52a (juan 4). In another three sermons, Hongzhi used momo as explanations for other themes, rather than the topic of silence and illumination.

110 According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, ji 迹 has the meaning of discriminating consciousness.

111 The phrase, mianmian eryong 綿綿而用 alludes to Laozi. I adopt Robert G. Henricks’ translation with minor changes. Henricks’s translation reads: “The Valley spirit never dies; we call it the mysterious female. The gates of the mysterious female—these we call the root of Heaven and Earth. Subtle yet everlasting! It seems to exist. In being used, it is not exhausted” 谷神不死，是謂玄牝。玄牝之門，是謂天地根。綿綿若存，用之不勤. Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, comp., Laozi jiaoshi 老子校譯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 6.25–27. Robert G. Henricks
jade plate, a pearl spins by itself without being turned. In a glass mirror, images come in it without being received. If one can attain such a state, congruence of both that [the principle and the phenomena] mutually interfuse and they marvelously harmonize; the adjunct and the perfect mutually involve.\(^{112}\) Both arrive at the inconceivable state. What is it like when one realizes it? The fruit is full and the enlightenment is complete. The flower blossoms and the world arises.

默默而靈，妙不涉迹。綿綿而用，應不循根。翡翠盤中之珠，不撥自轉。玻璃鏡中之像，無受而來。若能恁麼，也兼帶妙叶，宛轉偏圓，俱到不思議處。且作麼生體悉？果滿菩提圓，華開世界起。\(^{113}\)

There are two crucial points in this sermon concerning Hongzhi’s response to criticism. First, Hongzhi uses the same term “momo” 默默 (silence) that is the target of criticism of the Caodong Chan. Second, the theme focuses on the vital feature of silence and the lively function emerging from this silence. By highlighting the dynamic feature of silence and the function arising from the silence as essence, Hongzhi expounds that realization of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena entails these two aspects: dynamic silence and vivid function arise from this vital silence. Hongzhi’s emphasis on the lively aspect of silence can serve as a response to criticism of silence on the Caodong Chan. Hongzhi begins his sermon by underlining the dynamic quality in silence that refers to a serene mind that is not involved with discriminative thinking. The silent mind is motionless without being influenced by any conditions. The tranquility of the mind is not deadened silence as it gives rises to function. In true silence, the mind is marvelous, as it entails no discriminating consciousness. The stillness of mind does not abide in anything so it does not leave any trace. Hongzhi next delineates the responsive function emerging from silence. The

\(^{112}\) Tianqi comments Hongzhi’s commentarial verse on another cases involving Yunmen 雲門 and Qianfeng 乾峰, he notes “the mutual use of the principle and the phenomena” 理事互用 to explain Hongzhi’s expression, “the adjunct and the perfect mutually involve” 宛轉偏圓. \textit{Qiongjiee Laoren Tianqi zhidu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu}, X 67.452c (juan 1).

\(^{113}\) \textit{Hongzhi lu}, 3.216a7–10; \textit{Hongzhi chanshi guanglu}, T 48.52a (juan 4).
mind with true silence responds to any phenomena without relying on the six sense organs. This is because the motionless mind can sense any one condition without contacting it through physical faculties. Then, by using the similes of a turning pearl on a plate and images reflected in a mirror, Hongzhi conveys the cardinal importance of the unity of the principle and phenomena, or the fusion of the essence and function. When one attains this realized state, one’s tranquil mind vividly responds to conditions that it encounters without contacting them. The simile of a pearl on a plate suggests that the mind without discriminating thought is like a smooth plate that allows a pearl to turn by itself without the exertion of any external effort. This also expresses the mind of perfect realization as a mind that can react to any conditions without using sense faculties. This state of realization is also like a mirror that can reflect images without grasping them. Both metaphors convey the mind of non-duality that responds to any phenomena without discriminating among them. These images also express the idea of a function that involves no effort. Hongzhi then explicates that once one can reach such a state, one attains the state of congruence of the principle and phenomena. Here Hongzhi uses key Caodong expressions such as “congruence of both that [the principle and the phenomena] mutually interfuse and they marvelously harmonize” 兼帶妙叶 and of “the adjunct and the perfect mutually involve” 宛轉偏圆. In the end, Hongzhi depicts the realization of this interfusion can reach an ineffable state that is the fruition of Bodhi mind. Possibly in response to negative criticism of static silence, Hongzhi advocates that the realization of the mutual fusion of the principle and phenomena involves dynamic silence and function, which emerges from this active but still silence.

Criticism of Caodong Chan was strongly associated with Silent Illumination Chan as a result of Dahui’s furious attack at that time. Consideration of the connection between the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena with Silent Illumination Chan can inform our
understanding concerning Hongzhi’s response to the criticism of the Caodong Chan. It can also clarify why Hongzhi drew on realizing Silent Illumination from the perspective of meditative practice in his response to when he wanted to place primary emphasis on the dynamic aspect of Caodong Chan. Furthermore, we can deepen our understanding of why Hongzhi often uses the core teaching of Caodong to clarify any misconceptions regarding passive silence that some associated with the Silent Illumination approach.

Hongzhi views the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena as well as Silent Illumination Chan as the essence of the Caodong. Indeed, the Caodong core teaching of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, or fusion of the essence and function forms the doctrinal foundation of the Caodong hallmark: Silent Illumination Chan. Silent Illumination actually is a meditative practice that embodies the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, or the essence and function. Therefore, Caodong identity can be presented from two sides: the doctrinal side is the interfusion of principle and phenomena, whereas the practical side is the meditative practice of Silent Illumination. Scholars tend to overlook the connection between these two aspects of Caodong Chan identity and merely focus on the meaning of Silent Illumination; in particular, they emphasize the silent aspect through the lens of Dahui’s condemnation. Next, I will explain the practice of Silent Illumination. Then, I will examine how the teaching of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena manifests by means of Silent Illumination practice.

114 In “Silent Illumination Inscription,” Hongzhi regards the Silent Illumination Chan as the epitome of the Caodong practice. In close reading on the “Silent Illumination Inscription,” Schlüter states, “[Hongzhi] declares that silent illumination is the essential teaching of the Caodong tradition, and presents it as being at the center of Caodong self-definition.” Schlüter’s translation regarding these stanzas in the text reads: “when silent illumination is perfected and obtained, /the teaching of our tradition [zong] is set in motion./ Our tradition’s teaching of silent illumination/ penetrates to the highest peak and the deepest deep” 猶照至得/輸我宗家/宗家默照/透頂透底. Schlüter, How Zen Became Zen, 146, 148. See “Silent Illumination Inscription,” in Hongzhi Chanshi guanglu, T 48.84a (juan 8); Hongzhi lu, 1.77–78.
In Silent Illumination practice, silence and illumination mutually operate. The aspect of silence contains two layers of meaning: quiet sitting and silence of mind. Through the physical form of sitting quietly, the mind lets go of any thought and reaches a state of profound stillness without giving rise to discriminative thinking. In addition to this aspect of silencing the mind, from the tranquil mind awareness (zhi 知) simultaneously emerges. According to Hongzhi’s well-known admonition of sitting meditation, the “Lancet of Seated Meditation” zuochan zhen 坐禪箴, this awareness might refer to the aspect of illumination within Silent Illumination practice. This text is the only discussion of sitting meditation found in Hongzhi’s writings. As such, it probably refers to Silent Illumination Chan. The key lines read, “Without coming into contact with things—it knows; without having objects oppose it, it illumines” 不觸事而知，不對緣而照. These lines demonstrate both the aspects of silence and illumination: not making contact with phenomena is silence, while knowing is illumination, according to Master Sheng Yen. In the same vein, the second line shows that avoiding involvement with conditions is silence, while “it illumines” is illumination. Master Sheng Yen also points out the different emphasis on these two lines: the first line focuses on silence as “in the midst of silence there is illumination.” By contrast, the second line emphasizes “illumination in the midst of which there is silence.”

Hongzhi’s meditation admonition demonstrates that Silent Illumination is a

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115 Regarding quiet meditative practice, Hongzhi often used the compound, silent sitting (mozuo 默坐 or quiet sitting (jingzuo 靜坐). For example, in Hongzhi’s self-portrait encomia at the request of Chan men, there is a line, “Silently sitting on a folding chair” 默坐胡床兮. Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.79a1 (juan 7). In addition, in Hongzhi’s self-portrait encomia at the request of Chan men and fund-raiser, there are lines “Simply silently and tranquilly sitting, it [the mind] illuminates itself” 默默坐寒唯自照, and “quietly sitting without knowing leisure” 靜坐不知閑. Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.101c (juan 9).

dynamic practice shown through this axiom: the mind becomes silent, yet simultaneously knows everything with keen awareness. This aspect of broad awareness vigorously manifests in the tranquil mind without falling to deaden silence, which is the crucial point of criticism of Caodong Chan. For example, Dahui employs many negative expressions, such as “black mountain and ghostly cave” (heishan guiku 黑山鬼窟) to attack Silent Illumination practice, since he regarded this approach as passive meditation because it merely focuses on silence, making the mind dull without emphasizing on breakthrough enlightenment. However, Hongzhi’s characterization of the illumination aspect of Silent Illumination Chan demonstrates the practice’s keen emphasis on maintaining awareness.

After understanding Silent Illumination from the perspective of meditation, I now turn to examine different views of the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena—or the essence and the function—as the theoretical basis of Silent Illumination practice. There are two levels to view this core Caodong teaching as the doctrinal foundation of the Silent Illumination approach. On the first level, silence and illumination mutually operate as both essence and function. On the second level, through meditation using the Silent Illumination approach, one’s mind reaches a state of the full illumination of silence, thereby the mind functions marvelously as it can perfectly respond to any phenomena in the mundane world. Thus, full illumination of silence is the essence, or the principle; appropriate interaction with phenomena is the responsive function, or the phenomena.

In many of Hongzhi’s written sermons—dharma words (fayu 法語) that were addressed individually either to monks or to lay people without identifying them—he provides instruction

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117 Schlütter demonstrates that Dahui employed several specific expressions to criticize Silent Illumination Chan. Schlütter, How Zen Became Zen, 116–118, 126, 129–140.
on Silent Illumination Chan that poetically depicts the two levels of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena— the essence and function— through Silent Illumination practice. For example, in the opening of a written sermon, Hongzhi portrays both the silent and illumination aspects within Silent Illumination, reading, “The mind abides in tranquility and silence. As such, it departs from all conditions. It becomes vastly clear and bright without any dust. Directly it transcends and thoroughly sheds [all conditions].” The first half depicts silence, while the second half delineates illumination. With regard to silence, when the mind is absorbed in profound silence, it is not influenced by any conditions. At the same time, the awareness of the mind becomes vast and bright and releases any phenomena it encounters without attaching any thought to it. In this way, illumination also represents the transcendence of duality. Then, Hongzhi depicts that this enlightened state is inherent and intrinsically is endowed. “It [the mind] returns to the original place. That is not a new place that is found today. This is the old house before the great eon.” At a state when both silence and illumination activate together, “[the mind] is clear, bright and not dim; it is numinous, potent and shines alone.” The first line presents the aspect of silence and the second line portrays the aspect of illumination. The mind is quiet but does not fall into stupor; simultaneously, it is dynamic and luminous as it is sharp and aware of everything. “When it works in this way, not one tiny hair arises and not one speck of dust obstructs.” This describes the enlightened mind without any discriminative thought, which is the state of non-duality. Hongzhi continues to explain this state in which both silence and illumination mutually work: “All thoughts wither away and freeze to reach [the state of] great rest. It becomes thoroughly vast and clearly knowing.”
represents the silence in Silent Illumination. The second line expresses the clarity of awareness like illumination, so it represents the aspect of illumination within Silent Illumination. In this state, one lets go of any discriminating thought to silence the mind; furthermore, at the same time, the mind becomes serenely aware. Hongzhi’s usage of “withered” (ku 枯) “frozen” (han 寒) are key words under Dahui’s criticism of Silent Illumination Chan. Hongzhi’s sermon explains the interfusion of silence and illumination and how silence and illumination mutually operate as both the essence and the function as well as the principle and the phenomena. Hongzhi concludes the sermon to depict the second level of the interfusion of the essence and function manifesting in Silent Illumination. That is, the luminous mind attained through Silent Illumination Chan responds perfectly to whatever it encounters. Therefore, the illuminated mind is essence, whereas responsiveness is function. Hongzhi writes, “There is not a speck of the dust of thought. It is pure without perceptual objects of thought. It is as if when one steps back and releases one’s grip, one thoroughly realizes [the Buddha nature]. Then the mind can emit radiance to respond to the world. [The mind’s response] matches mutually with every object. It responds precisely and perfectly at every place.”

118 For example, Dahui employed the expression “cold ash” or “withered wood” in a general preaching sermon. According to Schlüter’s translation, Dahui’s statement reads: “Literati often have [the problem of] busy minds. So today, in many places, there is a kind of heretical silent illumination Chan. [The people who teach this] see that literati are obstructed by worldly concerns and that their hearts are not at peace, and accordingly they teach them to be like ‘cold ashes or dry wood,’ or like ‘a strip of white silk,’ or like ‘an incense pot in an old shrine,’ or ‘cold and somber.’” 而今諸方有一般默照邪禪，見士大夫為塵勞所障方寸不寧，便教他寒灰枯木去，一條白練去，古廟香爐去，冷湫湫地去. Dahui Puju chanshi yulu, T 47.884c12 (juan 17). Schlüter points out that Dahui used specific expression associated with Silent Illumination to criticize Silent Illumination Chan. Schlüter, How Zen Became Zen, the translation is 125–126, 132.

119 According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, in the Chan tradition, sashou 撒手 means the ability to let go of any view of reality. The instant one can completely let go of the mind’s grasping of thoughts and views, one will realize the true nature of reality.
The mind that realizes the ultimate truth can appropriately respond to the mundane world. This is the second level, within the perfect state of interfusion of silence and illumination, the mind can vividly respond to all phenomena. Which is to say, the great function emerging from the luminous mind is the full illumination of silence. Through the Silent Illumination approach, one actualizes the enlightenment by manifesting the illuminated mind that is intrinsically endowed, and maintaining the enlightened state moment by moment. This is not the explosive experience of awakening that Dahui emphasized in his advocacy of \textit{huatou} 話頭 practice. Thus, Silent Illumination approach emphasizes oneness of practice and enlightenment without emphasizing a breakthrough experience. Nevertheless, the de-emphasis of the sudden moment of enlightenment became Dahui’s central target of criticism.

In the previous passage, it is clear that the Caodong key teachings, the principle and the phenomena, or the essence and the function, manifest by means of Silent Illumination practice at two levels. That is, Caodong cardinal doctrine places the same emphasis on the principle and the

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120 The whole written sermon reads: “The mind abides in tranquility and silence. As such, it departs from all conditions. It becomes vastly clear and bright without any dust. It transcends [all conditions] directly and thoroughly sheds [them]. It returns to the original place. That is not a new place that is found today. This is the old house before the great eon. It is clear, bright and not dim; it is numinous, and shines alone. In this manner, it never stops working. When it works in this way, not one tiny hair arises and not one speck of dust obstructs. All thoughts wither away and freeze to reach [the state of] great rest. It becomes thoroughly vast and clearly knowing. If the mind does not rest completely, it can reach nowhere [close to] the realm that one transcends the birth and the death. The mind breaks through directly. There is not a speck of the dust of thought. It is pure without perceptual objects of thought. It is as just as if one has stepped back and released one’s grip, one thoroughly realizes [the Buddha nature]. Then the mind can emit radiance to respond to the world. [The mind’s response] matches mutually with every object. It responds precisely and perfectly at every place. Hence it is said, “Every dharma is not hidden and concealed; in the past and present it always manifests and reveals” 黙自住，如如離緣。豁明無塵，直下透脫。元來到箇處，不是今日新有底，從舊家曠大劫前。歷歷不昏，靈靈獨耀。雖然恁麼，不得不為。當恁麼為時，直教一毫不生，一塵不翳。枯寒大休，廓徹明白。若休歇不盡，欲到箇境界出生死，無有是處。直下打得透。了無思塵，淨無緣慮。退步撒手，徹底了也，便能發光應世，物物相投，處處恰好。所以道：「法法不隱藏，古今常顯露。」 \textit{Hongzhi lu}, 4.300a10–301a4; \textit{Hongzhi chanshi guanglu}, T 48.74b (juan 6).


phenomena, as well as the essence and the function; in the very same way, in the Silent Illumination approach, silence and illumination simultaneously operate without emphasizing either aspect. Thus, through Silent Illumination meditation, one can realize the state the interfusion of the principle and phenomena as well as the fusion of the essence and function. There is silence in illumination; there is illumination in silence. The two aspects of silence and illumination are inseparable. That is the reason why Hongzhi often points to Caodong identity, the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, to highlight the dynamic aspect of silence. In so doing, Hongzhi points to the cardinal importance that the Caodong Chan actually entails both silent and dynamic aspects. Thus, he implicitly responds to negative remarks made on the Caodong Chan concerning passive silence.

Hongzhi regards Silent Illumination as the prime practice since the Caodong core doctrine can manifest through this meditative method. Hongzhi also considers the Caodong core

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124 Here, I focus on using Hongzhi’s sermons to explore the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena as well as the unity of essence and function; yet, in Hongzhi’s famous poem, “Silent Illumination Inscription,” he actually explicates a variety of themes concerning the two levels of truth, absolute and relative. In “Silent Illumination Inscription,” according to Master Sheng Yen, “Through the words of “silence” and “illumination,” Hongzhi articulates the themes of the duality of essence and function, principle and phenomena, emptiness and existence, brightness and darkness, empty eon and present time, equality and difference, absolute and relative.宏智禪師在默照銘, 用默照二字，揭出了體用、理事、空有、明暗、空劫今時、平等差別、絕待相對的主題. Unfortunately, Master Sheng Yen does not offer analysis or a close reading. Sheng Yen fashi 聖嚴法師, Chanmen xiuzheng zhiyao 禪門修證指要 (Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1980), 121. In “Silent Illumination Inscription,” there are lines that convey these themes. For example, “It is the way of Silent Illumination, /and the root of detachment and subtlety / Vision penetrating into detachment and subtlety/ It is [like] weaving with a gold shuttle and a jade loom. / Proper and adjunct yield to each other; light and dark are interdependent./ Depending on neither subject nor object, /at the right time they interact” 默照之道/離微之根/徹見離微/金梭玉機/正偏宛轉/明暗因依/依無能所/底時回互. In addition to drawing on salient metaphors and imageries of Caodong, Hongzhi employs doctrinal terms to convey the experience of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena or unity of the essence and function, through the Silent Illumination approach. Typical Caodong metaphors include the image of the shuttle and the loom, the dual symbol of the proper and the adjunct, as well as the imagery of brightness and darkness. Hongzhi also uses doctrinal terminologies of subject and object (nengsuō 能所) and also the expression of liwei 离微 (detachment and subtlety). Detachment refers to departure from all phenomena. As such, it connotes the essence or the principle. Subtlety means subtle function; therefore, it indicates the function or phenomena. Sharf provides a detailed discussion of this expression and Hongzhi’s usage of this term in Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism, 196–203. Hongzhi lù, 1.77a9–78a5; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T. 48.84a14 (juan 8). I adopt Taigen Daniel Leighton’s translation with minor changes. See Taigen Daniel Leighton and Yi Wu, trans., Cultivating the Empty Field: The Silent Illumination of Zen Master Hongzhi (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1991), 67.
teaching not only as an efficient method to treat most defects in practitioners’ of practice, but also as a means of meditation through which one can attain the realized state taught by all other Chan traditions. Confronting the criticism of passive silence that might relegate the Caodong Chan as an inferior method of meditation to pursue enlightenment, Hongzhi assures that the Caodong Chan is an approach that can reach the same level of realization as other Chan lineages. In other words, each of the five Chan traditions has its own distinctive approach to attain the same realization. By making that assertion, Hongzhi implicitly offers a response to criticisms of Caodong Chan. Hongzhi’s statement of the teaching of the principle and the phenomena as an efficient way to deal with common defects in practitioners’ methods appears in his informal sermon delivered during his abbacy in Tiantong. Hongzhi says, “Presently, brothers realizing the way tend to sit on the two extremes [of the proper and the adjunct]. This all becomes defective. Then they cannot turn back to sides nimbly. The proper goes and the adjunct comes. One can fully benefit from this” 今時兄弟體道多只坐在兩頭，俱成過患，不能宛轉旁參，偏正往來，十成受用. Hongzhi indicates that most practitioners were trapped either in proper position or the adjunct position. In other words, most practitioners attach themselves either to existence or emptiness. At one extreme, they are caught in the realm of emptiness, at the other extreme; they cling to the world of phenomena. Hence they are not able to mutually involve in the two realms. Hongzhi further clarifies this problem, “One is able to realize birth and death, but unable to understand the present moment. One’s defect is in the present moment. One is able to

125 Hongzhi 4.279a3–5; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.68b (juan 5).

126 In a different context, Master Sheng Yen explains the defect of clinging to either existence or emptiness. When he illuminates the enlightenment experience of Dongshan Liangjie, the founder of the Caodong tradition, he says, “Most practitioners are attached either to existence or emptiness. Attachment to existence is dualistic involvement with object or subject. Attachment to emptiness arises when you become attached to the feeling that duality has disappeared. Here there is still a subtle dualism: attachment of self to its experience of emptiness. When existence and emptiness merge in a laugh, there is no longer a contradiction within phenomenal reality.” Master Sheng Yen, Illuminating Silence, 102.
realize the present moment, but not understand birth and death. One’s defect is birth and death.”

Hongzhi’s explanation implies that one should transcend the duality between birth-death and the present moment, the duality of the ultimate and conventional truth. After Hongzhi addresses the defects of this practice and explains the state of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, he points out the state of union of the principle and phenomena or fusion of the essence and function is enlightenment, which the essential teachings of other Chan traditions, such as Yunmen, Linji, Fayan, and Weiyan also actualize. Hongzhi concludes this informal sermon by reiterating the theme of the principle and phenomena: “When one penetrates the principle and the phenomena, one begins to obtain coming and going without obstruction” 理事貫通，往來無礙 始得.

Hongzhi presents the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena as a means to address the dilemma he witnesses within the practitioners’ proclivity to attach themselves to either existence or emptiness. Although Hongzhi does not specifically address the practical effect of this problem, he states that this problem makes people unable to transcend birth and death and to become distracted by language. To instruct students to avoid the faults of becoming stuck on either of the two extremes of existence of phenomena and emptiness, Hongzhi reiterates the

127 *Hongzhi lu, 4.279a5–6; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.68b (juan 5).*

128 In the same vein, in an informal sermon, by using the metaphor of birth and death, Hongzhi explicates the state in which people can interfuse the essence and function. “People who attain the essence cannot be moved by birth and death. People who attain the function can cross without being obstructed. On the surface, they cannot be hindered by the phenomena. Within the inner, they cannot be confined by silence” 兄弟得體底人，生死搖動不得，得用底人，縱横留滯不得，若也在表不被物礙，在裡不被寂囚. *Hongzhi lu, 4.271b2–3; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.66b (juan 5).*

129 This whole sermon is in *Hongzhi lu, 4.277b5–279b12; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.68b (juan 5).*

130 “They cannot transcend birth and death. They become strayed by language. They cannot liberate from what they see and hear. They cannot attain freedom. 於生死中不能超脫。盡被一切語言流轉。於見聞中不能脫略。不能自由。” *Hongzhi lu, 4.279b5–6; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.68b (juan 5).*
teaching of the principle and phenomena. He emphasizes the effectiveness of Caodong Chan and assures that it can achieve the same state of realization as those claimed by the other Chan lineages.

This section has shown that the criticism of the Caodong Chan occurred within increasing sectarian rivalry among Chan lineages. The general negative view targeted the static silence of the Caodong Chan and is reflected in Dahui’s condemnation of Silent Illumination Chan, the hallmark of the Caodong tradition. Since Dahui regarded this Chan approach as passive silence without seeking breakthrough enlightenment, he also denounced silence that leads to dullness, so, he asserted, that within the stillness of Silent Illumination Chan wisdom cannot arise. In response, and under fierce criticism of Caodong Chan, Hongzhi employed a central strategy to portray the Caodong identity, the core Caodong teaching of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, or the fusion of the essence and function. In this way, Hongzhi ingrained the Caodong identity through responses to the criticism from different perspectives. He intended to highlight the vital aspects of Caodong practice. By advocating the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, he repeatedly stressed that Caodong Chan entails both silent and dynamic aspects. In the Caodong tradition, the perfect realization is to experience the oneness of the two realms that is emptiness and phenomena. In other words, when encountering any phenomena, one sees the nature of emptiness manifested in all phenomena. There is no duality between emptiness and phenomena. Hongzhi used this Caodong central teaching to urge people not to fall into either side. In particular, he employed the metaphor related to the state of deadening silence to emphasize not to just dwell in stillness of emptiness without actively engaged in the phenomenal world. In addition, he showed that the Caodong core doctrine singled out lively and responsive functions arising from the essence of the silence. In doing so, he highlighted a vigorous facet of
the Caodong Chan. In addition, Dahui furiously attacked the Silent Illumination Chan among literati. In response, using “silence” as the central point in sermons, and further showcasing the Caodong doctrinal position, Hongzhi pointed out, by means of Silent Illumination meditation, that the realizing state is equal to the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Therefore, Silent Illumination does not merely entail passive silence. Hongzhi also promoted the Caodong Chan as an efficient method to treat common defective practices, as people tended to attach themselves either to emptiness or to phenomena. This results in not being able to merge both sides to become one without duality. Hongzhi further asserts that Caodong Chan is an approach that reaches the same level of realization that are expounded by the distinctive methods of other Chan lineages. He even claims that the core Caodong doctrine as a teaching allows one to attain the enlightenment that all Buddhas and patriarchs have transmitted. In short, this section demonstrates that, in varied aspects of his sermons, Hongzhi created a sectarian identity for Caodong Chan that responded to the criticisms levied against Caodong practice.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the larger and surrounding contexts as well as Hongzhi’s creation of Caodong identity from three aspects. First, Hongzhi identified the essence of the Caodong Chan as the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Second, he shaped the Caodong image through metaphors associated with this teaching in his gong’an commentarial verses. Third, he responded to criticism of the Caodong Chan through the Caodong doctrinal position of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena in sermons.

In the larger intellectual milieu, Hongzhi’s commitment to express Caodong identity, the teaching of the principle and the phenomena overlapped the major theme, studies of principle
(Lixue 理學) in the Daoxue movement, although both Caodong and Daoxue actually explored the principle in different ways, and ultimately pursued different goals. This chapter also places Caodong teachings in the broader trajectory of Buddhist doctrine to demonstrate that the seminal Caodong teaching was indeed a continuation of the cardinal Huayan teaching (i.e., the interpenetration of the principle and the phenomena). Yet Caodong and Huayan explicated this teaching in different manners. As a doctrinal tradition, the Huayan elucidated this teaching in a form of doctrinal exegesis, whereas the Caodong illuminated it through metaphors. Caodong’s metaphorical usage also reflected the trend of the broader Chan tradition that discredited conventional forms, words in particular, to articulate the ultimate truth. Under these wider intellectual contexts, first, Hongzhi created Caodong identity through the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena as the definitive core teaching of the Caodong tradition. Before examining Hongzhi’s creation of the Caodong identity, we have seen that Caodong monks constructed diverse sets of metaphors to express the Caodong identity. Within this trend of metaphorical language to advocate Caodong teaching, Hongzhi also employed metaphors associated with this doctrine to define the distinctive teaching style of Caodong. In addition to mainstream Caodong metaphors, Hongzhi also drew on elements from secular sources to create alternative imagery in order to display Caodong images more effectively than previous efforts had been.

Second, in this chapter I have demonstrated that Hongzhi created Caodong identity through metaphors related to seminal Caodong teaching in his gong’an poetry. The less favored position of Buddhism under the Song court and the status of the revival of Caodong were probably the major driving forces behind Hongzhi’s devotion to expressing and elucidating sectarian identity through his gong’an commentaries. Prior to Hongzhi, his Caodong
predecessors already established the legacy to employ the *gong’an* commentaries as an important vehicle to express their sectarian identity by using metaphors associated with pivotal Caodong teachings. Hongzhi also used this same strategy to present Caodong image, yet he devised more creative imagery by referencing secular writings as well as Buddhist ones. His usage of a broad scope of secular sources to innovate his metaphors is a striking feature that differs from the approach of past Caodong masters.

As his *gong’an* compilation was his first publication, as well as was circulated as a separate text from his collection of recorded sayings, his incorporation of elements from secular literature to create metaphors may have indeed been to reach a larger audience, including specifically the literati. By doing so, he probably attempted to help Caodong gain recognition among a wider readership. This can be seen as his efforts to revitalize a tradition that was still in a state of decline. In addition, by delving into how Hongzhi used metaphors to showcase sectarian identity, I have shown his distinctive usage of the *gong’an* among the varied Chan lineages. Scholars tended to think that the definitive practice of the Caodong tradition is the Silent Illumination approach, hence the usage of *gong’an* as a practice is less important than Linji. Linji’s hallmark practice is well known as contemplating crucial phrases from *gong’an* to generate doubt that leads to explosive enlightenment. Nevertheless, the Caodong tradition employs *gong’an* in a different way from Linji. Although Caodong did not develop a practice originating from *gong’an*, the Caodong identity, Caodong’s core definitive teaching of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena were embedded in the Caodong *gong’an* commentaries. Furthermore, this seminal Caodong teaching forms the doctrinal foundation of Silent Illumination meditative practice. In addition, the usage of *gong’an* as a crucial vehicle to promote distinctive teaching styles within both Linji and Caodong traditions also reveals the
changing trend in *gong’an* compilations. The Caodong masters’ usage of *gong’an* commentaries as an important venue to express sectarian identity reflects the tendency that Chan masters from different Chan traditions used *gong’an* commentaries to disseminate their own traditions’ representative practices, techniques, or essential teachings. This approach differs from the commentarial strategies of earlier *gong’an* commentators, who focused on illuminating the essential points of cases or expressing their own insight into encounter dialogues of old cases. While Caodong monks aimed to articulate Caodong teaching in *gong’an* commentaries, Linji monks attempted to guide people to practice *huatou* 話頭 in *gong’an* commentaries. In other words, despite sharing the same pedagogical purpose, the earlier *gong’an* works emphasized the conveyance of cardinal points embedded in the encounter dialogues, while the latter *gong’an* commentaries stressed sectarian promotion as both Linji and Caodong traditions created distinctive self-images in their *gong’an* works.

Finally, this chapter shows how Hongzhi created Caodong identity through sermons responding to criticism. With the rise of the Caodong tradition, the prevalence of Caodong Chan was probably a crucial condition that spurred the denouncing of the Caodong teachings by competitors. The common negative attitude about Caodong Chan focuses on passive silence. In response to this criticism, Hongzhi’s critical strategy is to articulate Caodong identity, its core teaching. By expounding Caodong’s key teaching, he not only highlighted the dynamic aspects of Caodong Chan, but also improved the Caodong image in the face of fierce criticism. To address the negative impression of the passive silence, he repeated again and again that the true Caodong Chan entails both the silent and the dynamic aspects. The state of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena can only be reached by placing the same emphasis on either emptiness

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131 According to Hsieh, Wumen Huikai used *gong’an* commentarial verse as a pedagogical device to guide practitioners in their *gong’an* introspection practice. Hsieh, “Poetry and Chan *Gong’an,*” 65.
or phenomena. Without being immersed in emptiness, one should engage in any phenomena while realizing the nature of emptiness manifested in all phenomena. Hongzhi also singled out the lively responsive function emerging from the essence of silence. In addition, in the face of criticism that might have been directed at the efficiency of the Caodong approach, Hongzhi advocated that the Caodong Chan had the capacity to treat the common problem that practitioners faced in terms of being attached either to existence or to emptiness. This chapter also demonstrates double sides of the Caodong identity: Silent Illumination Chan is the Caodong identity from perspective of meditative practice whereas the teaching of the principle and the phenomena is the Caodong sectarian profile from doctrinal aspect. This is the main reason why Hongzhi used the Caodong doctrine as dominant theme in his sermons to deal with the critics of Silent Illumination Chan. In this way, Hongzhi created a Caodong identity through sermons that responded to criticism. Finally, the fact that Hongzhi used the portrayal of a Caodong identity as a crucial strategy to respond to condemnation also reveals the possible critical reason why this Caodong master produced such a large body of gong’an literature, compared to other Chan traditions. Schlüter has already demonstrated that not only Dahui but also the entire Linji tradition attacked Caodong masters for teaching the Silent Illumination approach. Under attack from the Linji lineage, I suggest that both Hongzhi and his predecessors used gong’an commentary to shape a Caodong image in defense of their brand of practice. By using abundant metaphors, Caodong masters expressed the Caodong image in their gong’an writings.

132 Schlüter, How Zen Became Zen, 122-143.
Chapter 4: Participation of Hongzhi’s Gong’an Verses and Poetry for Laity in Literati Culture

Chapter 3 discussed the doctrinal perspective in Hongzhi’s gong’an writings. Through metaphors such as black-white imagery of a black person and coral branches, Hongzhi advocated the essential teaching of his own Caodong lineage in his gong’an commentaries. This chapter explores the literary dimension of Hongzhi’s gong’an writings. In creating a Caodong identity through metaphors in his gong’an verses, Hongzhi drew on examples not only from Buddhist writings but also from secular literature. This chapter will delve into this literary aspect of Hongzhi’s gong’an verses to explore how his commentarial poems intersected with literati culture. This chapter will further investigate how Hongzhi employed poetic practice to engage in literati culture. First, through close reading, we will examine how Hongzhi used allusions from secular sources in the Chan context. Looking at his deft usage of allusion reveals the erudition he earned through secular education. Next, we will explore direct and indirect ways in which Hongzhi participated in literati culture through his poetic practice. Literati had direct access to verses Hongzhi wrote specifically for them on different social occasions. Indirectly, his verses for monastics circulated among literati and were part of a larger elite economy of culture. Through close readings, this chapter will also examine the intersecting pedagogical, social, and economic functions of Hongzhi’s verses for secular elites.

Hongzhi’s Erudition in Secular Literature

In his commentarial verses on old cases, Hongzhi’s dense usage of classical allusions from a broad scope of texts reflects his thorough erudition, a facility he shared with secular literati. Hongzhi’s gong’an verses demonstrate his literary learning and writing talent. In his preface to
the Congrong lu 從容錄 commentary on Hongzhi’s gong’an verses, Wansong 萬松 praises Hongzhi’s literary eloquence by comparing him with Xuedou. Wansong writes, “In our tradition, there are Xuedou and Tiantong (Hongzhi), just like Yu (Ziyou 子游) and Xia (Zixia 子夏) in the Confucian tradition. The two masters’ verses are like Li (Li Bo 李白) and Du (Du Fu 杜甫) in the realm of poetry” 吾宗有雪竇、天童，猶孔門之有游夏，二師之頌古，猶詩壇之李杜.

Wansong also highlights Hongzhi’s considerable familiarity with both Buddhist and secular literature by stating that Hongzhi’s broad learning is like “great waves in a mighty ocean” 學海波瀾. In depicting Hongzhi’s use of allusions from Buddhist sources, Wansong points out that Hongzhi drew every phrase and character from Buddhist sources and writings of the patriarchs. Although Wansong stresses that Hongzhi employed allusions from Buddhist sources, his extensive reliance on allusions in his approach is also reflected in his dense references to secular literature. Indeed, Hongzhi seems to have incorporated more literary allusions into his gong’an verses than he did in his other verses. This is a strong indicator that his gong’an verses were intended to appeal to a wider audience. This section will compare Hongzhi’s use of allusions in a Chan context with his use of allusions in other secular writings. Hongzhi alludes to a wide range of secular writings to compose his commentarial verses, drawing allusions from different genres of literature, including classics (jing 經), histories (shi 史), the writings of philosophers (zi 子), and literary writings (ji 集).

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1 Congrong lu, T 48.226c27 (juan 1).

2 “In Teacher Tiantong’s commentarial verses on old cases, every phrase and character has all flown from the profound source of the Buddha and patriarchs” 天童老師頌古，片言隻字皆自佛祖淵源流出. Congrong lu, T 48.226c27 (juan 1).
Hongzhi’s facility with classical allusions suggests the thoroughness and quality of his early secular education. The only biographical reference we have about his secular learning tells us that “at the age of seven, he recited several thousand words from books every day. Before long, he had penetrated the *Five Classics*” 七歲誦書日數千言。少日遂通五經.³ From the four categories of literature that Hongzhi drew on for his allusions in his *gong’an* poetry, forty-six were drawn from philosophy, thirty-four from history, twenty-two from the classics, and twenty-one from literary writings. Repeating an allusion is very rare. From the statistical point of view, the numbers reveal Hongzhi’s wide erudition in many genres of literature. To demonstrate how Hongzhi made reference to a broad range of literature, I will look at examples from the above four categories of sources.

Hongzhi drew most of his allusions from *zibu* 子部 (the branch of philosophy). He consulted many works of philosophy, including *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Laozi* 老子, *Leizi* 列子, *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, and other writings.⁴ However, most of his philosophical allusions come from *Zhuangzi*. Alluding to *Zhuangzi*, Hongzhi created the imagery of a circle of the Way (*daohuan* 道環) to refer to Buddha nature—the essence or ultimate truth discussed in his commentarial verses. He used this metaphor throughout his collection of recorded sayings, including in his sermons and writings. Rather than taking the philosophical ideas, Hongzhi used analogies from philosophical writings to illustrate crucial points in initial cases. For example, in his *gong’an* commentarial verse, Hongzhi commented on a case in which a monk asked *Yangshan* 仰山 about the meaning of drawing characters. The case reads as follows:

³ *Hongzi lu*, 4.316a19–b1; *Hongzi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.119.c9 (juan 9).

⁴ The branch of philosophy also covers the writings of miscellaneous writers (*zajia* 雜家) miscellaneous works (*xiaoshuo* 小說). In addition to writings of philosophers, Hongzhi also employed allusions from *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, *Bowuzhi* 博物志, etc.
The monk asked Yangshan, “Are you still literate?” Shan replied, “That depends on the occasion (According to my ability).” Then the monk circled around to the right. He asked, “What is this character?” Shan drew the character “十” on the ground. The monk circle around to the left, and asked, “What is this character?” Shan changed the character “十” to “卍.” The monk drew a circle and held it with his two hands as if taking the pose of a demigod holding the sun and the moon, and asked, “What is this character?” In response, Shan drew a circle around the character “卍.” To this, the monk made the posture of the dharma-protecting deity, Rucika. Shan said, “Just so. Just so. You will maintain and protect the Buddha well.”

Through the postures of turning in a circle and drawing characters, the initial case illuminates the essential point that ultimate truth cannot be expressed through conventional means; that is, by language. In other words, the nature of emptiness cannot be conveyed by written words and speech. According to Wansong’s commentary, louzhi 樓至 stands for Sanskrit, “Rucika” or “Ruci.” It originally refers to Rudita Buddha, also known as Wailing (tiqi 啼泣) Buddha, who will be the last of the thousand buddhas to appear in the present kalpa (bhadra kalpa; xianjie 賢劫). However, the term louzhi later became a reference for the dharma-protecting deity who holds a vajra. Through taking the pose of dharma-protecting deity, the monk wordlessly expressed what he realized Yangshan had tried to convey through his gesture—ultimate truth.

Finally, Yangshan approved the monk’s understanding. Hongzhi’s verse reads:

道環之虛靡盈，
空印之字未形。

The circle of the Way is empty and not full.
The seal of emptiness has not been shaped.

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5 Hongzi lu, 2.110a10–b6; Hongzi chanshi guanglu, T 48.25b12–17 (juan 2).

妙運天輪地軸，
The wheel of the heaven and the pivot of the earth
marvelously revolve.

密羅武緯文經。
Closely woven together, martial ability is the warp and
literary talent is the weft.

放開捲聚，
Release, dispense, hold, and gather.

獨立周行。
It alone stands, and circulates.

機發玄樞兮青天激電，
Turning the profound pivot like powerful lightning in the
blue sky.

眼含紫光兮白日見星。
The eyes containing purple light see the stars during
daytime.\footnote{Hongzhi lu, 2.110b7–9; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.25b19–21 (juan 2).}

Using dense metaphors, the verse delivers the essential message that absolute truth, emptiness, is
unfathomable; therefore, it cannot be conveyed through any relative forms, namely, spoken
language or characters. The first line of the verse uses the mark of a circle to represent the nature
of emptiness. The term “\textit{daohuan 道環}” was not in common use in Buddhist writings.\footnote{I searched the term “\textit{daohuan 道環}” through the CBETA site, using the phrase, this expression only appears in Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings.} \textit{Zhuangzi}
has, “When ‘this’ and ‘that’—right and wrong—are no longer coupled as opposites—that is
called the axis of the Way. When this axis finds it place in the center, it responds to all the
endless things it confronts, thwarted by none” \emph{彼是莫得其偶，謂之道樞。樞始得其環中，
以應無窮}.\footnote{Zhuangzi jishi, 2.66. I adopt Ziporyn’s translation with slight revision. Ziporyn, \textit{Zhuangzi}, 12.} Hongzhi makes reference to “the axis of the Way” (\textit{daoshu 道樞}) and “the place in
the center” (\textit{huanzhong 環中}) to create the term \textit{daohuan}, according to Wansong’s
commentary.\footnote{Congrong lu, T 48.276c (juan 5).} In \textit{Zhuangzhi}, \textit{daoshu} and \textit{huanzhong} symbolize the state of freedom from any
opposition. However, Hongzhi employs of the center of the Way (\textit{daohuan}) to connote
emptiness, non-selfness. The second line indicates that even though Yangshan changed the
character “十” to “卍”, the seal of the emptiness cannot be marked by provisional means.
Emptiness, namely the ultimate, cannot be described in any conventional or relative way. In other words, the ultimate cannot be expressed by words. The second couplet refers to the two circles made by the monk as he turned right and then left and to the two characters that Yangshan drew. Through the image of the wheel and the pivot, the third line describes the monk’s postures of the two circles. The fourth line depicts Yangshan’s transformation of shi 十 to wan 卍.

Furthermore, by using the expression “closely woven together,” the fourth line illuminates Yangshan’s drawing a circle to circulate the character, “卍.” The third couplet describes Yangshan’s response and the monk’s postures. The stanza, “It alone stands, circulates” 獨立周行 alludes to Laozi, “Tranquil, vast, standing alone, unchanging. It provides for all things yet cannot be exhausted” 寂兮寥兮，獨立而不改，周行而不殆. In the context of Laozi, these expressions delineate “Dao” 道. Hongzhi refers to them to illustrate the monk’s changing of his posture as a way to respond. The fifth line portrays Yangshan’s responses, while the sixth line describes the monk’s assuming the postures of a demigod’s holding the sun and the moon and of the dharma-protecting deity. The verse concludes by expressing the dynamic function of the pivot—emptiness. The function is so vigorous and invisible that it is like lightning in the blue sky and stars during daytime. According to the commentary of Tianqi Benrui 天奇本瑞 (d. 1508), the expression “eyes containing purple light” means that a person’s vision is very clear.

Wansong points out that allusions from Zhuangzi primarily serve as a way to illuminate old cases in different way; the point is not to discuss philosophical points of Daoism or synthesize

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12 I explain the meaning of the verse based on both Wansong and Tianqi’s commentaries. Congrong lu, T 48, 267c. Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhzhu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu, X 67.457b13 (juan 2).

13 Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhzhu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu, X 67.457b19 (juan 2).
concepts with Daoist thinking. To illustrate the essential messages in this case, Hongzhi instills the metaphor of daohuan drawn from Zhuangzi with a Buddhist sense.

In commenting on another case, Hongzhi employs the Zhuangzi’s imagery of cutting an ox without seeing it and finding a pearl through formlessness to articulate non-duality. In the original case, Shoushan 首山 instructed his monastic assembly that there are three phrases. If one can attain the first phrase, one can be a teacher of Buddhas and patriarchs. If one can attain the second phrase, one can be a teacher of humans and heavenly beings. If one can attain the third phrase, one cannot save oneself. After a monk asked Shoushan which phrase he had attained, Shoushan offered a non-relative answer to demonstrate there is no distinction among the enlightened states realized through these three sentences. Hongzhi’s commentarial verse reads:

佛祖髑髏穿一串， The skulls of the Buddhas and patriarchs are strung in one line.

宮漏沈沈密傳箭。 The water of the timer drops to secretly transmit its arrow.16

人天機要發千鈞， The essential pivot of human and heavenly being shoots a thousand tons.

雲陣輝輝急飛電。 The drift of bright clouds flies fast like lightning.

箇中人看轉變， The person who personally [experiences the above] sees changes and transformations.

得珠罔象兮至道綿綿， Obtaining the jewel without [seeing] a image; the ultimate

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14 According to Wansong, “Today people see that Tiantong uses Zhuangzi, and they think that Laozi and Zhuangzi are the same with the ultimate Way. They do not know that the ancient borrowed roads to pass. That is just temporary phenomena” 今人見天童用莊子，便將老莊雷同至道，殊不知，古人借路經過，暫時光景耳. Congrong lu, T 48.275c (juan 5).

15 The case reads: “Shoushan said to the assembly, ‘If you attain at the first phrase, you will be teacher of buddhas and patriarchs. If you attain the second phrase, you will be teacher of human and gods. If you attain at the third phrase, you cannot even save yourself.’ A monk asked, ‘At which phrase did you attain?’ Shousan said, ‘The moon sets; midnight, going through the marketplace.’” 首山示眾云。第一句薦得。與祖佛為師。第二句薦得。與人天為師。第三句薦得。自救不了。僧云。和尚是第幾句薦得。山云。月落三更穿市過。I use Cleary’s translation. Cleary, Book of Serenity, 319. Hongzhi lu, 2.110a2–4; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.25b (juan 2).

16 The arrows are placed on the water timer to show time.
Way is endless. The blade plays without [seeing the image] of an ox; the sincere mind becomes vast.  

Hongzhi conveys the doctrinal point of non-duality that there is no distinction among the three gradual approaches through the three phrases as they are conventional means to realize the ultimate truth. Through the contrast imagery of Buddhas, patriarchs and skulls, Hongzhi expresses the transcendence of Buddhas and patriarchs to comment the first phrase. The second line illustrates a view from Wansong’s commentary that one attains awakening before any sign appears. In other words, one achieves awakening without any conventional means such as the three phrases in this case. The second couplet explicates the sudden moment of seeing emptiness nature through attaining the second phrase related to human and heavenly beings. According to Tianqi’s commentary, the essential pivot of human and heavenly being is like lightning that makes people unable to blink their eyes. In the following couplet, Hongzhi illuminates the idea that ultimate truth is realized through the distinct approaches is the same. There is no higher or lower realization. Hongzhi concludes the verse by commenting Shoushan’s response of transcending the three phrases through the imagery of formlessness (wangxiang 塢象) and non-oxen (wuniu 亡牛) from Zhuangzhi. In Zhuangzhi, the anecdote associated with formless depicts that the emperor’s pearl got lost and he sent four persons to look for it. The four persons’ names stand for what they represent—Knowledge, Sharp-eyed, Debate, and Shapeless. Finally, Shapeless found the pearl. By creating Shapeless to symbolize non-intention, Zhuangzi

17 Hongzhi lu, 2.110a6–8; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.25b (juan 2).
18 Congrong lu, T 48.275c11 (juan 5).
19 Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhizhu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu, X 67.457b8 (juan 2).
20 “The Yellow Emperor went wandering north of the Red Water, ascended the slopes of K’un-lun, and gazed south. When he got home, he discovered he had lost his Dark Pearl. He sent Knowledge to look for it, but Knowledge
illuminates that the Way cannot be contrived. Regarding the metaphor of the non-ox, *Zhuangzi* delineates that a cook can effortlessly cut an ox without seeing a whole ox because the cook sees the ox by means of his spirit rather than by using his eyes.\(^ {21}\) In *Zhuangzi*, the simile of the cook’s cutting an ox symbolizes following things as they are, namely according to the Way that nurtures life. Here Hongzhi employs the imagery of formlessness and non-oxen to symbolize discarding the three phrases that give rise to discriminative consciousness in order to attain awakening. In other words, one should realize the ultimate truth that is beyond the reach of conventional means, namely these three phrases. Hongzhi instills the imagery from *Zhuangzi* Chan sense of non-attachment to any form to make his doctrinal points since all the means such as language and images make people to arise discriminative thinking.

Besides philosophical texts, Hongzhi’s verses also abound with allusions to various historical records, including *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian), *Han shu* 漢書 (History of the Former Han), *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han), *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Record of Three Kingdoms), *Jin shu* 晉書 (History of the Jin), *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang), *Shui jing* 水經 (Book of waterways), and *Leinu zhuan* 列女傳 (Biographies of Chaste Women). By using allusions from these historical writings, Hongzhi imbues historical or couldn’t find it. He sent the keen-eyed Li Chu to look for it, but Li Chu couldn't find it. He sent Wrangling Debate to look for it, but Wrangling Debate couldn't find it. At last he tried employing Shapeless, and Shapeless found it.”

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\(^ {21}\) “What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now—I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are. So I never touch the smallest ligament or tendon, much less a main joint.”


biographical references with doctrinal ideas to illuminate the essential points of original cases.

For example, in a gong’an commentarial verse, the case reads:

When Monk Mi and Dongshan went on a journey and stayed overnight, they saw a white rabbit passing in front of them. Mi said, “It is handsome.” Shan (Dongshan) said, “How is it?” Mi said, “It is as if an ordinary person reveres a minister.” Shan said, “You are old, and say words like this.” Mi said, “Then what do you think?” Shan said, “For generations, one has stayed at a high position, and now temporarily one is down and out.”

密師伯與洞山行次，見白兔子面前走過，密云：「俊哉！」山云：「作麼生？」密云：「如白衣拜相。」山云：「老老大大，作這箇語話。」密云：「你又作麼生？」山云：「積代簪纓，暫時落薄。」

The dialogues between Monk Mi and Dongshan are very allusive. According to Wansong’s commentary, the respective answers of Monk Mi and Dongshan symbolize the two approaches of teachings, namely, that of nature (xing 性) and that of cultivation (xiu 修). Regarding the approach of cultivation, through practice one attains realization, reaching the state of sage from the mundane state. This is depicted through Mi’s metaphorical answer: common people pay respect to the minister. On the other hand, in terms the approach of nature, if one enters the mundane world from the realm of sages, it is like the metaphor, “for generations, one has stayed in high position,” but now one encounters poverty and bad luck. One originally is noble; that is, one originally is endowed with Buddha nature. Although currently one encounters misfortune, one still possesses an innate Buddha mind. Hongzhi’s commentarial poetry reads:

抗力霜雪， Forcefully defy frost and snow.
平步雲霄。 Smoothly ascend the sky.
下惠黜國， Xiahui was dismissed from office and expelled from his country.
相如過橋。 Xiangru went across a bridge.
蕭曹謀略能成漢， The strategy of Xiao [He 蕭何] and Cao [Can 曹參] could establish Han.
巢許身心欲避堯。
Chao [Fu 巢父] and Xu [Yu 許由] physically and mentally desired to avoid Yao.

寵辱若驚深自信，
If one is startled when one gains grace (gets favor) or gets insulted; one has deep confidence.

真情參跡混漁樵。
One’s true feelings follow traces and mixes among fishermen and woodcutters.24

There are multiple layers of allusions from historical texts and philosophical writings in this verse. By taking the ideas associated with the crucial points of Monk Mi and Dongshan’s replies from allusions, Hongzhi metaphorically addresses the two approaches of cultivation and nature—the central points of Monk Mi’s and Dongshan’s responses. The first line depicts Dongshan’s answer that one used to stay in high position, but currently is in poor condition. This reply refers to a teaching about nature. In the teaching, a pine refers to nature, while snow refers to conditions. Evoking the analogy that snow cannot change the nature of pine, Hongzhi implies that Buddha nature cannot be changed by conditions 隨緣不變.25 The second line refers to Mi’s answer, the teaching of cultivation. That is, one transcends the mundane world and attains the Buddha realm in the same way that an ordinary person obtains a high-status official position. The reference to Xiahou is from the Analects.26 Liu Xiahou 柳下惠 (720–621 BC) was a very upright person. Nevertheless, having been dismissed three times, he experienced a bumpy career as an official. Although he was dismissed and forced to leave his country, he insisted on the Way to serve his office. Hongzhi refers Xiahou’s situation to Dongshan’s reply, namely, the teaching of nature. Although one is endowed with the Buddha nature, one encounters adverse conditions when one practices. The expression of Xiangru crossing the bridge 相如過橋 is from Shiji 史記.

24 Hongzhi lu, 2.110b3–5; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.23c14–16 (juan 2).
25 Congrong lu, T 48.262c28 (juan 4).
26 Lunyu jishi, 36.1254.
The story says that after Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (ca. 179–117 BC) took a high position in the court, he crossed a bridge in a four-horse carriage. This anecdote expresses that Xiangru was born into and raised up by a poor family, and when he was a boy, he made a vow that if he could not have a four-horse carriage, he would not cross a bridge. Later, he became a high-status official and fulfilled his original vow to cross a bridge in a four-horse carriage. In Mi’s sayings, Hongzhi makes a reference to Xiangru’s story to evoke the teaching of cultivation and the idea that one must practice hard to attain awakening in the same way that one attains a high position from ordinary status. The story about Xiao He 蕭何 (257–193 BCE) and Cao Can 曹参 (190 BCE) depicts how their victories helped Han Gaozu 漢高祖 conquer several warring states and establish the Han Dynasty. Hongzhi uses this reference to express that one has to cultivate hard to attain realization. The story about Caofu 巢父 and Xuyou 許由 is an allusion found in Shiji. The legend describes Caofu 巢父 as an excellent person (gaoshi 高士) who lived during the Tang-Yao 唐堯 period. However, he was a recluse who did not seek worldly fame. Xuyou 許由 was appointed as the governor of nine prefectures by the emperor Yao. Nevertheless, he washed his ears if he had to listen to anything to do with temporal concerns. Hongzhi seems to take the morally upright sense of this reference to illuminate the workings of innate Buddha nature. In particular Dongshan’s words symbolize teachings about the Buddha-nature. In the last couplet, the line about grace and humiliation comes from a saying in Laozi 老子:

Redirect favor and disgrace with alarm. Respect great distress as you do your own person. What do I mean when I say “Redirect favor and disgrace with alarm”? Favor is inferior. If

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29 Shiji, 61.2567–2568.
you get it—be alarmed! If you lost it—be alarmed. This is what I mean when I say “Regard favor and disgrace with alarm.”

寵辱若驚，貴大患若身。何謂寵辱若驚？寵為下，得之若驚，失之若驚，是謂寵辱若驚。

Encountering both favorable and adverse negative conditions, one accepts the positive and the negative. This refers to Mi’s answer, namely, the teaching of cultivation. Whatever conditions one encounters, one should just keep practicing. The last line illustrates the intrinsically enlightened mind. Hongzhi seems to use the term “true feeling” to refer to Buddhahood that exists inherently within all sentient beings. Despite this innate Buddhahood, one has to practice in the mundane world as if one mingles among fishermen or woodcutters. Hongzhi takes particular aspects of ideas associated with the encounter dialogue in the cases to offer his comments on this old case. Hongzhi uses allusions to officials to illuminate the two different kinds of approaches to cultivation. Hongzhi makes reference to officials probably because the initial case features imagery of officials. However, in the original case, the imagery carries a more general sense. In contrast, Hongzhi employs specific references to particular historical figures to articulate the two approaches to cultivation.

As noted previously, Hongzhi’s biographical material provides only one reference to Hongzhi’s secular education: that he was thoroughly acquainted with the Confucian Five Classics, namely Shijing 詩經 (Classic of Odes), Shangshu 尚書 (Book of Documents), Liji 禮記 (Record of Ritual), Yijing 易經 (The Classic of Changes), and Chunqiu 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals). Indeed, in Hongzhi’s commentarial verses, he also employs allusions to the

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31 Laozi jiaoshi, 13.48–49.
Five Classics. In commenting on a case that discusses the non-duality of delusion and enlightenment, Hongzhi refers to Chunqiu and Shijing. This case depicts that Mihu 问: asked a monk to inquire Yangshan whether people need to make use of enlightenment. Yangshan replied that pursuing enlightenment falls into duality.\(^{32}\) Hongzhi’s commentarial verse reads:

第二頭分悟破迷
快須撒手捨筌罤
功兮未盡成駢拇
智也難知覺噬臍
兔老氷盤秋露泣
鳥寒玉樹曉風凄
痕玷全無貴白珪

The secondary head is to distinguish enlightenment and break delusion.
Quickly release one’s hands to discard trap and net.
An effort that is not exhausted is like an extra toe.
Wisdom that is difficulty to be aware of (cognized), is like biting one’s navel.
Under the moon, an ice plate weeps like autumn dew.
The bird is cold in the jade tree, the dawn breeze becomes chilly.
Completely without mark and flaw; the white jade becomes valuable.\(^{33}\)

Hongzhi poetically addresses the non-duality between enlightenment and delusion. The first couplet illustrates that one should relinquish the distinction between enlightenment and delusion since this discrimination falls into duality. Before discussing references to Chunqiu and Shijing, there is the imagery of trap and net from Zhuangzi. Just as the trap and net are tools to catch fish and rabbit, language is a means that serves to grasp the intent, according to Zhuangzi.\(^{34}\) Here Hongzhi uses the imagery of discarding the trap and snare to illustrate not allowing

\(^{32}\) The case reads, “Mi Hu had a monk ask Yangshan, ‘Do people these days need enlightenment or not?’ Yangshan said, ‘It’s not that there is no enlightenment, but what can be done about falling into secondary?’ The monk went back and reported this to Mi Hu. He deeply agreed with this.” 米胡令僧問仰山：「今時人須假悟否？」山云：「悟即不無，爭奈落第二頭何？」僧回舉似米胡，胡深肯之。I use Cleary’s translation. Cleary, Book of Serenity, 259. Hongzhi lu, 2.105a7–9; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.24a21 (juan 2).

\(^{33}\) Hongzhi lu, 2.105a10–b3; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.24a21 (juan 2).

\(^{34}\) “A fish trap is there for the fish. When you got hold of the fish, you forget the trap. A snare is there for the rabbits. When you have got hold of the rabbit, you forget the snare. Words are there for the intent. When you have got hold of the intent, you forget the words. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words, so I can have a few words with him?” 荃者所以在魚，得魚而忘荃；蹄者所以在兔，得兔而忘蹄；言者所以在意，得意而忘言。吾安得忘言之人而與之言哉。I use Ziporyn’s translation. Ziporyn, Zhuangzi, 114. Zhuangzi jishi, 26.944.
discriminative consciousness to arise when viewing enlightenment and delusion. In the third line, again alluding to Zhuangzi, Hongzhi uses the imagery of extra finger to illustrate uselessness of making efforts to attain realization. In Zhuangzi, the imagery of extra finger refers to manipulating humanity that is not nature. In addition, he uses the expression, “biting one’s navel” (shiqi 噬臍) from Chunqiu. This term conveys the uselessness of regret (the impossibility of changing what one learns in retrospect) in an anecdote from Chunqiu that describes how the nephews of Marquis Qi of Deng ask permission to kill King Wen of Chu before his impeding attack on their kingdom of Deng. They plea with their uncle to make plans early on, rather than “chew [his] navel” later, attempting the impossible. Hongzhi employs “biting one’s navel” to describe the difficulty of acquiring wisdom since it cannot be reached by being cognized. Next, the following couplet delineates that one should not cling to either delusion or enlightenment

35 “If you are crafty enough in manipulating Humanity and Responsibility, you may be able to correlate them to the five internal organs, but this is not the true and unskewed expression of the Course and its Virtuosity. For to web the toes together is to add useless flesh; to branch something off from the hand is to plant a useless finger, and when your craftiness webs or grafts something extra to the uncontrived condition of the five organs, it makes for perverse and distorted applications of Humanity and Responsibility, and for crafty use of the powers of seeing and hearing.” 多方乎仁義而用之者,列於五藏哉!而非道德之正也。是故駢於足者,連無用之肉也;枝於手者,樹無用之指也;多方駢枝於五藏之情者,淫僻於仁義之行,而多方於聰明之用也。 I use Ziporyn’s translation. Ziporyn, Zhuangzi, 57. Zhuangzi jishi, 8.311.

36 The anecdotes reads: “When King Wen of Chu attacked Shen, he crossed the domain of Deng. Prince Qi of Deng said, ‘He is my nephew.’ So they made him stay and offered him ceremonial toasts. The nephews Zhou, Nan, and Yang asked permission to kill the Master of Chu, but the Prince of Deng would not allow this. The three nephews said, ‘The one who will destroy the domain of Deng is certain to be this man. If you fail to make plans early on, later you’ll have to chew your navel, attempting the impossible. Please plan while something can still be done! If you would make plans for this, now is the time.’ The prince of Deng said, ‘If I were to act thus, people would not eat my leftovers.’ They responded, ‘If you do not follow the advice of your three servants, then it is the altars of the domain themselves that will no longer be used for flesh sacrifices. Where would you, my lord, get any leftovers?’ He did not follow this advice. In the year when they were returning home from their attack on Shen, the Master of Chu attacked Deng. In the sixteenth year, Chu again attacked Deng and destroyed it.” Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li and David Schaberg, trans., Zuo Tradition Zuozhuan: Commentary on the “Spring and Autumn Annals” (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 148–149. 楚文侯伐申, 過鄧。鄭祁侯曰:「吾甥也。」止而享之。駢甥、聃甥、養甥請殺楚子, 鄧侯弗許。三甥曰:「亡鄧國者, 必此人也。若不早圖, 後君噬齊, 其及圖之乎。圖之, 此為時矣。」鄭侯曰:「人將不食吾餘。」對曰:「若不從三臣, 抑社稷實不血食, 而君焉取餘?」弗從。還年, 楚子伐鄧。十六年, 楚復伐鄧, 滅之。Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed. and annot., Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu 春秋左傳注, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 169–170.
through the imagery of nature, according to Wansong’s commentary.\textsuperscript{37} The concluding couplet illustrates that Yangshan did not fall into duality that is the secondary.\textsuperscript{38} In the final line, Hongzhi refers to white jade (baigui 白圭) and flaw (dian 玷) from the \textit{Shijing}.\textsuperscript{39} By alluding to this line from the \textit{Shijing}, Hongzhi illuminates Yangshan’s view that once delusion perishes, enlightenment emerges like flaw that has been removed—a white jade appears. In short, by alluding to \textit{Chunqiu} and \textit{Shijing} that are \textit{Five Classics}, Hongzhi not only employs poetic expressions but also imbued the imagery for classic literature with Chan idea to comment the case. In doing so, his language in commentarial verse appear refined and vivid. Hongzhi’s vivid expressions enable his audiences to grasp the critical points of old cases through his commentarial poetry.

In the respect of literary writings, Hongzhi drew many expressions from Tang poetry, including the poems of Li Bo 李白 (701–762), Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770), Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), and Luo Binwang 骥賓王 (640–684). In addition to Tang poetry, Hongzhi draws many expressions from literary writing, such as Qu Yuan’s 屈原 (ca. 340–278 BC) “Encountering Sorrow” (\textit{Lisao} 齊騷), Sima Xiangru’s 司馬相如 (179–117 BC) \textit{Shanglin fu} 上林賦, Song Yu’s 宋玉 (298–222 BC) \textit{Dayan fu}, 大言賦, and Tao Yuanming’s 陶淵明 (365–427) writings. Hongzhi employs many poetic expressions from literary writings to refine his commentarial verses and sometime expands its meanings in original contexts. For example, Hongzhi use Tao Yuanming’s expressions to comment a case. The encounter dialogues deal with the non-duality

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Congrong lu}, T 48.266a13 (juan 4).

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39} “A flaw in a jade still can be polished” 白圭之玷尚可磨也. \textit{Maoshi zhengyi} 毛詩正義, in \textit{Shisanjing zhushu zhengliben} 十三經注疏整理本, vol. 6 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 18.1371.
between the phenomena and the principle. Fayan 法眼 (885–958) studied Chan under Changqing Huileng 長慶慧稜 (854–932), but Fayan became the Dharma heir of Dizang Guichen 地藏桂琛 (867–929). Zizhao 子昭, Dizang’s student challenged this succession. In response, Fayan asks Zizhao about the meaning of Changqing’s crucial turning words, “Among the myriad phenomena, it alone reveals the body” 萬象之中獨露身. Here, “the body” refers to the principle, the nature of emptiness. This crucial phrase represents Changqing’s essential teaching of non-duality between the phenomena and the principle. Zizhao is unable grasp the point of this phrase, but Fayan guides him to understand it. Hongzhi’s verse reads:

離念見佛，
破塵出經。
現成家法，
誰立門庭？
月逐舟行江練淨，
春隨草上燒痕青。
撥不撥？
聽丁寧。
三徑就荒歸便得，
舊時松菊尚芳馨。

When one departs from thoughts, one sees the Buddha.
Break the dust and transcend the sutras.
The manifest teaching of the house.
Who established the entrance hall?
The moon chases the boat on the river that is pure like white silk?
Spring follows the black burnt mark on the grass.
Does it turn or not?
Listen to the exhortations.
The three paths are almost abandoned; upon returning, one obtains them.
The pines and chrysanthemums of old times still emit a fragrant aroma.41

40 The complete case reads: “The head-seat monk, Zizhao asked Fayan, ‘When you opened the hall, whom did you succeed?’ Yan said, ‘Dizang.’ Zhao said, ‘You owe the late master Changqing too much.’ Yan said, ‘I do not understand the turning word of Changqing.’ Zhao said, ‘Why do not you ask?’ Yan said, ‘Among the myriad phenomena, it alone reveals the body. What does it mean?’ Then Zhao raised a whisk. Yan said, ‘This is what I learned from Changqing. What do you think?’ Zhao did not speak. Yan said, ‘It is just like among the myriad phenomena, it alone reveals the body. Does it turn the myriad phenomena? Doesn’t it turn the myriad phenomena? Zhao said, ‘It does not turn.’ Yan said, ‘Both.’ He asked people besides him and they all said, ‘It turns the myriad phenomena.’ Yan said, ‘Among the myriad phenomena, does it alone reveal the body?’” 子昭首座問法眼：‘和尚開堂，承嗣何人？’眼云：‘地藏。’昭云：‘太辜負長慶先師。’眼云：‘某甲不會長慶一轉語。’昭云：‘何不問？’眼云：‘萬象之中獨露身，意作麼生？’昭乃豎起拂子。眼云：‘此是長慶處學得底，首座分上作麼生？’昭無語。眼云：‘只如萬象之中獨露身，是撥萬象？不撥萬象？’昭云：‘不撥。’眼云：‘兩箇。’參隨左右皆云：‘撥萬象。’眼云：‘萬象之中獨露身？」Hongzhi lu, 2.105b8–106a6; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.24b3–11 (juan 2).

41 Hongzhi lu, 2.106a7–9; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.24b12–14 (juan 2).
The verse treats two crucial themes in the initial case. First is Zizhao’s inquiry about whom Fayan succeeded. Second is Fayan’s questioning Zizhao about the meaning of Changqing’s turning words, “Among the myriad phenomena, it alone reveals the body.” The first couplet shows that because of dualistic thinking, one cannot see the body; that is, the principle is among the myriad phenomena. The opening line alludes to the Perfect Enlightenment Sutra (Yuanjue jing 圓覺經), which reads, “The mind originally is the Buddha. Because thoughts arise, it (the mind) drifts and sinks” 心本是佛，由念起而漂沈.42 The second couplet expresses that Changqing’s turning words are the epitome of the teaching style of his tradition. Hongzhi implies that Fayan actually succeeded from Changqing’s teachings as Fayan investigates Changqing’s turning words. In the second couplet, Hongzhi associates “the manifest teaching of the house” with the phrase, “among the myriad, it alone reveals body.” He uses “entrance hall” to suggest the representative teaching style. Changqing actually already had established the representative teaching. The third couplet depicts the meaning of “among the myriad phenomena, it alone reveals the body.” The fifth line alludes to Xie Xuanhui’s 謝玄暉 (464–499) poem, “the clear river is tranquil like silk” 澄江靜如練.43 The sixth line might draw on an expression from poet monk Huichong’s 惠崇 (Northern Song), “the spring enters the blunt mark on the grass” 春入燒痕青.44 According to Wansong’s commentary, the moon and the grass refer to myriad phenomena, while the moon and spring refer to the idea of “alone the body reveals,” namely the

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42 Dafang guangyuan xiuduohuo liaoyi jing lueshu 大方廣覺修多羅了義經略疏. T 39, no. 1795, 524a16.

43 Xie Xuanhui 謝玄暉, “Late Climb Three Mounts and Far Gaze the Capital” 晚登三山還望京邑, in Wen xuan, 27.1263.

44 Huichong 惠崇, “Visit Yang Yunqing’s Villa on Huai River” 訪楊雲卿淮上別墅, in Quan Song shi 全宋詩 (Beijing: Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, 1998), 126.1464. Regarding the expression of blunt mark (shaohen 燒痕), it means the mark of the wild fire.
principle or the essence.  The following couplet uses “exhortation” to depict Fayan’s challenge to Zizhao by posing the question “turn or not turn,” and Fayan’s ending question, “Among the myriad phenomena, does it alone reveal the body?” In the last couplet, the expressions about three paths and pine and chrysanthemum are from “Guiqu laici” attributed to Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 as follows: “The three paths are almost obliterated. But pines and chrysanthemums are still here” 三徑就荒，松菊猶存. These two expressions always refer to reclusive landscapes. Since few people visited Tao, the three paths were almost obliterated. However here, according Wansong’s commentary, Hongzhi, taking the analogy of abandoned paths and the fragrance of old times to refer to the teachings of his masters, Changqing and Dizang. This implies that Fayan actually continued to advocate their teachings, and Fayan truly succeeded to the two teachers. In addition, Tianqi offers a different interpretation as he comments that the three paths means that Fayan guided Zizhao to grasp the essential points of his late master, Changqing as if he returned to the old three paths. Thus, Hongzhi expands the meanings of Tao Yuanming’s expressions by situating them within new Chan context. Hongzhi’s approach of expanding the meanings of allusions distinguishes him from other Chan masters.

45 Regarding Wansong’s commentary, see Congrong lu, T 48.267b12 (juan 4).
47 Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhizhu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu, X 67.455c24 (juan 2).
48 In my review of the commentarial verses of other Chan masters, such as Xuedou, I have not found many allusions to secular literature. Furthermore, where allusions are made, other Chan masters do not expand upon the meaning of original reference.
Another example in his commentarial verse on a case about Luopu’s encounter dialogues with his student before he passed away. Luopu guided his student to realize awakening. 49 Hongzhi’s commentarial verse reads:

餌雲鉤月釣清津， Using a cloud as bait and the moon as a hook, he fishes at a clear harbor.
年老心孤未得鱗。 At old age and with solitary mind, [he] does not obtain a fish.
一曲離騷歸去後， After [writing] the poem of “Encountering Sorrow” and going back,
汩羅江上獨醒人。 There is only one sober person on Miluo River. 50

Through the imagery of fishing, the first couplet describes how Luopu effortlessly guides his student to realize awakening, but he failed. Next, Hongzhi alludes to Qu Yuan’s 楚 340–278 BC “Yufu” 漁父 (Fisherman) to illustrate Luopu’s awaken realization in contrast to his student’s dullness. In “Yufu,” Qu Yuan expressed his frustration because his political agenda was rejected by his king, he was slandered and banished from the court. Qu Yuan considered

49 The original case reads: “When Luopu was about to die, he said to the assembly, ‘I have one thing to ask you people. If this is so, this is adding a head on top of your head. If it is not so, this is cutting off your head seeking life.’ At that time the head monk said, ‘The green mountain is always moving its feet; you don’t hang a lamp in broad daylight.’ Luopu said, ‘What time is this to make such a speech?’ A certain elder, Yancong, came forth and said, ‘Leaving these two paths, I requested the teacher not to ask.’ Luopu said, ‘Not yet—speak again.’ Yancong said, ‘I don’t care if you can say it all or not.’ Yancong said, ‘I have no attendant to answer the teacher.’ That evening he called elder Yancong: ‘Your answer today was most reasonable. You should experientially realize the saying of my late teacher, ‘before the eyes there are no things—that meaning is before the eyes. That is not something before the eyes, not in reach of the ears and eyes.’ Which phrases are guest, which phrases are host? If you can pick them out, I’ll impart the robe and bowl to you.’ Yancong said, ‘I don’t understand.’ Luopu said, ‘You should understand.’ Yancong said, ‘I really don’t.’ Luopu shouted and said, ‘How miserable!’ A monk asked, ‘What is the teacher’s meaning?’ Luopu said, ‘The boat of compassion is not rowed over pure waves: over precipitous straits it is wasted effort to set out a wooden goose.’”

50 Hongzhi lu 2.97b10–98b1; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.22a24 (juan 2).
himself as the only sober man in the world and to portray himself as a loyal and righteous man against corruptive officials in the court. In addition, according to his biography in Shiji, he eventually committed suicide by drowning himself in Miluo River. Hongzhi employs Qu Yuan’s political allegory to depict Luopu’s state of high awakening and Luopu’s condition of being dying. By situating literary references to Qu Yuan in the Chan case, Hongzhi changes the political implication.

The impressive array of classical allusions drawn from a wide range of sources throughout Hongzhi’s commentarial verses confirms our sense that Hongzhi had considerable familiarity with secular literature. His erudition also demonstrated his literary talent, a facility he shared with the educated elite. His biographical references show that Hongzhi’s writing talent appealed to the literati. Actually, Hongzhi composed a significant number of poems for literati. Through poetic practice, Hongzhi engaged in literati culture.

**Hongzhi’s Literary Production: Poetic Practice**

Hongzhi’s mastery of using of classical allusions from a wide range of sources demonstrates that he thoroughly absorbed the literary culture of his time. Hongzhi’s erudition contributed to his literary production, and this further led to his literary engagement in literati culture. Verses and poetry comprise a high proportion of his writings. Hongzhi composed a significant number of verses for his secular audience. This section examines how Hongzhi employed typical literati poetic forms for pedagogical, social, and economic purposes.

51 “All the world is muddy, and I alone am pure. All people are drunk and I alone am sober” 舉世皆濁我獨清，眾人皆醉我獨醒. Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1090–1155), Chuci buzhu 楚辭補注, ed. Bai Huawen 白化文, Xu Denan 許德楠, Li Ruluan 李如鸞, and Fang Jin 方進 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 7.179.
As stated earlier, there are two ways in which Hongzhi engaged in literati culture through poetic practice. In a direct way, Hongzhi wrote verses for literati on different occasions; in an indirect way, Hongzhi’s verses were circulated among literati through his verses at monastics’ request. There are three aspects that might intersect in Hongzhi’s poems to literati. First, Hongzhi’s poetry served as a pedagogical vehicle to disseminate Chan teachings among literati circles. Second, Hongzhi employed poetry as part of the exchange reinforcing his social network with elites. Third, Hongzhi used poetry to urge literati patrons to make offerings. As a result, Hongzhi’s poetry performs pedagogical, social, and economic functions.

**Hongzhi’s Verses Addressed to Literati**

In the direct fashion, there are two generic categories of verses addressed to literati: verses and self-portrait encomium (zhenzan 真讚). Similar to literati activities, some verses were written for poetic exchanges, such as responding (he 和). Hongzhi also wrote verses for elites in the context of various social occasions. These include departing (bie 別), sending off (song 送), visiting (fang 訪, ye 訪), passing through (guo 過), thanks (xie 謝), and inscriptions for dwellings. Many verses were not written for a particular occasion. These are marked by the expressions “given to” (ge 給), “sending to” (ji 寄), and “verse at the request” (qiusong 求頌). Among these, “verse at the request” occupied a large number in Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings.

Self-portrait encomium is another type of verse that was directly addressed to literati. These types of verses were intended to be inscribed on Hongzhi’s portrait. Hongzhi composed a number of his self-portrait encomia at literati’s request. It is worth noting that the number of verses written by Hongzhi at literati’s request, including “verse at the request” (qiusong 求頌) and self-portrait encomia requested by the elite, exceeds the number those of written by other
contemporary Chan masters. One of the integral features of these two sub-genres of verses is their vital pedagogical function within Hongzhi’s *guanglu*.

The Pedagogical Function of Hongzhi’s Verses Written at the Request of Literati

Hongzhi seemed to use the two types of verses at the literati’s request as a crucial medium to teach them Buddhism, Chan or Silent Illumination teachings. In the larger Chan tradition, it is very common for Chan masters to employ poems or verses as vehicles to convey doctrinal themes. Nevertheless, we can get a sense of the primary pedagogical function of Hongzhi’s verses at the elites’ request by considering its significant place within Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings. Among the different genres in Hongzhi *guanglu*, both Hongzhi’s public and informal sermons appear to target primarily a monastic audience, not the literati; there are only five sermons that can be identified as addressing the literati, including named officials and patrons. In addition, there is a section entitled “Dharma words” (*fayu* 法語) in Hongzhi *guanglu*. According to the preface to this section, Hongzhi composed Dharma words at the

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52 I searched the Buddhist canon through CBETA site, using the phrase “qiusong 求頌.” There are only nine Chan masters who composed verses at the request of literati. Each of these nine masters composed less than five verses. According to Griffith Foulk and Robert Sharf, “Although Hongzhi may be the most prolific writer of eulogies on record, the practice of inscribing large numbers of portraits on request for a wide variety of persons is well attested in the *yulu* material.” In addition, according to the note of “On the Ritual Use of Chan Portraiture in Medieval China” in 143, “the *Fohai Huiyuan chanshi guanglu* (the record of Xiatang Huiyuan 見堂慧遠), 1103–1176), which lists approximately thirty eulogies under the heading ‘eulogies requested by men of Chan who drew the master’s portrait However, I found most of the portrait eulogies by Fohai Huiyuan were written for monastics. T. Griffith Foulk and Robert H. Sharf, “On the Ritual Use of Chan Portraiture in Medieval China,” in Chan Buddhism in Ritual Context (New York: Routledge, 2003), 143.

53 There are only five occasions directed to literati in Hongzhi’s sermons. There is the ritual of ascending the hall at the request of Minister Duke Fan 范相公 in *Hongzhi lu*, 3.173b4–7; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.40c24–28 (juan 4). The ritual of ascending hall at the request of Lu Yiren 陸宜人 in *Hongzhi lu*, 3.207b4–11; T 48. 49c20–50a9 (juan 4). The ritual of ascending hall at the request of Vice Minister Feng 馮侍郎 in *Hongzhi lu*, 3.219a4–b7; T 48. 52c27–53a18 (juan 4). The ritual of ascending hall at patrons who read a sutra 施主看經 in *Hongzhi lu*, 3.226a1–7; T 48.55a10–13. The ritual of ascending hall at patrons who make offerings to sages 供聖施主 in *Hongzhi lu*, 3.234a1–7; T 48.57a11–19 (juan 4).
request of both literati and monks. Dharma words might also be an important way to disseminate Buddhist or Chan teachings to a literati audience, but Hongzhi did not address the names of monks and literati in every individual fayu. Finally, in Hongzhi’s collection, there is a section entitled “gāthā” (jisong偈頌), covering all Hongzhi’s verses addressed both to monastic and secular audiences. In addition, Hongzhi composed a significant number of doctrinal verses. However, this section was not published as an individual text during Hongzhi’s lifetime. This section was compiled as a part of his collection. Among different genres for literati in Hongzhi’s collection, verses comprise a major portion. Among the varied sub-genres of verses addressed to literati, the verses at the literati’s request occupied high percentage. These verses requested by literati actually serve as an important means for Hongzhi to promote characteristic teachings of the Caodong tradition, namely Silent Illumination, and the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. In writing verses requested by literati, Hongzhi only addressed individuals with their surnames and official titles. As such, it is impossible to research particular biographical information. However, the titles of officials provide evidence that Hongzhi’s social network was not only local but also national.

A comparison of the major genres of Hongzhi guanglu with those of his contemporary Chan masters will also inform our understanding of the teaching role of Hongzhi’s verses addressed to the literati. For example, there is the work of Hongzhi’s counterpart in the Linji tradition, Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲. In addition to public sermons—which includes ascending the hall (shangtang 上堂), instructions for the assembly (shizhong示眾), and informal sermons (xiaocan小參)—Dahui’s collection includes general preaching (pushuo普說), which are
sermons directed to secular audience in his recorded sayings.\(^{54}\) Further, Dahui’s letters addressed to literati were also compiled in his collection.\(^{55}\) In contrast, we do not have any letters from Hongzhi, addressed either to monastics or to the laity in his guanglu. In contrast to Hongzhi, in Dahui’s collection, there are no verses written at the request of elites.

By considering the place of Hongzhi’s verses requested by literati in his collection and comparing the different genres of his collection with others in the larger Chan tradition, we can surmise that among the varied extant genres in Hongzhi’s body of work, the pedagogical role of Hongzhi’s poetry is prominent. The salient themes of silence and illumination that recur throughout these verses give them the flavor of sermons. A poem titled “Administrator for Public Order Shi Requests a Verse” 時司理求頌 reads:

> 淨磨心鑑絕游塵，  
> Cleanse and polish the mind mirror to eradicate transient dust.  
> 本際靈明自照神。  
> The original boundary is numinous and luminous; it itself illuminates the spirit.  
> 歷歷箇裏機回圓，  
> Perfectly and vividly, the pivot turns and responds.  
> 化分百億大千身。  
> Transforming and separating into a hundred billion bodies of the great chilicosm.\(^{56}\)

By using metaphors and expressions associated with silence and illumination, Hongzhi poetically addresses the central points of silence and illumination. Since Hongzhi regards Silent

\(^{54}\) *Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu*, T 47.890–916. According to Schlüter, general preaching sermons seem to “be a form of sermon of which where there were no specific rules, and which could be held whenever the abbot so chose. *Pushuo* sermons may not have been in common use at Hongzhi’s time, but the form was made famous and popular by Dahui, who often used to address laity.” See Schlüter “The Record of Hongzhi,” 196. Also see Ishii Shūdō, ed., *Daijō butten Chūgoku Nihon hen* 大乘仏典中国日本篇, Zen goroku 禅語録 12 (Tokyo: Chuō Kōron sha, 1992), 91–242; Ishii Shūdō, “Daie Fukaku Zenji hōgo (zoku) (jō)大慧普覚禅師法語<続> (上),” *Komazawa daigaku Zenkenkyū nenpō* 駒澤大學禪研究年報 4 (1993): 20–62; and Ishii Shūdō, “Daie Fukaku Zenji hōgo (zoku) (ka) 大慧普覚禅師法語 (下),” *Komazawa daigaku Zenkenkyū nenpō* 駒澤大學禪研究年報 4 (1994): 85–127. See also Miriam Levering, “Ta-hui and Lay Buddhists: Ch’an sermons on Death,” in *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society*, ed. David W. Chappel (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1987), 181–206.


\(^{56}\) *Hongzhi lu*, 6.462b10–12; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.97c9–11 (juan 8).
Illumination Chan as the epitome of Caodong practice, he disseminates this teaching through his poems for elites. The opening couplet metaphorically addresses silence and illumination. By employing the typical imagery of the mind as mirror, and the metaphor of dust as affliction, the first line depicts silencing the mind through cleansing wandering thoughts. The second line expresses the teaching that when the mind is devoid of any thought, it restores its luminosity. Through this luminosity, one can see original truth, namely ultimate truth. In other words, wiping away dust from the mirror-mind restores its original brightness. The second couplet points out that ultimate truth interfuses principle and phenomena. In the ending couplet, the pivot refers to the principle that manifests in the ten thousand bodies, namely, myriad phenomena. The luminosity of the mind, like the pivot, responds to circumstance appropriately and dynamically. To respond to different situations, it can transform into varied forms.

The theme of manifesting different forms to appropriately respond to the needs of sentient beings is also Hongzhi’s chief theme for monastics. The way that Hongzhi conveys these teachings is similar to the verses for monks. Hongzhi uses the same metaphors, mirror and dust for both literati and monastics. However, for literati, Hongzhi more frequently uses metaphors or expressions associated with dust (*chen* 塵). By using this word as a key expression, Hongzhi might be suggesting that the secular lives of literati are caught up in being busy and that mundane concerns make them tired.

Through different expressions, the cardinal topic of silence and illumination is prevalent throughout Hongzhi’s verses at the elite’s request. Hongzhi focuses on the theme of Silent Illumination Chan when instructing his literati audience. The theme of silence and illumination recurs throughout these verses. For example, in a verse he wrote to Office Manager Zhu (Zhu *ganbian* 朱幹辨), “When one polishes and cleanses away scattered dust, the hundreds of
thoughts become mature, / The bottom of the source becomes limpid and does not branch into separate streams.” 磨洗紛塵百念秋，/ 湛然源底未分流. 57 The two lines portray the aspects of silence and illumination. When ceasing scattered thoughts, the mind becomes still and calm. This state refers to the aspect of silence. Then within this state of unmoving mind, the clear source emerges. This is the aspect of illumination. In a similar vein, another verse addressed to Director Jiang 江郎中 reads, “Cleanse the mind-ground that is vast without boundaries, / A ray of light breaks long-standing gloom” 淨治心地廓無垠，/ 一段光明破夙昏. 58 When the mind is tamed and discursive thoughts are pacified, no thought can defile it. Within this state, the inherent true mind emerges; it is luminous and boundless, and its clarity breaks afflictions. In the first line, the portrayal of purifying the mind illustrates the silence of the mind, while the second line expresses the state of illumination when the mind attains the pure state. Similarly, emphasizing the practice of Silent Illumination, Hongzhi writes this in a verse at the request of Academician Zhao 趙學士, “When one’s wild mind settles completely, one can meet it in person. / In the autumn water and pure sky, the moon stands uprightly” 歇盡狂心便相見，/ 水秋天淨月亭亭. 59 Once the agitated

57 The complete verse reads: “When one polishes and cleanses away scattered dust, the hundreds of thoughts becomes calm, / The bottom of the source shines brilliantly and does not branch into separate streams. / At this moment, it illuminates itself outside of causes and conditions. 磨洗紛塵百念秋/湛然源底未分流/其間自照因緣外 /水浄娟娟浮月鉤. According to Hucker’s definition, Office Manager is a sub-official functionary who served as a kind of chief clerk in the Armaments office of the Ministry of Works, the headquarters of Fiscal Commissioners and Judicial Commissioners, and many other agencies. Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 276. Hongzhi lu, 6.465a7–9; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.98a20–22 (juan 8).

58 “Director Jiang Requests Verse”江郎中求頌 reads: “Cleanse and treat the mind-ground that is vast without boundaries. / A ray of light breaks long-standing dim (delusion). / Turn the pivot and wheel to transform the diverse phenomena.” 淨治心地廓無垠/一段光明破夙昏/撥轉機輪分化事/百千三昧見門門. Hongzhi lu, 6.461b4–6; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.97b2–4 (juan 8). According to Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, jingzhi 淨治 is a purification ritual in esoteric Buddhism. This ritual includes cleaning the altar and the pathway to the temple, and chanting of a dhāraṇī. Lanzhong 郎中 is a director of a bureau in a ministry. However, there are no biographical references to this literati figure.

59 “Academician Zhao Requests a Verse” 趙學士求頌 reads: “Before one is born and after one dies, it alone is numinous. / All tathāgatas came from this path. / When one’s wild mind settles completely, one can see it face to face...
mind settles, one can see the luminosity of the mind emerging just like autumn moonlight. In short, silence—stilling the mind—is the prerequisite for illuminating the nature or the essence. Since Silent Illumination is the core practice in the Caodong tradition, it is an overlapping theme that Hongzhi advocates in his verses for both monastic and literati. However, in comparison to Hongzhi’s verse for monastic and literati, Hongzhi articulates this theme in different way. In the monastic context, in an abstract way, Hongzhi directly uses silence (mo 默) and expression associated with illumination to convey the state of realizing Silent Illumination. For example, in Hongzhi’s verse to a master, he writes, “Breaking darkness and true radiance is in silence” 破暗真光默默中. 60 However, for literati, in a practical way, Hongzhi emphasizes letting go of any thought to illustrate the aspect of silence. By doing so, Hongzhi concretely teaches his elite readers how to practice Silent Illumination Chan. Hongzhi never specifically addressed why he liked to convey the teaching of Silent Illumination in his verses to elite. However, Dahui’s criticism of Silent Illumination Chan reveals that this approach appealed to literati. 61 Literati tended always to have busy minds that yearned to “cease and rest” (xiuxie 休歇). Silent Illumination practice provided a means to do so. When Hongzhi teaches the concept of letting the mind cease and rest in these verses, he is providing something that is useful for elite self-cultivation in the midst of their busy lives.

60 The title of this verse is “Great Master Xinyue Requests Verse” 行月大師求頌 in Hongzhi lu, 6.463b1–4; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.84a (juan 8).

61 According to Schlüter’s translation, “Literati often have [the problem of] busy minds. So today, in many places, there is a kind of heretical silent illumination Chan. [The people who teach this] see that literati are obstructed by worldly concerns and that their hearts are not at peace, and accordingly they teach them to be like ‘cold ashes or dry wood,’ or like ‘a strip of white silk,’ or like ‘an incense pot in an old shrine,’ or ‘cold and somber.’” 而今諸方有一般默照邪禪。見士大夫為塵勞所障方寸不寧。怗便教他寒灰枯木去。一條白練去。古廟香爐去。冷湫湫地去. Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu, T 47.884c25–28 (juan 17). Schlüter, How Zen Became Zen, 125–126.
The doctrine of inherent Buddha nature was a key theme that Hongzhi advocated for both ordained and lay followers. In keeping with this interest, it is a theme that emerges regularly in his verses for the elite. The essential teaching of Caodong emphasizes that all sentient beings possess inherent Buddha-nature; therefore, it is not necessary to strive for actualizing enlightenment. Because the Caodong taught that one could experience the state of awakening through meditation, it was appealing to literati. A verse for “Gentleman Fu Fifteen” reads:

塵勞排遣廓而明，When defilements are expelled, the mind becomes vast and luminous.
靈照心空合未萌。Numinous illumination makes the mind become empty; they merge without arising [any thought].
妙盡源窮成本得，When wonder is depleted and the source exhausted, the mind accomplishes what it originally obtained.
從來等佛與眾生。From the beginning, Buddhas and all sentient beings are equal.
圓虛裹許得真游，Within the perfect and empty, one is able to truly roam.
離水犀通一點秋。[The mind] like the parting the waters rhinoceros can pass through a hint of autumn.
機應無私登鳥道，The pivot that responds without self ascends the path of the birds.
妙同明月靜隨流。The wonder is like bright moon that tranquilly flows along the currents.

The first couplet depicts Silent Illumination Chan, namely, the theme of silence and illumination.

Through the expression of “defilement,” the first line expresses that while letting go of affliction

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62 Schlüter points out that inherent Buddha-nature was clearly an all-important Buddhist teaching for Hongzhi, as he emphasized it again and again throughout his sayings and writings. Schlüter, How Zen Became Zen, 149.

63 Ibid., 180.

64 According to Beihu lu, the horns of a rhinoceros (lishuixi) can part water. It was said that rhinoceros horns have the power of stimulus-resonance (ganying). Beihu lu, in Congshu jicheng xinbian, vol. 91 (Taipei: Xinwenfen, 1986), 108. In addition, in examining representations of rhinos in the Tang dynasty, Natasha Heller indicates that rhinos can detect poison with their horns. Natasha Heller, “Why Has the Rhinoceros Come from the West? An Excursus to the Religion, Literary and Environment of the Tang Dynasty,” Journal of the American Oriental Society 131, no.3 (2011): 358–359. Special thanks to Professor von Glahn for indicating that this “parting the waters rhinoceros” should be understood as a huge beast that miraculously can pass through a hint of autumn.

65 Hongzhi lu, 6.460a4–8; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.96c17–21 (juan 8).
and thoughts, the mind becomes bright and immense. The second couplet elucidates the meaning of original Buddha nature. After one practices settling one’s mind, one sees one’s own Buddha nature; that is, one gains one’s intrinsic pure mind. This is the state that one originally obtained because the enlightened mind has always been present from the very beginning. This is why Buddhas and all sentient beings are originally equal. After practicing, one can realize the Buddha nature inherent within oneself. This line refers to the originally pure mind—intrinsic Buddha nature. The third couplet describes the vivid function of the nature of emptiness. The final couplet addresses the mind of selflessness and the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. The path of the birds is traceless, since a flying bird leaves no trace of its path. This expression depicts the state of the mind without attaching to anything. If there is any attachment, there would be a trace. In the concluding line, water currents refer to the phenomena while moon symbolizes the principle. By elucidating the doctrinal import in the verses at the literati’s request, Hongzhi provides instructions in poetic form to the elite. These verses address three doctrinal themes: Silent Illumination, the unity of the principle and the phenomena, and inherent Buddha nature. For Silent Illumination Chan, as discussed in previous passage, Hongzhi stresses letting go of any thoughts to still the mind. Regarding inherent Buddha nature, although throughout Hongzhi’s sermons, this doctrine is a prominent theme, this is not a crucial theme in his verses addressed to monastic. It is probably because the ordained followers were familiar with this doctrine, but literati were not. For the Caodong essential teaching of the principle and the phenomena, Hongzhi uses typical Buddhist metaphors for literati such as moon and water here while employing Caodong prominent metaphors including dark-bright imagery or the imagery of the paradoxical action of insentient objects to convey this doctrine.
Apart from the sub-genre of “requesting verse,” Hongzhi also offers his teachings to literati through self-portrait encomia. Regarding the genre of portrait encomium, Morten Schlütter points out that inscribed portraits were themselves a crucially important venue for maintaining good and close relationships with both monastics and lay patrons. The encomium is inscribed on a portrait; therefore, in accordance with a portrait, the content is frequently characterized by description of physical features, or personality. Besides portrayal of physical characteristics, monks often use encomia as a vehicle to convey doctrinal ideas. Hongzhi often portrays himself as embodying of silence and illumination to convey this teaching in his encomia. For example, “The Virtuous Friend, Lu Quan Requested an Encomium” 善友陸銓寫真請贊 reads:

野雲情態閒。秋山風骨瘦。真照也默默而靈。湛存也綿綿而壽。圓蒲曲木兮清白傳家。老鶴蒼松兮歲寒去就。

The condition and shape of the wild cloud is carefree and leisurely. The style and the spirit of the autumn mountain are vigorous. True illumination is silent but numinous. Luminous existence is endless and everlasting. By a round cushion and a curved stick; one transmits the uprightness of the family. An old crane on a green pine endures the cold season of the year.

Differing from the use of metaphors to illuminate the practice of stilling the mind and realization of luminous insight in the verses at the literati’s request, Hongzhi directly employs the words silence (mo 默) and illumination (zhao 照) in his encomium to portray himself as the embodiment of silent illumination. The use of these two characters to convey the Silent

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67 Shanyou 善友 is a translation of kalyāna-mitra. Regarding Lu Quan, there is no biographical reference.

68 Hongzhi lu, 6.406a10–12; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48. 82a23–26 (juan 7).
Illumination Chan is very prominent throughout his encomia. Byrne also points out, “Although Hongzhi uses the term silence (mo 默) and the reduplicative momo 默默 throughout his yulu, nowhere does it appear as frequently as within his encomia.” Hongzhi begins with the description of his persona. The first line describes his attitude as at ease like the wild clouds. In the second line, Hongzhi uses the image of “the autumn” to convey the sense of his physical aging, but he parallels this feeble image to his vigorous inner spirit. The second couplet elucidates the Silent Illumination Chan. Hongzhi straightforwardly employs the characters of silence and illumination to express the realized state of silent illumination. Within this state, the mind is still but vivid. Furthermore, the mind is truly luminous, and the clarity of the mind can remain forever. The final couplet uses the image of Chan heritage, the cushion and the stick, to symbolize his transmission of Chan teachings. The last line refers to an image of the old crane and green pine to portray his endurance as well as his aged physical appearance. Hongzhi often uses the image of a crane and a pine tree to portray himself in his self-portrait encomia written for both monastic and elite recipients. In this encomium, from the Buddhist perspective, aside from conveying the pivotal Caodong teaching, Silent Illumination, Hongzhi delineates himself as an heir of Chan transmission. There are other themes related to ease manner and aging physical features, which are overlapping issues for both monastic and literati recipients in Hongzhi’s encomia.

Aside from disseminating the teaching of Silent Illumination, Hongzhi illustrates the doctrinal theme of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena in his encomia. An encomium requested by Director Qian 錢郎中 reads:

勝淨明心，

The perfectly pure, bright mind,

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69 Byrne, “Poetics of Silence,” 258.
混融古今。 merges the ancient and the present.
河漢之氣清秋闊， The energy of the Milky Way is vast in the clear autumn.
牛斗之光寒夜深。 The light of starry sky is profound in the cold night.
機歷歷兮錦梭吐緒， The loom passes while the shuttle spits out threads.
道綿綿兮玉線聯針。 The Way is endless as if the needle is drawing a jade thread.
月漾珊瑚海， The moon ripples on the coral sea.
春回薝蔔林。 Spring returns to the grove of campaka trees.
法法變通手段， Every dharma changes and penetrates the means.
塵塵出礙胸襟。 Every faculty comes from obstruction in the mind.
明鏡誰嫌差別像？ In the bright mirror, who detests the disparate images?
空山自答合同音。 The empty mountain echoes itself and harmonizes with the same sound.\(^{70}\)

Hongzhi identifies himself as the realized state of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. This encomium poetically addresses doctrinal points without any description associated with physical feature or mental state. There are typical images referring to the principle and the phenomena: the imagery of the brightness and the darkness, the motion and the motionless. The opening couplet depicts the enlightened mind as not restrained by the time. As the mind does not abide anywhere, it transcends time. In this state, all thoughts are experienced as timeless. In the second couplet, using the image of Milky Way and the starry sky, Hongzhi expresses the vastness and the luminosity of the mind. In addition, the fourth line refers “The starry sky” to the brightness, namely the phenomena, while using the cold night to symbolize the darkness, the principle. The third couplet elucidates the endless way. The fourth couplet poetically conveys the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena through natural imagery. The moon refers to the principle, while the coral sea symbolizes the phenomena. Similarly, the spring symbolizes the principle, while the trees represent the phenomena. There is no independent self in every dharma. Therefore, as skillful means, it can transform in varied ways. The enlightened mind does not

\(^{70}\) Hongzhi lu, 5.331a3–7; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.103a18–23 (juan 9).
regard every faculty as self; therefore, the mind is free without being hindered. The mirror refers to the principle while the images refer to the phenomena. The bright mirror reflects all images without distinction. The empty mountain refers to the principle, while the shout refers to the phenomena. Through abundant imagery, Hongzhi addresses metaphorically the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena without depicting his physical or mental characteristics. Many of his encomia fully addresses doctrinal points without descriptions associated with his portrait. The doctrinal theme of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena figures prominently throughout Hongzhi’s encomia for both monastic and elite recipients.

Hongzhi’s emphasis on illuminating doctrinal themes in his encomia can be revealed in his description concerning his relationship with patrons. In “Gentleman Wang of Affairs-Management Requests a Portrait Encomium” 王承事寫真求贊, Hongzhi not only elucidates the Buddhist teachings but also depicts his relationship with the recipient literati. It reads:

白眼前
Preserved in the stone, the precious jade illuminates the mountain.

蒼棱羼顏,
White eyebrows blend in with the face.

瑩珠蘊石而輝山。
Stored in the stone, the precious jade illuminates the mountain.

老節歲寒,
Aged joints during the cold season of the year.

琥珀抱松而永年。
The amber that embraces a pine is everlasting.

威音未興之際,
When the Majestic Sound Buddha has not yet arisen,71 Before the chaos was going to be pierced,

混沌欲鑿之前。 The great import of monasteries is the Way of Venerable Baizhang.

叢林大義兮道尊百丈,
Upon the calm waves of the ocean, the moon manifests the chiliocosm.

剎海平潮兮月現三千。
I speak the dharma for you.

我為爾說法，
You open up fields for me.

爾為我開田。
I occupy and sit upon a rock under the root of the pine.

據坐松根石頭上，

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71 Majestic Sound Buddha is Bhīṣma-garjita-svara-raja, who lived in the extreme past and originally appears in the Lotus Sūtra, Miaofa lianhua jing, T 9.50c3 (juan 6).
Hongzhi rarely addresses his relationship with recipients in his encomia; this encomium is the sole example. However, the description of his relationship with this literati patron might reflect his relationship with other patrons. This encomium begins with the description of Hongzhi’s outer appearance and inner nature. Then it turns to depict the characteristic Caodong teaching. Finally, it addresses the reciprocal relationship between Hongzhi and the recipient. The first and second couplets depict the parallels between outer appearance and inner nature. The first and third lines portray Hongzhi’s aged physical features, while the second and fourth lines seem to describe inner nature. The second and fourth lines seem to describe the innate Buddha nature (inherent Buddhahood) through the metaphors of jade and amber. The following couplet elucidates that the Buddha nature already existed before the Majestic Sound Buddha and the chaos. According to Ishii and Schlüter, the term “the Majestic Sound Buddha” was almost exclusively used in Caodong texts. “Majestic Sound Buddha” lived in the extreme past, and this Buddha refers to the realm where there is no distinction between subject and object. In the fourth and fifth couplets, Hongzhi alludes to an old case associated with Baizhang Huaihai百丈懷海 (749–814) to portray his relationship with the recipient patron. The original case describes that in a communal (puqing 普請) occasion, Baizhang instructed his monastic assembly, “You open up field for me. I expound the great import for you 汝等為我開田，我為汝說大義.”

72 Hongzhi lu, 5.391a3–7; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.119b8–13 (juan 9).

73 Ishii and Schlüter point out that this term takes on central roles in Caodong teachings and it was exclusively used in Caodong texts. Ishii, Sōdai zenshū shi no kenkyū, 229. Schlüter “Before the Empty Eon’s Versus ‘A Dog Has No Buddha-Nature’,” 175.

74 Zengaku daijiten, 309.

75 Chanzong songgu lianzhu tongji, X 65.546b5 (juan 12).
Hongzhi alludes to Baizhang’s sayings to portray his relationship with the recipient. In other words, the reciprocal relationship is land-dharma exchange. Both Hongzhi and the recipient play the roles of donors and recipients. From Hongzhi’s perspective, he as a recipient, having acquired the field from Gentleman Wang; as a donor, he gives dharma talks to Wang. On the other hand, from the perspective of Gentleman Wang, as a giver, he donates fields to Hongzhi; as a recipient, he obtains the dharma teachings from Hongzhi. Their relationship actually entails both economic and cultural or spiritual exchange. Regarding the teachings that Hongzhi expounds as Baizhang delivered doctrinal points, in the latter half of the fifth couplet Hongzhi illuminates the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. The moon symbolizes the principle, while the waves of the sea represent the phenomena. In the end, Hongzhi describes himself sitting on a rock at the pine root. This line might refer to the landscape in Hongzhi’s portrait, as the image of a rock and a pine are prominent figures in the painting of portraits. Hongzhi concludes the encomium by expressing his cordial relationship with the recipient by referring to Gentleman Wang as a true friend who obtains the transmission of the mind from Hongzhi. Hongzhi’s depiction of his relationship with Gentleman Wang might reflect his general reciprocal relationship with all patrons, including ordinary people and literati. Furthermore, this land-dharma relationship reveals Hongzhi’s concern for doctrinal dissemination in his verses for his literati audience.

76 Michael J. Walsh’s ideas of economic capital, cultural or spiritual capital inspires my thinking. See Michael J. Walsh, *Sacred Economies: Buddhist Monasticism and Territoriality in Medieval China* (New York: Columbia University, 2010), 47, 116–119.

Through close readings of Hongzhi’s “requested verses,” I have demonstrated that he used poetic forms to instruct his secular elite audience about Caodong core teachings: the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena, Silent Illumination practice, and inherent Buddha nature. These teachings are overlapping themes that Hongzhi advocates in his sermons and writings for his monastic audience. For Hongzhi, these teachings are essential and important for scholars and officials alike. Hongzhi’s promotion of the Caodong pivotal teachings further shows his commitment to the revival of the Caodong tradition within literati circles. With respect to illuminating Silent Illumination, Hongzhi concretely highlights letting go of any thoughts to silence mind. In the verse for monastics, he addresses this theme more abstractly. In light of their busy lives, such a concrete approach probably appealed to literati’s concerns with self-cultivation. His encomiastic verse also depicts the generally reciprocal relationship that he maintained with literati recipients involving economic and spiritual exchanges.

**Hongzhi’s Social Verses**

Aside from the integral role they played in promoting Silent Illumination Chan or Buddhism, Hongzhi’s verses addressed to the literati also perform social functions. Hongzhi uses occasional verse for exchange to build or reinforce his relationships with the secular elite. There are several frequent tropes in Hongzhi’s occasional verses for literati, including friendship, the imagery of Tao Yuanming’s reclusive life and doctrinal ideas. In his responses to certain individuals on particular occasions, Hongzhi formed a bond with literati through poetic practice. The theme of friendship is central in Hongzhi’s verses to literati. In his occasional verse, there also are some clues about the way in which Hongzhi interacts with literati. For example, when Hongzhi visited
a prefect, he wrote a poem entitled, “Via the floating boat to Changguo to visit Prefect Han Keming” 浮舟之昌國謁韓克明知縣. It reads:

南風帆腹飽， The southern wind completely fills the sail.
半夜渡滄津。 At midnight, the boat crosses the cold ford.
鯨海漾新月， In the sea of whales, the new moon ripples.
仙山尋故人。 In the mountain of immortals, I seek for an old friend.
浪寒千里雪， The waves are cold, a thousand miles of snow.
烟暖十洲春。 The mist is warm in ten isles in the spring.
來就昌黎語， I have come here to approach the words of Changli
(韓愈).
良慚我效顰。 I am very ashamed to imitate you.78

The emphasis on the expressions associated with friendship may reflect the way in which Hongzhi interacts with literati, as the topic of friendship is not stressed in his verse to monastics. In this poem, Hongzhi expresses his cordial relationship with Prefect Han to commemorate his visit. This verse is a secular-type poem, as there is no doctrinal content in this verse, and it is indistinguishable from poems by literati. The first couplet describes that Hongzhi’s travels to Changguo (present-day Zhoushan 舟山 in Zhejiang 浙江) via a boat to visit Prefect Han. In the second couplet, “old friend” expresses their close relationship and “mountain of immortals” refers to the island where Prefect Han resides. The third couplet, uses the term, “ten isles 十洲.” According to the legendary record Haimei shizhou ji 海內十洲記, the ten isles were abodes of immortals.79 Hongzhi might be alluding to Li Shangyin’s 李商隱 (813–858) poem, when he makes use of this term to refer to the place where Prefect Han resides.80 In the last couplet,

78 Hongzhi lu, 6.447b8–10; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.93a25–28 (juan 8).


80 Li Shangyin’s poem, “Peony” (mudan 牡丹) reads, “The immortals live in ten isles” 神仙居十洲, Quan Tang shi, 539.6223.
Hongzhi uses Han Yu’s (韩愈 768–824) well-known name, Changli, as a reference to Prefect Han, who shared the same last name.⁸¹ Hongzhi expresses that he would like to learn from Prefect Han’s words. Regarding the theme of friendship, in this verse he uses “old friend” to express his close relationship with the literati. Hongzhi even employs youyu 友于 to portray his intimate relationship with the literati as the term youyu 友于 carries the meaning of brotherhood.⁸² In addition, in the verse, Hongzhi states that his visit aims to obtain Prefect Han’s words. Asking words from literati seems to be a major way in which he interacts with them. In another verse, to Yang Caishu 楊才叔, Hongzhi writes, “I am eager to seek true words to cleanse dusty thoughts” 欲求真語滌塵想.⁸³ Hongzhi might want to obtain advice from Yang to deal with ordinary things. In another verse, Hongzhi writes, “I am eager to seek dusty words from the black eyes of an old [friend] 塵語欲求青眼舊.⁸⁴ When one “sees with black eyes,” it indicates one’s fondness or appreciation. In contrast, if one turns the whites of the eyes up, it shows one’s dislike.⁸⁵ Talking seems to be a common way in which Hongzhi interacts with his literati friends. It seems clear that when Hongzhi met with his literati friends they would engage in lively conversations.

In another verse written on an occasion when Hongzhi is sending off a scholar, titled “Sentences Composed to Send Off Jiang Xinchen, a Candidate in Metropolitan Examination” 蔣

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⁸¹ Changli is Han Yu’s hometown, so Han Yu also kown as Han Changli.

⁸² Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.94b25 (juan 8).

⁸³ Hongzhi lu, 6.427a3; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.87c17 (juan 8).

⁸⁴ Hongzhi lu, 6.459a3; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.96b15 (juan 8).

⁸⁵ Jin shu 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghuw shuju 1974), 49.1361. When Ji (Ruan Ji 阮籍) is ecstatic, you can see his black eyes” 籍大悅，乃見青眼.
新臣秀才告別作句送之, Hongzhi expresses his mutual close bond with the literatus. The verse reads:

雪屋高寒能我過，
疎梅清秀雪林柯。

At the snow house that is lofty and cold, you can visit me. Sparse plum blossoms are delicate and beautiful among the branches in the snowy forest.

不慳屈宋楚人語，
來試宗雷蓮社科。

Not being lack of the Chu words of Qu [Yuan 屈原] and Song [Yu 宋玉] You come to test the studies of Zong-Lei’s lotus association.

後會說盟如有以，
春風遲立欄竿曲。

If there is condition that we talked our promise in our future meeting. In spring breezes, one stands by the curving banisters.

此行洗念入無何。
白雪樓前船弄梭。

During this journey, you cleanse thoughts to enter nothingness. In white snow, in front of the chamber, boats travel without ceasing. 86

In this verse, Hongzhi seems to transform his social-bond with this scholar into a dharma-bond relationship. Hongzhi shows his appreciation for the scholar’s visit as the verse begins, by depicting the cold scene in the winter during the scholar’s visit. The second couplet makes a reference to the scholar’s learning of Buddhism despite his familiarity with the *Chuci* 楚辭 of Qu Yuan and Song Yu. Zonglei is an abbreviation of the names two lay literati, Zong Bing 宗炳 (375–444) and Lei Cizong 雷次宗 (386–448). Zong Bing was a talented scholar as he was good at calligraphy, painting, and playing a lute, and he served as an official of Record’s Office. Later, he studied Buddhism under Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) in Mount Lu. 87 Lei Cizong studied Buddhism under Huiyuan when he was a child. He was fond of learning both Buddhist and secular literature. He was invited by Emperor Wen of Liu 劉宋文帝 (407–453) to teach in the

86 Hongzhi lu, 6.444b9–12; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.92b28–c3 (juan 8).
87 The allusion of Zonglei can be found in *Song shu* 宋書. *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 93.2278–2279.
Hongzhi uses these allusions to describe scholar Jiang as someone who not only studies secular literature but also wants to learn Buddhism like Zong Bing and Lei Cizong. The third couplet indicates their mutual bond based on the dharma. The term *shuomeng* usually refers to a commitment or vow that two intimate friends make together. Hongzhi encourages this scholar to cleanse his thoughts. In the same way, in another verse, Hongzhi writes, “The Way is just the tip of friendship as the brotherhood has not yet ended” 道在金蘭端未艾. Hongzhi uses expressions of friendship as a form of brotherhood to depict his close bonds with individual literati.

In addition to focusing on his friendship with his literati friends, some of Hongzhi’s poems to literati have both social and pedagogical aspects. Similar to networking practices of literati, Hongzhi exchanged poems with both literati and monastics. In an exchange poem, “Responding Again to the Verse Sent by Zhu, the Gentleman for Court Service” 再和朱朝奉見寄, the phrase “responding again” in the title expresses that Hongzhi and Zhu have already exchanged poems many times. This verse touches on many topics, including the reclusive life of the elite, Buddhist teachings, and their cordial friendship. It reads:

> 謝來林下人， Where does the man under the tree come from?
> 挂冠脫朝緣。 Hang up the cap and take off the robe of the court.
> 身閒道愈尊， When the body is at ease, the Way becomes more honored.
> 神靜碧照目。 The spirit is quiet like a green jade that illuminates the eyes.
> 落落我就璞， Firm and strong, I am simply a rough stone.
> 碌碌誰如玉？ Precious, who is like jade?
> 欲學陶淵明， You desire to imitate Tao Yuanming.
> 高情異浮俗。 Lofty emotion differs from the frivolous mundaneness.
> 白雲無定心， There is no permanent mind in the white clouds.
青山有奇骨。
有奇骨。

There is an extraordinary spirit in the green mountains.

肯從蓮社賓，
您是愿意到蓮社來做客嗎？

You are willing to be a guest of the Lotus Association.

共奏無絃曲。　

Together play the unstrung [lute] song.

佛生等一念，

The Buddhas and all sentient beings are equal in one moment of thought.

日劫詎延促？

How can the day be transitory and the eon be long?

傾蓋同故人，

You were like an old friend at our first meeting.

道存聊一矚。

The Way remains as we chat with one gaze.

Through the image of taking off the official cap and robe, the opening couplet describes Zhu’s retirement. The second couplet seems to depict Zhu’s retired life; Hongzhi uses the words “the body is at ease” to suggest that Zhu is no longer busy with official affairs. Hongzhi also expresses Zhu’s state of mind by stating that Zhu’s Way and his spirit are luminous, like a jade that shines on the eyes. The following couplet alludes to Laozi. In Laozi, it is said, “They desire not to dazzle and glitter like jade, but to remain firm and strong like stone” 不欲碌碌如玉，落落如石. Contrasting the image of precious jade with a hard rock implies noble vs. humble status. Hongzhi depicts himself as a rough stone, while referring to Zhu as a jade. The fourth couplet praises Zhu’s transcendence of mundane life by making reference to the famous recluse, Tao Yuanming. Then, Hongzhi turns to making doctrinal points. The fifth couplet addresses the doctrine of the principle and phenomena through typical Caodong metaphors: clouds indicate phenomena, and a mountain symbolizes principle. Hongzhi then uses the expression “no permanent mind” to imply the impermanent nature of emptiness, which is the principle. In the

90 “骨” connotes the sense of people’s character or spirit.

91 “Lotus Association” might refer to Pure Land Association that practices reciting Amitâbha Buddha’s name.

92 Hongzhi lu, 6.443a1–5; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.92a2–7 (juan 8). “矚” means to look steadily and focus on.


94 Roberts, Dao De Jing, 110.
following line, when Hongzhi mentions the spirit of the mountain he might be referencing innate Buddha nature. The sixth couplet refers to an “unstrung [lute] song” (*wuxian qu* 無弦曲) to convey the teaching of emptiness. The allusion of a lute without strings comes from the biography of Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 in *Jin shu* 晉書. It is said, “[Tao Qian] could find joy in a lute, but it was not necessary to have the sound of strings” 但識琴中趣，何勞弦上聲. Chan monks broadly used the metaphor of an unstrung lute to convey the message that ultimate truth cannot be attained by conventional means, but, here, rather through the Pure Land practice of reciting Amitābha Buddha’s name, one can realize emptiness. The seventh couplet explains the non-duality between Buddhas and sentient beings, as well as between a day and an eon. Hongzhi concludes the verse by depicting his friendship with Zhu. The expression (*qinggai* 傾蓋) alludes to *Shiji*. There is a saying that describes two people immediately feeling like old friends at their first meeting—“if they happened to bump into each other on the road, it would seem like the tops of their carriages would lean into each other’s” 傾蓋如故 as they engaged in intimate conversation.

Due to his correspondents’ high level of Buddhist learning, Hongzhi’s Chan ideas and his doctrinal messages are pronounced in his poetic exchanges. In responding to his close friend, Layman Chaoran 超然居士 (Zhao Lingjin 趙令衿), Hongzhi makes abundant use of Chan

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95 *Jin shu*, 94. 2463.

96 A verse recited in the service of the recitation of Amitābha Buddha’s name reads: “As the flower blooms, I see the Buddha, and realize emptiness” 花開見佛悟無生. According to the entry, “wusheng 無生”, in *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “wusheng 無生” means “Not produced or arisen; nonproduction; uncreated; no rebirth; nirvāṇa as not subject to birth and death, and which negates them; the condition of the absolute. Since the original quality of all things is emptiness, there actually is no such thing as arising, changing and ceasing. In this sense, the term is equivalent to emptiness.”

97 *Shiji*, 83.2981– 2982.
allusions. As noted in the introduction, Zhao was a royal family member who wrote a preface for Hongzhi’s collection, and in the preface he indicated that he personally composed a poem for Hongzhi. It is unfortunate that Hongzhi’s exchange with this literatus is lost. Nevertheless, in Hongzhi’s collection of poetry, there are two poems for Zhao. That fact that Zhao was a devotee might explain why Hongzhi’s poem in response to Zhao is packed with Chan language. For example, in responding to Zhao’s verse to thank Hongzhi for bringing Zhao to meet with Chan Master Baofeng Jingxiang 寶峰景祥 (1062–1132). Baofeng was a Linji master who once had five thousand students. In this verse, probably because of Zhao’s surname was same with Zhaozhou, Hongzhi used several old cases associated with Zhaozhou to encourage Zhao to practice Chan. In addition, Hongzhi made reference to the case about Pang Yun 龐蘊 (d.u.), a famous lay Buddhist, to portray Zhao. Hongzhi also employed cases related to Juzhi to depict Zhao’s meeting with Baofeng.

98 The titles of the poems are as follows: (1) “Layperson Chaoran was able to ask the Way from Chan Master Baofeng Xiang. After he returned, he wished to write a long letter to express his gratitude to me because I brought him [to visit the Chan master]. In my reply to his correspondence, I soaked my pen to write phrases to continue his [prose].”超然居士。得得問道於寶峯祥禪師。且欲歸歌長篇。以謝予偕其行見挽。以和漬筆。說句繼之. Hongzhi lu, 6.421b6–422a2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48. 86.b05–07. (2) “Borrowing the poem of Xuedou to give to Layman Chaoran Zhao to note (or record) his time in Letan.”借雪竇韻送超然居士趙表之時在泐潭. Hongzhi lu, 6. 425b8–426a2;  Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.87b7–14.

99 The title of this verse is “Layperson Chaoran was able to ask the Way from Chan Master Baofeng Xiang. After he returned, he wished to write a long letter to express his gratitude to me because I brought him [to visit the Chan master]. In my reply to his correspondence, I soaked my pen to write phrases to continue his [prose].”超然居士。得得問道於寶峯祥禪師。且欲歸歌長篇。以謝予偕其行見挽。以和漬筆。說句繼之. Hongzhi lu, 6.421b6–422a2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T48.86b5–7. The complete verse reads: “Every gate reaches the way to Chang’an. / At random, you pick a gate up, and it is exactly perfect. / The heels step on the pass of Zhaozhou. / The sixteen-foot golden body is a stalk of grass. / When I first met this person, / He sees and embraces every dharma that is perfect and penetrating each other. / Holding a staff and wearing straw shoes, he came to follow me to the monastery. / He did not learn ignorant Chan and did not contact anyone. / Green mountains and white clouds can be penetrated through one path. / All the paths of the birds, who investigates them? / Master Baofeng is the son of Mazu. / Knowing each other now and he regrets it is not earlier. / Layman Pang swallowed the West River in its entirety. / Elder Juzhi called someone back and raised his finger. / The clay ox plows vigorously the empty kalpa of the spring. / The wooden man holds the treasure of the form-mountain. / Finish plucking the whiskers of a tiger; returns to the come and go. / In the forest of thistles and thorns, let one rises and falls at will. / At noon, the sun is bright in the sky; the sunshine is luminous”門門通徹長安道，/信手拈來還恰好。/脚跟踏著趙州關，/丈六金身一莖草。/我初相會箇中人，/法法圓通見懷抱。/杖農追隨來道場，/不學癡禪事關掃。/青山白雲一徑通，/行行鳥道誰
incorporates intense Chan allusions and Caodong doctrines into his verses for Zhao, without making references to secular sources. Aside from poetic exchanges through letters, because of the literati recipients’ deep engagement with Buddhism, Hongzhi also makes use of social occasions to offer his teaching in poetic form. In a parting verse for Minister Lu (陸尚書), Hongzhi spends many lines on illuminating doctrinal points of non-duality of being and non-being, transcendence of life and death, as well as on the merging of principle and phenomena.  

Although Hongzhi writes this verse for a parting occasion, he uses it to revisit important doctrinal ideas.

There was one other occasion for which Hongzhi incorporated doctrinal ideas to his verses, namely, commemorating a dwelling or a place. The content of this type of verse can be regarded as versified statements of doctrine. According to Zhang Yunshuang 張蘊爽, during the Southern Song literati were absorbed in naming and explaining the meaning of studio names to others in literary writings. Many literati made references to Buddhist doctrines in naming their studios. It was within this context that they requested monks to write about the meaning of their studios. During one occasion, an official, Wei Jinke 衛進可 asked Hongzhi to write a verse for his studio, the Hall of Six Placidities 六湛堂 after he treated Hongzhi to a meal. Wei explains

尋討。/寶峯師是馬駒兒，/相得而今恨不早。/吸盡西江居士龐，/喚回豎指俱胝老。/泥牛力耕空劫春，/木人捧出形山寶/罷捋虎鬚歸去來，/荊棘林中任起倒。/午日麗天光杲杲。  

The complete verse reads: “One thousand miles in the same wind, the virtuous one is not alone./ The mind is like the autumn and awakening is like the moon that shines at the empty vessel./ Sitting to cut off the two ends; what is life and death? / Within a point of perfect illumination; is there any difference between being and non-being? / In the cold, the wooden horse neighs on green grass bank / In the spring, the clay ox plows in white clouds patch. / Upon seeing and hearing Buddhist services, who welcomes or abandons them? / Where the function operates to the fullest extent, the Way turns the pivot.”  

100 The complete verse reads: “One thousand miles in the same wind, the virtuous one is not alone./ The mind is like the autumn and awakening is like the moon that shines at the empty vessel./ Sitting to cut off the two ends; what is life and death? / Within a point of perfect illumination; is there any difference between being and non-being? / In the cold, the wooden horse neighs on green grass bank / In the spring, the clay ox plows in white clouds patch. / Upon seeing and hearing Buddhist services, who welcomes or abandons them? / Where the function operates to the fullest extent, the Way turns the pivot.”  

that “six placidities” means that “when the six faculties stop, the essence returns to being placid”

六處休復同一湛然. Hongzhi’s verse reads:

風瀾未作見靈源，
When the wind and the great wave do not rise, one sees the numinous source.

六處亡功體湛存。
When the six faculties cease to function, the essence remains placid and tranquil.

諸法性空方得座，
When one sees the empty nature of every dharma, one obtains one’s seat.

一彈指響頓開門。
In the span of a finger-snap, one opens the door.

寒梅篳落春能早，
When cold plums fall on the bamboo hedge, spring may arrive earlier.

野雪櫺窓夜不昏。
When the wild snow falls on the window-frame, the night is not dim.

萬像森羅心印印，
Among the myriad phenomena, the mind-seal seals.

根塵超豁妙無痕。
When one transcends cognitive faculties and their objects, the wonder is traceless.

The term “six” refers to the six faculties. When the six faculties do not function, they are like wind and waves that do not arise. Within this state, the lucid essence, namely Buddha nature, emerges. The moment one realizes that the nature of everything is empty, one sees Buddha nature as if one is opening a door. After realizing Buddha nature, upon seeing that every phenomenon manifests just like a plum blossom falls, one’s mind is luminous and not dark like the reflection of snow at the night. In the state of seeing Buddha nature, one clearly sees the manifestation of every phenomenon. Although one’s cognitive faculties and objects function, one is not attached to any phenomena. Therefore, the mind is traceless without being attached to all phenomena. In the same way that other literati regarded their studios as self-cultivation spaces,

102 Hongzhi lu, 6.459b6–11; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.96c4–11 (juan 8). “On the twenty-ninth of the twelfth month, Assistant Clerk Wei Jinke treated me to a vegetarian meal. We gathered at supreme ease in a hall on the west side. It is named, “Six Placidities.” This name means that when the six faculties stop, the essence returns to being placid. He requested some words from me, so I composed a verse as it reads” 衛進可寺丞。臘月二十九日。招我以蔬飯。從容勝集其居之西一堂。榜曰六湛。意六處休復同一湛然。且求語因作偈云. There is no biographical information about Wei.

103 Hongzhi lu, 6.459b6–11; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.96c4–11 (juan 8).
Wei names his studio as a place for self-cultivation in a Buddhist sense. Responding to Wei’s explanations of his studio name, Hongzhi seems to urge Wei to see the Buddha’s nature through the six faculties.

Hongzhi’s verse collection contains several verses for commemorating dwellings. Nevertheless, there is no reference to the identities of recipients. In addition, in Hongzhi’s guanglu, there is another genre, inscription (ming 銘). Hongzhi composed several inscriptions to commemorate dwellings. Unfortunately, there is no information about the recipients. Some of them might have been written at the literati’s request. It is worth noting that because the place names are associated with Buddhist ideas, the content of Hongzhi’s verses is full of doctrinal ideas, such as “Inscription of the Original Boundary Hut” 本際庵銘. We can surmise that monks used the genre of commemoration of dwelling places as an opportunity to explicate doctrinal themes. Similarly, secular elites engaged in writing commemorative inscriptions for Buddhist establishments. Literati commemorated Buddhist institutions from various perspectives. These included criticism of Buddhism, political views, social concerns, and personal feeling. This literati trend demonstrates that there was a fruitful exchange between monks and literati.

Hongzhi’s social verses demonstrate multiple dimensions. From a social perspective, Hongzhi established his social network with literati through poetic practice. Depending on the

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104 There is an inscription titled, “The Inscription of Room of Pure Happiness” 淨樂室銘. Hongzhi probably wrote this inscription for a literatus. Hongzhi lu, 1.78a6–b10; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.100b15–c1 (juan 8).

105 Hongzhi lu, 6.466b2–5; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.100b15–c1 (juan 8).

106 In Dahui Zonggao’s collection of recorded sayings, there are several inscriptions of dwellings written at the request of literati. The names of dwellings were associated with Buddhist doctrines. For example, No-heat Room (wure xuan 無熱軒), Purify Mind Pavilion (jingxin ge 淨心閣), and Wondrous and High Hall (miaogao tang 妙高堂). Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu, T 47.856c20–857a28 (juan 11).

literati’s distinct level of engagement with Buddhism and in addition to other social factors, Hongzhi makes adjustments and incorporates corresponding doctrinal messages into his verses. From a literary perspective, Hongzhi’s social verses demonstrate his multi-faceted literary talent in responding to varied social occasions. He aptly used either allusions from secular sources or references from Chan literature to portray his literati friends.

**Hongzhi’s Verses Written at Monastics’ Request for Begging Practice**

So far we have seen how, in a direct way, Hongzhi participated in literati culture through poetic practice. He offered teaching through verses and encomia written at the request of literati. In addition to commenting on doctrinal points, Hongzhi wrote poems to respond to various social occasions as a way to establish personal connections within literati circles. In an indirect way, Hongzhi also engaged in literati culture through his verses directed to monastics that were written in a larger socio-economic context. Hongzhi composed many verses and encomia for monastics who begged for alms or raised funds among literati. Although Hongzhi composed verses for monastics for financial purposes, his verses circulated among literati patrons. Verses written at monastics’ request for economic support fall into of two categories. First, Hongzhi wrote verses for monastics who were about to embark on begging for alms, meals, salt, and fields; these verses were circulated among the literati. Although these poems lack contextualizing references, the monastics might show Hongzhi’s verses to their literati patrons when they approached them for support. The other category of verses includes Hongzhi’s self-portrait encomia that were directed to monastics for fund-raising. Schlüetter indicates that fund-raisers (*huazhu* 化主) prepared portraits of Hongzhi with inscriptions before travelling for fund-raising. The fund-raiser “would then give these inscribed portraits to generous donors, important
officials, and other people with whom good relations were important.” Thus, in an indirect way, Hongzhi’s portrait encomia were circulated by fund-raising monastics.

Verses of monastics’ requests for begging for material items have several interesting features. From an abstract perspective, Hongzhi illuminates the meaning of monastic begging practice, the ultimate significance of begging items, and doctrinal points. On the other hand, from a practical perspective, Hongzhi delivers messages to literati patrons to urge them to make offerings. For example, a verse at a monk’s request for begging, reads:

孤禪抖擻起僧氈
挂鉢寒藤著瘦肩。
破夜無私看霽月，
開華不染出泥蓮。
底心眾事水雲餓，
何處人家粥飯緣？
寄語毘耶老居士。
相投莫怪喚春眠。

A solitary Chan mendicant rolls up a rug energetically,
Hanging a bowl and a withered vine on his skinny shoulders.
Selflessness breaks darkness to see the clear moon after the rain.
Its blossoms unpolluted, the lotus emerges from the mud.
In the mind, there is the assembly’s affair about the monks’ hunger.
Where is karmic affinity for meals at each household?
I send words to the old layman in Vaiśāli.
If a monk is seeking for help, please do not blame him for waking you up during your springtime nap.

This verse contains descriptions associated with monastic begging practice, doctrinal idioms, and messages about asking patrons for offerings. The integral topic in verses for monastics’ requests for begging practice is the portrayals of items for which monks beg. Here, Hongzhi opens by depicting monastics’ begging practice through the images of a bowl and staff. The second couplet turns to deliver a didactic statement. The third line conveys the point that the selflessness involved in the practice will break through delusion like dark night to see the Buddha nature like

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109 “shuiyun 水雲” might mean “yunshui 雲水,” a term referring wandering monks like fleeting clouds and flowing water because they do not stay in a fixed place.

110 The old layman who lived in Vaiśāli is Vimalakīrti.

111 Hongzhi lu, 6.465a10–b1; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.98a23–27 (juan 8).
bright moon. The third couplet depicts that the monk’s begging as selfless action because of his concern for the hunger of his monastic assembly. The latter half of the verse seems to address the literati patron, as Hongzhi uses the expression “send words” *jiyu* 寄語. The third couplet expresses the monastics’ concern and asks where the monk can get provisions. The last couplet evokes the image of Vimalakīrti, who is an old layman who lived in Vaiśālī. The poem uses this image of the ideal layman as a way to ask patrons to offer alms to the monk. In some verses that do not draw on the metaphor of Vimalakīrti, Hongzhi explicitly employs “dāna” *tan’na* 檀那 (patrons) to request contributions. For example, a verse reads, “I sent words to patrons (*tan’na*) to help the monk (you). / Year after year, donors look for opportunities to provide meals for monks.” 寄語檀那好相助，/ 年年長得飯僧緣. By using “dāna” to address donors, Hongzhi urges laymen to make offerings to monks.

Hongzhi employs anecdotes or expressions associated with Vimalakīrti to flatter literati patrons. An example is the verse titled, “Venerable Yun Requests a Verse for Holding a Bowl” 雲上人持鉢乞頌:

雲水千僧共默耕，
煩君乞食出山行。
蕨薇夜雨萌寒麓，
桃李春風織錦城。
空谷一呼同響應，
圓珠眾色合光明。
上方此去分香飯，
為我先須見淨名。

A thousand wandering monks together plow silently.  
May I trouble you to travel outside the mountain to beg for food?  
On the cold mountain, during rainy nights, the ferns are budding.  
In town, in the spring breeze, peach and plum flowers blossom like woven silk.  
In the empty valley, a shout and its echo respond together.  
Every color of the round pearl harmonizes with its brilliance.  
Going upward to distribute delicious meals.  
For me, you have to first meet Impeccable Reputation.  

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Hongzhi flatters lay patrons by referring to Vimalakīrti in this type of verse for begging. The opening line depicts that the assembly engages in practice by reference to “plow”; that is, to cultivating the field of the mind. It is worth noting that Hongzhi puns on the recipient’s name by using *yun* in his reference to wandering monks. Incorporating a reference to the name of the recipient monks is a salient feature in this sub-genre of verse. In the following line, in a humble way, Hongzhi requests the monk to leave the monastery to beg for food while the entire monastic assembly is practicing Chan. The second couplet contrasts the mountain where the monastery is located and the town where patrons reside. The final couplet refers to a story in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. The anecdote depicts an assembly meeting during mealtime. Vimalakīrti used his supernatural powers to manifest a country called Many Fragrances (*zhongxiang* 異香) where the fragrant aroma of the food “wafted to an immeasurable world in the ten directions.” A Buddha named Fragrance Accumulated (*xiangji* 香積) resided in this land. In the story, Vimalakīrti asks a conjured bodhisattva to go to the land and approach Fragrance Accumulated Buddha with a request for leftovers to dispense in the *Saha* world. In his verse, Hongzhi employs the allusion of Vimalakīrti to implicitly request the laity to make donations.

Another tactic Hongzhi employs is to explicitly use the term “dāna” (patron) and further offers a message that patrons’ kindness will be paid back. A verse titled “Venerable Hua Holding a Bowl to Request a Verse” 化上人持鉢求頌 reads:

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化事而今盡付君，
歸來還我驗兒孫。
諸塵正受盛於鉢，
一句含胡覆却盆。
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Today the affair of begging alms is completely entrusted to you.
When you return, I will test the disciples.
The samādhi of every atom fills the bowl.
One ambiguous sentence makes the pot turn upside down.
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別處見人知雪嶺， In other places, one visits other teachers, you understand Xuefeng
自家喫飯識雲門。 When one personally eats meals, one understands Yunmen.
底心肯負檀那力， Your mind is ready to carry on the patrons’ effort.
開發真機報施恩。 Develop the true ability to repay the kindness of donors. 115

The first couplet describes begging practice and puns on the monastic recipient’s name. In the
second line, Hongzhi expresses that he will test the monk’s begging practice. The second and the
third couplets allude to two gong’an related to a bowl and meals. The original cases depict a
dialogue between a monk and Yunmen. The monk starts the dialogue by asking, “What is every-
atom samādhi?” 如何是塵塵三昧 Yunmen answers, “Rice in the bowl, water in the bucket” 鉢
裡飯桶裡水. 116 Yunmen’s response suggests that one can achieve samādhi through worldly
activity. By alluding to this case, Hongzhi makes the point that begging is a practice that leads to
the realization of samādhi. In other words, one can attain ultimate samādhi through conventional
begging practice.

The other old case is associated with Xuefeng. The initial case describes that Xuefeng
served as the head cook under Dongshan. One day, while Xuefeng was washing rice, Dongshan
asks, “Wash the sand and get rid of the rice? Wash the rice and get rid of the sand?” Xuefeng
responds, “Both sand and rice are gone simultaneously.” To which Dongshan asks, “What does
the assembly eat?” Then Xuefeng turns the pot upside down. Dongshan responds with, “In the
future, you shall visit other teachers” 子佗後別見人去在. 117 Dongshan’s final statement implies
that although Xuefeng could not understand his words, Xuefeng would achieve awakening under

115 Hongzhi lu, 6.450b7–10. Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.94a26–b1 (juan 8).
116 Hongzhi lu, 2.119a6–7; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.27b19 (juan 2). I use Cleary’s translation. Cleary, Book
of Serenity, 99.
117 Hongzhi lu, 2.146a2; Hongzhi chanshi guanglu, T 48.34a7 (juan 3).
another teacher. The fifth line alludes to Dongshan’s saying that Xuefeng shall visit other teachers. This case illuminates that one can gain Chan insight through daily chores such as washing rice. By referring to the case associated with Xuefeng, Hongzhi seems to be urging the monk to regard his begging activity as a practice that leads to attaining awakening. The sixth line implies that in taking the eating of meals as practice, one eats meals single-mindedly without wandering. In other words, when one is eating, one does not have any thought except eating. In this way, one may attain ultimate samādhi through the mundane practice of eating a meal. The final couplet seems to target potential literati patrons. The two lines implore monks to bear in mind their patrons’ efforts and practice hard to requite the donor’s generosity. The final couplet implies that patrons’ offerings will not be given in vain, as monks will express their gratitude though arduous practice. Hongzhi’s implicit message is that patrons should donate.

Hongzhi also uses other general expressions such as “ten thousand houses” to refer to potential patrons. This phrase appears in the following verse for a monk who is begging for salt:

泥沙淘洗干净，
The mud and sands are washed out and the waves are simmered dry.
一片照人冰雪寒。
Like the cold of ice and icy and cold snow, a sheet of salt illuminates people.
意得試蓮浮鹵力，
The intention is to try floating a lotus in natural salt.
默知隨供入蔬盤。
One silently knows that, through chopsticks, the salt goes into the plate of meals.
萬家婉婉能相助，
Ten thousand houses are able to help politely.
眾口調和信不難。
One believes that it is not difficult to satisfy everybody’s taste.
無像有神聊勘過，
The salt has no form, but it has the spirit that deeply examines the meal.
圓通眼在舌頭端。
The perfect penetrating eye is at the tip of the tongue.  

This verse considers salt from both a conventional and an ultimate perspective. The verse opens by describing the processing of the salt from salt-mingled-with-mud into pure salt. The second
line begins by punning on the name of the monk, yi 一. Taking a mundane perspective, the
second couplet expresses salt as an integral component of meals. The third couplet depicts that
ten thousand houses have contributed to donating salt. By praising donors’ capacity to make
offerings, Hongzhi implicitly asks patrons to provide salt. Ultimately, the final couplet states that
salt can aid practitioners to attain the state of perfect penetration of ultimate truth. The
Śūraṃgama Sūtra describes how twenty-five Bodhisattvas attained enlightenment through
penetrating their faculties of tasting, touching, smelling, hearing, seeing, and others. Bhaiṣajyāraja
and Bhaiṣajyasamudgata were two Bodhisattvas who achieved awakening through gustatory
objects. They realized that “taste was neither existing nor non-existent, was neither body nor
mind and did not exist apart from them. [They] could discern the cause of taste”了知味性，非
空非有，非即身心，非離身心。分別味因，從是開悟.119 By alluding to perfection of taste
practice in Śūraṃgama Sūtra, Hongzhi suggests that salt offerings can contribute to monastic
practices that lead to achieving realization. Indirectly, Hongzhi is urging people to donate salt.

In these verses requested by monastics for the practice of begging, Hongzhi not only
instructs doctrinal ideas but also, in either explicit or implicit way, asks patrons to make
offerings to the monks. Unfortunately, there is no reference to the context within which monks
performed begging practice. As noted above, Hongzhi sometimes wrote that he sent messages to
patrons. Based on this, it is possible that monks would explain the verses when they visited
potential patrons. Although the verses had been composed at the monks’ request, the verses were
circulated among the patrons, including literati and ordinary people. Through the verses, the

119 Dafo ding rulai miyin xiu zheng liaoyi zhupusa wengxing shou lengu yan jing 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬
行首楞嚴經, T 19, no. 945, 125c29 (juan 5). Charles Luk, trans., The Śūraṃgama Sūtra (New Delhi: Munshiram
potential donors including literati would be reminded of the ultimate significance of ordinary monastic begging practice and about the mundane material items they requested. Furthermore, they received appreciative messages regarding their practice of giving.

**Hongzhi’s Encomia for Fund-raising**

In an indirect way, namely through the writings addressed to monastics for fund-raising, Hongzhi’s encomia were also circulated among patrons, including literati and ordinary people. A corpus of 434 portrait encomia under the heading, “Chan man and fund-raiser request encomia” (*Chanren ping huazhu xiezhen qiuquan* 禪人並化主寫真求贊) were compiled in Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings.\(^\text{120}\) In addition, all of Hongzhi’s encomia—including those for fund-raising, those requested by literati and monastics, and those for past Chan patriarchs—were compiled as a separate text and published in 1157. It is clear that portrait encomia were a crucial medium for fund-raising. For example, Hongzhi writes in the preface that, during his over thirty years’ residence at Tiantong Monastery, there were multitudes of monks, and they were short of food. On their journeys to beg for alms, fund-raising monastics would bring Hongzhi’s encomia and the portraits on which they were inscribed. When fund-raisers begged funds from lay patrons, they would offer encomia and portraits to patrons.\(^\text{121}\) Hongzhi clearly regarded the encomia for fund-raisers as Dharma offering to patrons. As he states in the opening of the preface, “to make Dharma offerings without flaws” 法供養以無疵 in the preface of the encomia.\(^\text{122}\) To make

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\(^{121}\) *Hongzhi lu*, 5.323a6–7; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.101a18 (*juan* 9). According Schlütter, Hongzhi wrote the foreword in the fifth month in 1156, and the collection of Hongzhi’s portrait inscriptions was published while he was still alive or shortly after his death in the tenth month in 1157. See Schlütter, “The Record of Hongzhi,” 194.  

\(^{122}\) *Hongzhi lu*, 5.323a1; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.101a18 (*juan* 9).
Dharma offerings to patrons, Hongzhi employs encomium as a vehicle to disseminate Buddhist teachings. As previously discussed in Hongzhi’s encomium at elite’s request, Hongzhi conveys the Caodong core teachings, Silent Illumination as well as the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. These two doctrinal themes appear prominently throughout his encomium for fund-raising. Through encomia, Hongzhi maintained an exchange relationship with lay patrons. Patrons would make financial offering to Hongzhi, and Hongzhi would makes Dharma offerings to them. As I have demonstrated above, the way Hongzhi depicts his relationship with patrons actually entails not only an economic and cultural reciprocation but also a spiritual exchange.

Compared to his contemporaries, Hongzhi composed many more encomia. In light of this fact his encomium must have impressed literati. In particular, he used encomia as a crucial means to gain fund among literati patrons probably because his writings appealed to elite. Although we do not have any direct descriptions of a patron’s reception of his encomia, there is a reference to a monk’s reception of one of Hongzhi’s encomia for six Chan patriarchs. Praising this encomium, Monk Shigui 士珪 (1083–1146) wrote that his “intent is true and words are wondrous. They transcend the Buddhas and patriarchs” 意真語妙。超佛越祖. Hongzhi uses many metaphors which he writes in six Chan patriarchs’ eulogies in his fund-raising encomia. Shigui’s positive critique suggests that Hongzhi’s encomia likely also appealed to literati. At the same time this might also prove their willingness to donate.

**Conclusion**

This chapter began with a close reading of Hongzhi’s use of allusions from secular sources crossing different genres. His deft usage of classical allusions demonstrates his erudition.

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123 *Hongzhi lu*, 5.325b9–10; *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu*, T 48.101c24 (juan 9).
Hongzhi drew on metaphors from philosophical writings such as *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi* and instilled them with a Buddhist sense to illustrate essential messages in particular cases. Hongzhi imbues historical and biographical references with doctrinal ideas to illuminate the essential points of original cases. He also employs many poetic expressions from literary writings to refine his commentarial verses.

Hongzhi’s knowledge of secular literature also contributes to his participation in secular literati culture. His varied genres of writings in his collection shows that Hongzhi engaged in literati culture though poetic practice. In a direct way, Hongzhi composed verses for literati on different social occasions. In an indirect way, Hongzhi’s verses were circulated though writings for monastics used for fund-raising purposes. Hongzhi’s verses for literati perform pedagogical, social, and economic functions.

Pedagogically, we have seen that two types of verses written at literati’s request—verses and portrait encomia—were major mediums for conveying essential Caodong doctrines. From a social perspective, Hongzhi used poetic practice to reinforce his bond with literati friends. Moreover, Hongzhi would make adjustments and incorporate doctrinal messages into his verses that were in keeping with individual literati’s distinct levels of engagement with Buddhism. Thus, social and pedagogical functions occur concurrently.

From an economic perspective, Hongzhi composed portrait encomia for fund-raising and also wrote verses for monastics who went door-to-door to beg for material support. Although these two types of verses were written in the larger contexts of raising fund or begging for alms, they both were crucial means for imparting doctrinal messages to literati. Hongzhi’s verses for literati reflect his multi-faceted writing talent, as he incorporated allusions from both secular and Buddhist sources to portray his literati friends. It is worth noting that according to the official
titles of the recipients of Hongzhi’s verses, his social network in the literati circle included both local and national figures. In short, Hongzhi participated in literati culture through elite activity, namely poetic practice. Through his great literary eloquence, he advocated Buddhist teachings, responded to social occasions, and urged the literati to make offering to begging monks.
Conclusion

This dissertation has examined Hongzhi’s *gong’an* commentarial verses from the perspectives of textual production, Caodong doctrine, and literary usages. Chapter 2 has examined the larger context of *gong’an* literature within which Hongzhi composed his *gong’an* works. The examination of major forms of *gong’an* commentarial practice explains that different settings, approaches, and literary styles contributed to the emergence of varied types of *gong’an* commentaries. The critical statements associated with major forms of *gong’an* commentaries shows that a pedagogical purpose was an important driving force behind the emergence of different fashions of commenting on original cases. In different commentarial approaches, Chan masters strove to raise crucial points to propel their audience toward a deeper understanding of original cases. The ways in which Chan masters commented on initial cases also played an important role in the textual production of *gong’an* literature. The varied modes of *gong’an* commentarial practice also led to the formation of diverse genres of *gong’an* texts. Hongzhi’s collections of commentarial prose and verses were compiled within this context of pedagogy as well as within contemporary expectations of textual production.

Chapter 2 also investigated textual sources of old cases in the formation of *gong’an* commentaries. It did this through identifying inter-textual relationships between Hongzhi’s *gong’an* works and other influential *gong’an* commentaries. It demonstrated that prior *gong’an* collections were the source of a high proportion of the old cases that Hongzhi drew on. Hongzhi’s approach of using such sources suggests how his contemporary Chan masters also used primary and secondary sources for their composition of *gong’an* commentaries. Primary sources refer to collections of recorded sayings or lamp transmission texts; secondary sources
refer to gong’an works. Drawing on secondary sources also reflects a contemporary trend of recycling old cases rather than drawing on new sources of original cases. Chan masters reused the same original cases in different ways to create new gong’an texts. In keeping with this practice, I have shown how Hongzhi incorporated related encounter dialogues into selected original cases.

In addition, I have demonstrated that Fenyang, Xuedou, and Hongzhi used different strategies in tackling essential messages of original cases. Chan masters’ distinct approaches contributed to the formation of gong’an commentaries. Their commentarial strategies include tone, position, assertion of authority, and literary engagement. When comparing Hongzhi’s commentarial verses with those of Fenyang and Xuedou, it is clear that Hongzhi tended to take a neutral tone to critique Chan masters involved in old cases. Hongzhi’s literary prowess is a striking feature that distinguished his gong’an verse from other masters. His poetic lines are replete with allusions to both Buddhist writings and secular literature.

Shifting the focus from textual production to doctrinal concerns, Chapter 3 examines Hongzhi’s creation of a Caodong identity in his gong’an commentarial verses. This chapter also looks closely at the sermons he wrote in response to criticism of Caodong Chan. I have demonstrated that Hongzhi created a Caodong identity from three aspects. First, Hongzhi identified the essence of the Caodong Chan as the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. Second, he shaped the Caodong image through metaphors associated with this teaching in his gong’an commentarial verses. Third, he responded to criticism of Caodong Chan in his sermons through addressing the strengths of Caodong identity.

The teaching of the Caodong tradition was characterized as the doctrine of the principle and phenomena or the essence and function. Daoxue 道學 shared this same concern with the
doctrines of principle. However, Daoxue tackled the doctrine of principle from different angles and reached for different goals. Caodong’s advocacy of the teaching of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena was a continuation of the Huayan doctrine of the interpenetration of the principle and phenomena. Unlike Huayan’s use of doctrinal terms to elucidate this teaching, Caodong masters devised varied metaphorical systems to articulate this doctrine. The Caodong lineage promoted this doctrine within this secular and Buddhist intellectual milieu. In addition to these larger frameworks, the surrounding secular and Buddhist contexts had impact on the approach Hongzhi took in his creation and promotion of the Caodong tradition. The decline of the Caodong was a main factor behind Hongzhi’s engagement in establishing a Caodong image.

Building on his Caodong predecessors’ characterization of the Caodong teaching, Hongzhi identified the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena as the core teaching of Caodong. Taking the same approach as that of his Caodong predecessors, he represented this doctrine through various metaphors. However, rather than simply using typical Caodong metaphors, he also alluded to secular writings to create new imagery to define this Caodong core teaching. In the face of the declining status of the Caodong lineage, receiving the legacy from his predecessors to use gong’an commentaries as vehicle to express the Caodong identity, Hongzhi established the Caodong position in his gong’an works. Through the metaphors of the Caodong pivotal doctrine of the principle and the phenomena, Hongzhi portrayed a Caodong images in his gong’an poetry. In addition to using mainstream Caodong metaphors, Hongzhi incorporated elements from secular sources to create innovative imagery. Again, Hongzhi’s usage of secular literature to create metaphors distinguished his approach from his Caodong predecessors. Hongzhi and his Caodong predecessors’ usage of gong’an commentaries as a vehicle to present the Caodong identity demonstrate a changing trend of
gong’an commentaries. The usage of sectarian promotion differed from earlier gong’an commentaries that served to make original cases easily understand. This changing tendency of using gong’an commentaries also reflects trends in the gong’an works of Linji tradition. Following a similar Linji masters used gong’an collections to explicate the practice of contemplating crucial phrases such as Wumen guan.

I also demonstrated how Hongzhi used sermons responding to the criticism of the Caodong Chan as an opportunity to create a Caodong identity and to promote the doctrine of the principle and the phenomena. In light of sectarian competition for patronage, the prevalence of Caodong Chan was probably a crucial factor that spurred condemnation of the Caodong teachings by other lineages. Passive silence was the focal point of criticism directed at Caodong Chan. Hongzhi’s central strategy in response was to create a Caodong identity by promoting its core teaching. By advocating Caodong’s essential teaching, he not only highlighted the dynamic aspects of Caodong Chan but also improved the Caodong image. To address the negative impression of passive silence, he emphasized that true Caodong Chan entails both silent and dynamic aspects—a lively responsive function emerged from the essence of silence. Hongzhi also correlated Silent Illumination with the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena to highlight the energetic aspect of Caodong Chan. I have demonstrated two sides of the Caodong identity: Silent Illumination Chan represents Caodong identity from the perspective of meditative practice; the teaching of the principle and phenomena represents Caodong identity from the perspective of doctrinal views. This was the crucial factor behind Hongzhi’s use of the Caodong doctrine as a dominant theme in his sermons to address the critics of Silent Illumination Chan. In addition, Hongzhi singled out the effectiveness of the Caodong approach to treat a common problem for practitioners—being attached either to existence or to emptiness.
Hongzhi’s use of the creation of a Caodong identity as a crucial strategy to respond to attacks also reflects a possible critical reason behind the Caodong’s production of a large body of gong’an literature, compared to other Chan traditions. Schlüitter has already pointed out that not only Dahui but also the entire Linji tradition criticized Caodong masters for teaching the Silent Illumination approach.1 Under attack from the Linji lineage, I suggest that both Hongzhi and his predecessors used gong’an commentary to defend their hallmark practice through shaping a Caodong identity. By using poetic imagery, Caodong masters illuminated the Caodong core doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena through their gong’an works. Their elusive metaphors and Hongzhi’s use of secular literature likely targeted a wider audience, especially literati, in an effort to gain recognition of their Caodong sectarian profile.

I have shown that in composing his gong’an poetry, Hongzhi’s literary talents in using secular literature distinguished his approach not only from his Caodong predecessors but also from the approaches of Chan masters of other linages. Chapter 4 has explored the literary aspect of Hongzhi gong’an commentarial verses by examining how his gong’an poetry as well as his verses for elite allowed him to engage with literati culture. With regard to his gong’an poetry, I have demonstrated Hongzhi’s deft usage of allusions from a wide range of secular literature. This was a facility he shared with secular literati. Hongzhi injected imagery drawn from philosophical writings (zi 子) such as Zhuangzi and Laozi with a Buddhist sense to illuminate the essential points of particular cases. Similarly, Hongzhi imbued historical (shi 史) and biographical references with doctrinal imports to convey the crucial points of original cases. Hongzhi employed many poetic expressions from the Classics (jing 經) and literary writings (ji 集) to embellish his commentarial stanzas.

Deepening this literary dimension of Hongzhi’s writings, I also examined Hongzhi’s participation in literati culture through his poetic practice. His poetry for literati performed pedagogical, social, and economic functions. Hongzhi wrote different types of verse for the secular elite. The number of verses he wrote at literati’s request, including “verse at the request” and self-portrait encomia requested by the elite, exceeded the number of those written by other contemporary Chan masters. Pedagogically, these verses at literati’s request were a crucial medium for Hongzhi to promote the Caodong core teachings among the literati circle. This chapter looked at how Hongzhi used such verses to present Silent Illumination Chan as well as the doctrine of the interfusion of the principle and phenomena. In respect to social function, Hongzhi employed poetry for social exchanges to reinforce his social network with elites. Through poetry, Hongzhi expressed his cordial relationship with elite individuals to reinforce his bond with them. Hongzhi’s occasional verses demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of his literary talents that allowed him to respond appropriately and insightfully to various social occasions. He aptly drew on allusions from secular sources or references from Chan literature in his portrayals of his literati friends. According to a particular individual’s distinct level of engagement with Buddhism and in light of other social factors, Hongzhi would incorporate corresponding doctrinal messages into his verses for secular friends.

From an economic perspective, Hongzhi wrote verses in two particular contexts: he wrote verses for monastics who performed begging practice and he wrote portrait encomia for those raising funds. Subsequently, these verses were circulated among literati patrons, indirectly. In the verses for monastic who begged for material offerings, Hongzhi used various literary allusions to urge elite to make donations. In his portrait encomia for raising funds, Hongzhi not only conveyed the Caodong doctrines but also portrayed his general reciprocal relationship with
patrons that was material-Dharma relationship that entailed both economic and cultural or spiritual exchange.

Hongzhi’s anthology of gong’an commentarial verses represents his enduring literary legacy within his collection of recorded sayings. Hongzhi’s collection of recorded sayings was lost sometime before the beginning of the Ming dynasty. However, his gong’an commentarial verses collection was used as a textual source for other Chan texts in two ways. First, Hongzhi’s commentarial verses were compiled in texts that defined essential Caodong teachings. An example noted above is “Dongshan guche” 洞上古徹, a text that defined the Caodong core teachings. From perspective of gong’an commentaries, Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses became a core text of other gong’an commentary collections. Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses text was recycled to produce new gong’an commentaries in both China and Japan. In China, most famous works are Wansong’s Congrong lu and Zhiqi’s Qiongjue laoren Tianqi zhizhu Tiantong Jue heshang songgu. In addition, some of Hongzhi verses became old cases that demanded commentary. In the collection of Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1603), in the section of comments on old cases (niangu 拈古), Zibo commented on several of Hongzhi’s verses without providing the original cases that Hongzhi’s verses were based on.² In Japan, during Edo period, under the revival of Sōtō Zen, many Zen monks compiled commentaries for Hongzhi’s anthology of commentarial verses. Among these texts, the most famous was Menzan Zuihō’s 面山瑞方 Wanshi kobutsu jiyuko hiyakusoku monge 宏智古仏頌古百則聞解.³ It is hoped that

² Zibo zunzhe quanji 紫柏尊者全集, X 73, no. 1452, 283c6 (juan 16).
future scholars will explore how Hongzhi’s collection of gong’an commentarial verses was recycled to produce new texts. This dissertation only focuses on Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial verses. Significant work remains for future research that would look at Hongzhi’s gong’an commentarial prose as well as how he uses gong’an in his sermons.

## Chronology of Hongzhi Zhengjue’s Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emperor And Reign Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zezong 哲宗</strong></td>
<td>1091</td>
<td></td>
<td>Born in Xi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuanyou 元祐 6</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Able to memorize and recite thousands of words a day. Mastered the <em>Five Classics</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaosheng 绍聖 4</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Took full precepts under Zhiqiong (d.u.) at Ciyun Monastery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Huizong 徽宗</strong></td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tonsured under Master Benzong (d.u.) at Jingming Monastery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jianzhong jinggao 建中靖國 1</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Travelled to study with different teachers. Arrived at Mount Shaoshi. Stayed for the summer retreat. Arrived at Xiangshan Monastery and visited Master Kumu Facheng (1071–1128). Obtained an enlightenment experience by listening to a monk reciting the <em>Lotus Sūtra</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zhenghe 政和 3</strong></td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Already studied with Danxia Zichun (1064–1117) Got enlightened under Danxia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhenghe 4</td>
<td>1114</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Became the chief monk in Huizhao Monastery where Danxia’s Dharma heir Dasheng Lisheng (d. u.), was the abbot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhenghe 5</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Served as the secretary (<em>jishi</em> 記事) in Mountain Dahong where Danxia was the abbot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuanhe 宣和 3</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Appointed as the chief monk in Mount Dahong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuanhe 4</td>
<td>1122</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Became the chief monk at Yuantong Monastery, under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuanhe 5</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>33 Became the chief monk in Chongfu Chan Monastery where Zhenxie Qingliao (1089-1151) took up the abbacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuanhe 6</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>34 Appointed as abbot of Puzhao Monastery by Xiang Ziyin (1085–1152). This was Hongzhi’s first post as an abbot.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuanhe 7</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>36 Led the assembly of Puzhao Monastery to greet emperor Huizong when he inspected the southern of China.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qinzong 欽宗</td>
<td>1127</td>
<td>37 In the fourth month, Hongzhi took up the abbacy at Taiping Xingguo Chan Monastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingkang 靖康 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaozong 高宗</td>
<td>1128</td>
<td>38 In the sixth month, Hongzhi took up the abbacy at Nengren Monastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jianyan 建炎 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hongzhi visited Chan master Yuanwu Keqin (1063–1135), the teacher of Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163) of the Linji tradition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In the ninth month, Yuanwu and Zhao Lingjin (d. 1158) had Hongzhi appointed as abbot in Chongfu Chan Monastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jianyan 3</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>39 In the eleven month, Hongzhi took up the abbacy at Tiantong Monastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaoxing 2</td>
<td>1132</td>
<td>42 Began to construct the Monastic Hall at Tiantong Monastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaoxing 紹興 9</td>
<td>1139</td>
<td>48 Transferred from Tiantong Monastery to Lingyin Monastery in Linan. Returned to Tiantong Monastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaoxing 26</td>
<td>1156</td>
<td>66 Petitioned to prefecture officials to appoint Dahui Zonggao as abbot of Ayuwang Monastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the eighth day in the tenth month, Hongzhi passed away.
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Abbreviations


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