

*ZEN IN MEDIEVAL VIETNAM*



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# ZEN IN MEDIEVAL VIETNAM

A Study and Translation  
of the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*

Cuong Tu Nguyen

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PART I

A Study of the  
*Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*



# Introduction

This study presents a historical analysis of the origin and evolution of the so-called Zen tradition or Zen School within Vietnamese Buddhist history. The scholarly study of Buddhism in East Asia and Southeast Asia has generally neglected the Vietnamese Buddhist tradition, and this work is an effort to remedy this situation. It is not an attempt at a general survey of Vietnamese Buddhist history, but rather an analysis of the place of the Zen tradition within this history.

In the following pages, I present an analysis of one voice telling this story. This voice is a text known to Vietnamese Buddhists as the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* [Outstanding Figures in the Vietnamese Zen Community, henceforth referred to as *Thiền Uyển*]. The *Thiền Uyển* was compiled in Vietnam around the third decade of the fourteenth century. It is a collection of biographies of eminent Zen monks in Vietnam from the sixth to the thirteenth century, presented in the form of the transmission of three Zen lineages or schools.

The present work is thus a study of a text and its impact on a community of interpreters and how they have interpreted and used the text. Given the current situation of modern scholarship on interpreting or reading texts, I deem it necessary to delineate my approach to the *Thiền Uyển* as well as to analyze its nature as a text. The *Thiền Uyển* is purported to be a narrative history of Vietnamese Zen Buddhism and as such is obviously modeled upon the literary genre called *chuandeng lu* or “transmission of the lamp” or “lamp history” in Chinese Zen Buddhism. What the *Thiền Uyển* tells us is that Vietnamese Buddhist history is a continuation of the development of the Chinese Zen tradition.

Although in reality there are various voices telling us about different aspects of the Vietnamese Buddhist past, the *Thiền Uyển*, at least in the last fifty years, has been the most authoritative voice among the Vietnamese Buddhist elite. One of the reasons for this is that the *Thiền Uyển*

is probably the only extant text that attempts to narrate a cohesive history of Vietnamese Buddhism. It is also true that the *Thiền Uyển* is the most readily available source. The story that the *Thiền Uyển* tells has been accepted as the official history of Vietnamese Buddhism for more than half a century. Read as the most authoritative presentation of medieval Vietnamese Buddhist history, the *Thiền Uyển's* view of Vietnamese Buddhist history has even had an impact on modern Vietnamese Buddhism. Therefore, it is both worthwhile and necessary to undertake a thorough, critical investigation of this text.

In this study I question this traditional, uncritical reading of the *Thiền Uyển*—a reading that takes as its basic premise that the author of the text faithfully narrates historical events as they were. In sum, I have found this reading of the text not only superficial but misleading, since it fails to contextualize the text or to check the voice of this text against other voices telling Vietnamese Buddhist history. These voices speak not only in words through other texts, but also in concrete facts such as institutions, practices, arts, and popular manifestations.

I am persuaded by a modern philosopher's observation that history is a study of meaning,<sup>1</sup> and I find the notion that history can be a faithful reconstruction of the past naive. At the same time, I recognize that the voice of the tradition under investigation is an indispensable source of data, revealing the tradition's effort to understand itself, to define its meanings and aspirations. I accept Keith Taylor's remark that "[t]he past is vaster and stranger than we have been trained to believe, and it belongs to no one but those who lived it."<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious that a credulous, uncritical reading of a text like the *Thiền Uyển*, which takes it as a literal account of "the facts" of history, is too simplistic to provide any useful understanding of history—no matter that such a reading is defended in euphemistic terms as "letting the tradition speak for itself." "The tradition" is and has always been multifarious, multivocal, reconceived, and refashioned endlessly through the ages by insiders, each with an agenda and a selective focus. The *Thiền Uyển* itself is one powerful voice from "the tradition," but not the only one we must heed.

Without presuming on the modern perspective and scholarship, I believe that as modern researchers we are capable of differentiating instances where the traditionalist authors construct history from the traditional perspective and system of meanings, from those where the ideas presented are blatant errors or intentional fabrications to serve political or factional purposes.

Some scholars in modern literary criticism, particularly those who emphasize the reader-oriented reading, downplay the significance of the

author's pretextual intention in understanding a text. For these scholars, the text's intention is independent of the author's intention.<sup>3</sup> I am of the opinion that the author's intention is extremely relevant in reading the *Thiền Uyển*, especially since our goal is to understand the historical implications of the text and more than the literal meaning or pedagogic significance of the biographies of the monks.

At one level, the meaning of these biographies is clear. Vietnamese Buddhists can read them as examples of virtuous and heroic behavior, and this is no doubt a revealing dimension of meaning for historians of religion to explore. But awareness of this field of meanings does not hinder us from exploring other meanings hidden in the records of the *Thiền Uyển*—meanings at variance with the author's manifest intent to have the *Thiền Uyển* read to show Vietnamese Zen as a continuation of Chinese Zen, and as the highest form of Vietnamese Buddhism. Nor does respect for the intent of the authors of the *Thiền Uyển* prevent us from discovering meanings at variance with modern-day uses of the *Thiền Uyển* as a charter for certain notions of orthodoxy and for a certain view of Vietnamese Buddhist history that accords Zen a preeminent place in the tradition.

Of course for the *Thiền Uyển*, we do not even know who the author was, and we have reason to believe that he did not compose the biographies de novo, but only put them together by collecting data from different sources. The author draws together what appear to be disparate life stories of monks and refashions them into biographies of Zen masters. He solicits us to read "monks" as "Zen masters" and to believe that the text he compiles—the *Thiền Uyển*—is a "transmission of the lamp" text in the sense that it faithfully and consistently records the biographies of Zen masters.

Guided by an intention to compose a Vietnamese Buddhist history in the context of Zen, the author of the *Thiền Uyển* constructs the Vietnamese Zen tradition based on data that in themselves might reveal to us a different picture of Vietnamese Buddhism. Acknowledging the author's intention lets us gauge the way he handles his materials and thus helps us in our effort to understand the historical meaning of the *Thiền Uyển* and thus Vietnamese Buddhist history.

### On Terminology

Inevitably in studies that endeavor to reach across the boundaries of cultures and times, there is a problem of terminology. Many of the generalizing terms of the language in which this study is written were first applied in the context of the study of European history. Some might therefore argue that these terms are so freighted with associations from

the European context that they should not be applied at all in reference to other areas of the world. Writing in English about a non-Western area, such broad terms as “history,” “politics,” “state,” “nation,” “culture,” “religion,” and “philosophy” would then be out of bounds.

To be sure, it could be legitimately argued that all of these terms, and the categorization of human experience they reflect, are culture-bound and parochial, and that how to use them, or whether to use them at all, in reference to phenomena outside their native culture area will always be a problematic issue and an open field for convoluted controversy.

When writing about Vietnam, should we abandon our own language and insist on Vietnamese terms for all the key categories? Can we only discuss Buddhism in a melange of Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, and all the many other languages of the lands where Buddhism has been propagated? This hardly seems a workable solution.

The only way out is to make clear from the outset, and constantly remind readers, that little analytic weight is being put or should be put on such broad category-labels as “history,” “politics,” “state,” “nation,” “culture,” “religion,” and “philosophy.” Using these terms is just a convenient shorthand, a way of talking (dictated by the language we are using), and not a way of thinking.

Similarly, using terms like “Vietnam,” “China,” “Buddhism,” and “Confucianism” is not meant to imply that there was or is some essential “Vietnam,” “China,” “Buddhism,” or “Confucianism” outside the particular time-delimited clusters of people and ideas to which these terms are applied as a convenient shorthand. Clearly Vietnam and China in medieval times were not nations in the modern sense of the word. Their states were not modern states, and the concerns of modern nationalists were not the concerns of medieval statesmen and thinkers. Words like “Buddhism” and “Confucianism” are just synchronic abstractions applied as shorthand labels to realities that were multidimensional, multifarious, and ever shifting.

We reject the conventional way of reifying these abstractions and making them actors in the historical narrative, but these terms can serve as shorthand labels—we have no others. Again, saying that “Vietnam changed” or “China posed a threat” is merely a convenient way of talking, not a way of overlooking or denying the complexity of social realities on the ground through time.

### Structure of the Work

This study consists of two parts. Part I is a study of the *Thiền Uyển* from both historical and textual perspectives. Part II is a complete translation of the *Thiền Uyển*.

Part I comprises three chapters. In Chapter One, I discuss the date, authorship, and source materials for the composition of the text. With scant materials available, I also endeavor to patch together a picture of the situation of Buddhism in Vietnam up to the time of the composition of the text itself.

My conclusion is that through the outset of the Lý dynasty (1010–1225), Buddhism in Vietnam was of a composite nature. It was a mixture of some Buddhist elements from India and China and the beliefs and practices characteristic of the indigenous people's religious sensibilities and popular cults. This Buddhism emphasized magic, ritual, and thaumaturgy. From the middle of the tenth century on, Chinese Zen literature and probably a number of Zen adherents made their way to Vietnam. Zen literature began to appeal to the Buddhist elite at the capital. It was this newly introduced (Zen) Buddhism that influenced medieval Vietnamese Buddhist intellectuals in forming their conception of Buddhist history and Vietnamese Buddhist history in particular.

In Chapter Two, I suggest a critical reading of the *Thiền Uyển*, that is, a complete textual and historical analysis of the text. In this chapter I delineate the influence of Chinese Zen classic the *Jingde chuandeng lu* [Transmission of the Lamp Composed in the Jingde Era] on the Vietnamese Buddhist conception of Buddhist history, and the use of the “lamp history” paradigm for Vietnamese Buddhism. I also attempt to locate the *Thiền Uyển* within this context.

My goal is to show that the traditional/literal reading of the *Thiền Uyển* as a “transmission of the lamp” text and the corollary interpretation of Vietnamese Buddhism as a continuation of Chinese Zen is both superficial and misleading. A thorough textual and historical analysis of the *Thiền Uyển* in light of other available sources and the contemporary social and institutional background brings me to the conclusion that Zen in medieval Vietnam was only a limited presence. Whatever our understanding of the term “Zen school” might be, Zen in Vietnam was never what it was in China, Japan, and Korea.

In Chapter Three, I show how departing from a literal reading of *Thiền Uyển* not only does not detract from the unique value of the text but reveals other layers of meaning of the text that shed light on the situation of Buddhism in medieval Vietnam and underline the text's unparalleled richness as a historical resource.

The *Thiền Uyển* is a treasure trove for the study of Vietnamese Buddhism, packed with vivid information on the beliefs and practices of medieval Vietnamese Buddhism, on the interplay of Buddhism and popular religions, and on how Buddhism was intertwined with social-political life and literary life.

From the above observations, I offer a conclusion that the Zen tradition or school in medieval Vietnam was, more than anything, an imagined community. In the absence of physical, textual, doctrinal, and practical evidence necessary to substantiate its existence as a Buddhist school, it appears that Zen in medieval Vietnam was not an institutionalized entity, but a more diffuse set of attitudes and styles spreading out among its adherents—a blend of life attitude and aesthetic taste and intellectual vocabulary that held considerable appeal for some among the Vietnamese elite, offering a life-style for today and a more abstract romantic visualization of the past of their religion and their country.

Feeling themselves part of this “Zen,” this cluster of Zen-derived styles and lore, seeking self-understanding in terms of a view of Buddhist history that makes Zen the paramount achievement, these would-be adherents of Zen in Vietnam have understood themselves as part of Zen history and by so doing have formed an imagined community. A text like the *Thiền Uyển* is a site for this imagined community, where its tone and style, the tales of its exemplars, its landmarks and history are set out in convincingly coherent fashion—and with great artistry and depth. The *Thiền Uyển* can connect its readers to each other and their imagined past, letting them imagine themselves as part of Zen, and Zen as the core of the transmission of Buddhism in Vietnam.

There are three appendixes containing materials that I believe are useful for those who wish to investigate Vietnamese Buddhist history more deeply. Appendixes I and II, respectively, contain additional supporting data to Chapters One and Two. In Appendix III, I offer more translations of biographies of eminent monks from sources other than the *Thiền Uyển*.

The original Chinese text of the *Thiền Uyển* is reproduced at the end of the book.



## Chapter One

# The *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* in Vietnamese Buddhist History

Modern scholars who study Vietnamese Buddhism seem virtually unanimous in their reliance upon the *Thiền Uyển* as the unique and authoritative source for both the history and philosophy of Vietnamese Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* was compiled around the early decades of the fourteenth century C.E. in the style of the Chinese Zen corpus known as the “transmission of the lamp” (*chuandeng lu*) literature. (The exact date of the *Thiền Uyển* is discussed in greater detail in Appendix I.) The *Thiền Uyển* purports to record biographies of eminent Zen monks from the Đinh dynasty (968–980) through the [Former] Lê (980–1009) and Lý (1010–1225) up to the Trần dynasty (1225–1400). Although the author of the *Thiền Uyển* claimed to record Vietnamese Buddhist history from its inception up to his own time (ca. fourteenth century), his earliest records date back only to the late sixth century. Moreover, most of what he records for the period prior to the Đinh dynasty appears to be apocryphal.

### Early Buddhism

We have evidence to suggest that Buddhism had come to Jiaozhou (as Vietnam was then called) over routes stretching from India and Central Asia as early as the second century C.E.<sup>2</sup> Vietnam did not gain political independence from Chinese hegemony until the tenth century.<sup>3</sup> Thus, although Buddhism had made its presence felt in Vietnam centuries earlier, it was not until the rise of an independent Vietnamese state that Buddhism became a religion recognized by the ruling dynasties and their subjects as a state-supported and state-supporting religion.

During the four centuries after Vietnam established its independence from China, the Vietnamese ruling dynasties constantly enlisted eminent monks to assist them in religious, political, and literary affairs. During this period Buddhism was able to establish itself as a significant political and cultural force. Some eminent monks served at court, and others who

did not come to court were involved in state affairs in indirect ways. Certain eminent monks who spurned the court's invitations and chose to shun court politics were nevertheless celebrated as paragons of religious purity and embodiments of national values and powers.

Various semihistorical and historical texts meant to solidify Vietnam's national identity were composed for the first time in the centuries after independence.<sup>4</sup> The historical memory for Buddhist affairs reflected in these texts, however, does not seem to have gone back much further than the period of independence when eminent monks began to collaborate closely with the ruling dynasties. This explains why medieval Vietnamese Buddhist historians apparently had at their disposal only materials for Vietnamese Buddhist history after independence. In other words, Vietnamese Buddhist history appears to begin with the history of Vietnam as a nation.

This paucity of source materials has made it difficult to trace the history of Vietnamese Buddhism from its beginnings (around the second century C.E.) up to the period of independence (tenth century C.E.). This scarcity of reliable data has hindered not only modern scholars but also medieval and premodern scholars in their attempts to depict the history of Buddhism in Vietnam.<sup>5</sup>

With the scant source materials available, in the following sections I shall attempt to give a brief description of Buddhism in Vietnam during the centuries prior to the *Thiền Uyển*. This will help us reconstruct the cultural, religious, and political background and context in which the *Thiền Uyển* was compiled.

### BUDDHISM IN JIAOZHOU

The scattered data that remain are only enough to let us discern the broad outlines of Buddhism in Jiaozhou. Reasonably well-documented stories of activities by leading Buddhist figures in Jiaozhou can illuminate the general landscape of Jiaozhou Buddhism and supply hints to the pattern of connections between Jiaozhou and the contemporary Buddhist world. From these scattered hints and vignettes, we can understand Jiaozhou Buddhism with some confidence as consistent with the continuum of cultural, commercial, religious, and political influences to which the region was exposed in the first millennium of the common era.

There are a few historical landmarks that can orient us toward the general landscape of Jiaozhou Buddhism. Shi Xie (Sĩ Nhiếp in Vietnamese), who was governor of Jiaozhou toward the end of the Han dynasty (187–226), is revered in later Vietnamese annals as a shaper of Jiaozhou culture and promoter of Confucian values.<sup>6</sup> It seems that Buddhist monks

from India and Central Asia formed a conspicuous part of Shi Xie's grand entourage.<sup>7</sup>

Tales set in the days when Vietnam was Jiaozhou show an easy familiarity with such Buddhist elements as the chanting of *sūtras*, the building of Buddhist statues, and the magical interventions of Buddhist monks. From these scattered stories, it is not difficult to infer that Buddhist-derived elements were an established part of the religious spectrum of Jiaozhou and that (at least some of) the people of Jiaozhou had recourse to Buddhist-derived images and ritual formulas in their efforts to secure supernatural aid and protection.

Another token of the integration of Jiaozhou in the cosmopolitan Buddhist world of the time is the figure of Kang Senghui. This eminent monk and translator was born in Jiaozhi, the son of a merchant of Central Asian origin who had become assimilated to Chinese culture and did his business in the busy entrepot of Jiaozhi. Eventually, in 247 C.E., Kang Senghui went north to the capital of the Chinese kingdom of Wu and became a leading exponent of Buddhism there.<sup>8</sup>

There are other scattered notices: A wonder-working monk traveled through Jiaozhou and Guangzhou and finally ended up in Luoyang (and hence made his way into the Chinese annals).<sup>9</sup> A sometime companion of his travels, who was also a wonder-working monk, remained in Jiaozhou and subsequently became closely connected with the origin of a principal indigenous belief and practice.<sup>10</sup> A Central Asian translator-monk who worked in Jiaozhou and was able to recruit a staff of assistants learned enough in Buddhist texts from among the Jiaozhou people.<sup>11</sup> A Jiaozhou monk who chanted the *Lotus Sūtra* sat in meditation and studied with an Indian teacher in Jiaozhou (who happens to be mentioned in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*).<sup>12</sup> The shadowy figure of Mou Bo, the Chinese scholar official who lived and worked in Jiaozhou possibly in the second century C.E., taught Buddhism and composed his treatise the *Mouzi*.<sup>13</sup>

For data on Jiaozhou, all we have is a handful of shards, and it is risky to deduce the shape of the vessel (or vessels) from which they come. But the picture we glimpse is not inconsistent with what we know about this period of Buddhist history: Buddhist travelers moving across cultural barriers and bringing Buddhist stories, images, texts, ideas, and practices from country to country. Monks engaged in translation work. Buddhists from overseas collaborated with local people to introduce Buddhist beliefs and practices. Monks and lay followers pursued chanting and meditation practices. Buddhist temples were built and images made, with patronage flowing into Buddhist projects. Among high and low alike, appeals for supernatural aid and blessing took on Buddhist coloration. In brief, there

was a blending of Buddhist outlooks and the multilayered local sense of piety and religiosity.

By the time Sui Wendi reunified China late in the sixth century, we can safely presume that Buddhist-derived elements in many forms were already a long-established part of the cultural and religious life of many people in Jiaozhou. Indian, Central Asian, and Chinese monks were regular visitors in Jiaozhou, and they not only contributed to Buddhist studies and activities there, but also inspired native monks to go on pilgrimage trips to India or China to study the Dharma. Buddhism in Jiaozhou may well have in fact been as widespread and solidly rooted as the following famous account from five centuries later claims.

The story goes that late in the eleventh century, the learned Vietnamese Buddhist savant Thông Biện presented the empress dowager with an account of Vietnamese Buddhist history. Speaking of the period of Sui Wendi (sixth century), Thông Biện told this story:<sup>14</sup>

At one time Sui Wendi intended to send Buddhist monks to Jiaozhou to bind the area more firmly to his realm, and to spread the Buddha Dharma there. But a Buddhist monk at the court told the emperor that this was not necessary: He reminded the Chinese emperor that Jiaozhou had long been in communication with India, and Buddhism from there had been brought to Jiaozhou at the same time as to China. Buddhist temples were built, monks were ordained, scriptures were translated. Eminent monks called Jiaozhou their home. Even now eminently qualified Buddhist teachers are at work there. The monk concludes his address to the Sui emperor with these words: "Thus Jiaozhou is no different than China. Your Majesty, you are the compassionate father of all the world. Wishing to bestow your grace everywhere equally, you would send an emissary [to spread Buddhism to Jiaozhou]. But there are already Buddhist teachers there; we do not have to go to convert them."<sup>15</sup>

Without having to accept Thông Biện's account as literally true, we can conclude that there is a core of historical truth in his contention that Buddhism in Jiaozhou already had a long and eclectic history of its own, amalgamating many influences, even before the Sui Tang "Golden Age" of Buddhism in China. During this time Jiaozhou had become a center of Buddhism and Buddhist studies with well-organized Buddhist communities.

Surprisingly, little record of Buddhism in Vietnam during the Tang period remains, but we get hints of a continuing pattern of international links between Vietnam and other parts of the Buddhist world. There were still active links between the Buddhists in Vietnam and Buddhists in India and China.

Several Chinese poems of the period attest to visits to China by monks from Vietnam.<sup>16</sup> The Chinese Buddhist traveler Yijing, in his *Datang*

*Xiyu qiufu gaoseng zhuan* [Biographies of Eminent Monks of Tang Who Traveled to India to Seek the Dharma], mentions Chinese and Central Asian monks who stopped by Jiaozhou on their way to India and monks from Jiaozhou who sojourned in China and India and were well versed in Sanskrit and Chinese and various Central Asian languages.<sup>17</sup> Even from the scant evidence that remains, we can infer that Buddhism was a well-established part of the social and cultural landscape in Vietnam during the centuries when the Tang dynasty ruled the Chinese world.

### THE EARLY VIETNAMESE DYNASTIES

Looking back, we see that Buddhism had existed in Vietnam for nearly a millennium by the time Vietnam established itself as an independent state free of Chinese political hegemony. Continuous interactions with monks from India, Central Asia, and China had helped shape a learned clerical class in Vietnam. Learned monks from elite families were in a position to serve at court and assist the new dynasties (the Đinh, the [Former] Lê, and the Lý) in their efforts to secure their legitimacy and to defend themselves against Chinese pressure. The early Vietnamese dynasties found in the Buddhist clergy a cultural force that could assist them with their political agenda.

In parallel, through a process hidden from historians, by this time in Vietnam Buddhist stories and images had been disseminated among the common people, and Buddhist temples and monks had become a familiar part of the local religious scene. Buddhist monks became figures in traditional tales of magical powers—they were known not only as men of letters but as *religieux* with magical powers that they could use to work wonders, help those in need, and ward off natural and supernatural disasters.

With China disunited after the downfall of the Tang dynasty, Vietnamese leaders had their chance to establish themselves as independent sovereigns in their own right. The Vietnamese Ngô Quyền defeated the army of the Chinese Southern Han state in a climactic battle on the Bạch Đằng River in 939. But Ngô Quyền died only five years later,<sup>18</sup> and the Ngô dynasty disintegrated soon after his death. Rival factions from Vietnamese elite backed by their partisans embarked upon a generation of political turmoil known as the Twelve-Warlord Period. Finally in 968 Đinh Bộ Lĩnh gained victory over the various Vietnamese warlords and became Đinh Tiên Hoàng (or “the Founding Emperor of the Đinh”).<sup>19</sup>

According to a Vietnamese court chronicle, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh was the first Vietnamese ruler to proclaim himself emperor. He signaled Vietnam’s status as an independent entity by instituting a Vietnamese reign era name (until his time Vietnam had been following Chinese reign eras). He changed the name of the country and moved the capital to Hoa Lư.<sup>20</sup>

Three years after ascending the throne, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh instituted a system of hierarchical ranks for court officials, Buddhist monks, and Daoist priests.<sup>21</sup> This implies that Buddhist monks already had a recognized place in the social and symbolic order of Vietnamese life, for the new regime to be concerned with including them within its system. Đinh Bộ Lĩnh was the first king of medieval Vietnam to attempt to integrate Buddhism—along with Confucianism and Daoism—into the structure of the state.

Historical records reveal little if any detail about the nature of Buddhism in Vietnam during this period. Keith Taylor has observed that “Vietnamese Buddhism up to the tenth century never seems to have gone far beyond the animist perspective.”<sup>22</sup> His observation appears to be an extrapolation based on one aspect of Lý Buddhism. Archaeologists have recently discovered some steles with inscriptions of mantras erected by Đinh Liễn, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh’s eldest son.<sup>23</sup> This has led some scholars to conclude that elements of Tantric Buddhism were already present in Vietnam in the middle of the tenth century.<sup>24</sup>

The [Former] Lê dynasty (980–1009) succeeded the Đinh. Not much is recorded of Buddhism during this period except the fact that Lê Đại Hành (r. 980–1005), the founder of the dynasty, also supported Buddhism. He showed great respect for certain of the eminent monks of the time and consulted them on important literary and political issues.<sup>25</sup>

From historical records and extant Buddhist literature we learn that by this time Buddhism had developed a close affinity with the indigenous religions of Vietnam. This was the usual course of events when Buddhist teachings were initially being propagated in a given culture. Popular and local cults along with their deities were integrated into Vietnamese Buddhism, although they assumed a subordinate position in this composite Buddhist world view. During the early centuries when Buddhist missionary monks came to Vietnam (then Jiaozhou), Buddhist temples were still few and far between, so the monks often took up residence in temples or shrines dedicated to local deities.<sup>26</sup> (This explains why the early Lý kings had so many temples built during their reigns.)

Through the charisma and skill in means of these Buddhist missionaries, the indigenous deities—the spiritual representatives and protectors of the Vietnamese terrain and its inhabitants, either nature gods, local genies, or the deified spirits of past national heroes—were eventually brought within the Buddhist fold and converted into protectors of the Dharma. The situation in Vietnam was thus an instance of the typical Buddhist process of incorporating rather than suppressing indigenous cults.<sup>27</sup>

It appears then that with Buddhists in Vietnam absorbing and inheriting religious attitudes from among the people, Buddhist monks may have had a firmer hold over the people than the Confucian scholars, who were basically more occupied with administrative affairs than with the immediate religious needs of the masses. These eminent monks in times of crisis were able to rally the people for patriotic causes, through their command over religious meanings and symbols in which the people believed. Politically involved monks also created myths and legends for propagandist purposes. They put forth interpretations of omens with supernatural predictions of success for the dynasty and enhanced the dynasty's legitimacy with the masses.<sup>28</sup>

Chinese classical learning had become the main scholarship of the time for the Vietnamese elite, and numerous Buddhist monks from elite families had received a Confucian education before they took up the monastic vocation. These men were as learned as any Confucian scholar in Confucian political lore and could assist the court both with immediate administrative affairs and with the long-term issue of building political legitimacy. Records of eminent monks at the Đinh and Lê courts show that Buddhist monks did indeed fulfill such functions at court. For example, during the reign of Lê Đại Hành (r. 980–1005), the founder of the Lê dynasty, the eminent monk Pháp Thuận (914–990) reportedly played a major role in policy deliberations.

#### THE LÝ DYNASTY

The kings of the Lý dynasty (1010–1225) continued to draw support from Buddhism, and in return they patronized Buddhism (and the popular and local cults associated with it) on a larger scale. Whereas the Đinh and [Former] Lê had been short-lived regimes that rose and fell amidst political turmoil over a timespan of only three generations, the Lý government lasted two centuries. The Lý had more time to concern themselves with constructing a system of rule and an official world view, and under the Lý the relationship between the court and Buddhism was cast in a more established and organized pattern.

Keith Taylor has referred to the ideological underpinning of the Lý rule as “the Lý national culture” or “Lý dynasty religion,” and I believe his characterization of this Lý national culture is a useful interpretive framework for understanding the nature and transformation of Lý Buddhism. According to Taylor, the Lý national culture was “varied, experimental, and nonexclusive.”<sup>29</sup>

The Lý national culture was varied because local cults and deities were being woven into a central ideology that served the building of a national identity and the legitimization of the dynastic authority.

The Lý national culture was experimental because this was a period of self-discovery of the Vietnamese people. During the centuries of Chinese hegemony the heroes who were symbols of a Vietnamese identity had been all but forgotten—except at their native villages where there were shrines dedicated to their memory.<sup>30</sup> It was not until the Lý era that the Vietnamese people begin to search seriously for a national identity and to reconstitute a “collective memory.” The Lý kings were leaders in this search in the sense that, through their virtue, they became the embodiment of the national spirit. They were able to invoke the potent spirits and recruit them as protectors of the country.

The Lý national culture was nonexclusive in terms of ethnic origin and doctrinal orientation. Chinese, Cham, and Indian cultural and religious elements and deities all had a part in this process. Even within the context of Buddhism, Keith Taylor is correct in his remark that “[d]ifferent forms of Buddhist thought grew side by side, academic scholarship and rustic enlightenment, royal patronage and ascetic self-sacrifice.”<sup>31</sup>

Taylor concludes that “[t]he Vietnamese were not consciously disentangling themselves from ten centuries of Chinese rule, they were not working their way through a postcolonial reaction in the twentieth-century sense. They did not feel culturally threatened by China. They were too absorbed by the excitement of discovering and constructing their own culture to erect barriers against any particular influence. Buddhist monks, [D]aoist priests, and classical literati all had positive contributions to make. . . . China was a military and political problem, but not a cultural threat.”<sup>32</sup>

I believe that this culturally open attitude toward China and the gradual ascent of the Confucian-inclined faction at the Vietnamese court were the major factors that contributed to the emergence of a more exclusive-oriented Sinocentric world view, which in turn inspired the development of a new formulation of Buddhism and guided the Buddhist elites’ view of Vietnamese Buddhist history.<sup>33</sup>

The Lý kings adopted this “national culture” as both an expedient political strategy and an earnest effort at a cultural self-discovery. Various elements with different ethnic and ideological origins took on specific roles in the process. This “division of ideological labor” became a trademark of the Lý and after them the Trần. Buddhists, Daoists, and Confucians all had their own roles in this national culture and their own contribution to make in civilizing and elevating the court and the people (although court chronicles mention little if anything about the role of Daoism).<sup>34</sup> The Lý regime’s attitude toward the usefulness of all three religions probably laid the foundation for the typical pattern of royal



patronage and respect for all three religions in subsequent Vietnamese dynasties, particularly the Trần.

The Lý clan was the most powerful in the country, but as Keith Taylor points out, “the Lý dynasty was established by general acclamation, not by a campaign of pacification.” Powerful regional clans were loyal to the Lý and accepted its legitimacy not through forced compliance but because they believed that the Lý kings were virtuous men, competent to obtain the supernatural blessings from the spirits of the land that could ensure the nation’s prosperity.<sup>35</sup>

Eminent Buddhist monks, due to their influence over local deities, were able to rally them, and thus the masses who believed in them, in support of the kings in patriotic causes. Court chronicles and other semihistorical sources record cases of potent spirits including nature gods, local genies, and spirits of past national heroes who declared their allegiance to the Lý kings, in some cases through the medium of Buddhist monks, and offered their assistance.

The following are a few such instances from the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập* [Collected Stories of the Potent Spirits of the Viet Realm]. Formerly when the monk Chí Thành came to dwell at Kiến Sơ Temple at Phù Đồng Village, he erected a shrine dedicated to the genie on the right side of the temple’s gate. (The genie was said to be an incarnation of Phù Đồng Thiên Vương or the Celestial King of Phù Đồng, a legendary national hero of Vietnam). The shrine was also used as a place for the monks to meditate and chant. Eventually, for some unknown reasons, the temple fell into decay and the masses turned it into a place to worship wicked spirits.

Afterward Monk Đa Bảo repaired the temple and had a mind to pull down the shrine. One day, through his meditative power, Đa Bảo invoked the genie by causing a verse to appear on the trunk of an old tree near the shrine:

Who can protect the Buddha-Dharma?  
The pillar of virtue that supports the sangha.  
If you do not [belong to the Buddha’s] lineage,  
You’d better move quickly to another place. . . .

The next day Đa Bảo saw next to his verse the genie’s response in an eight-line verse of his own:

The Buddha-Dharma is immensely compassionate,  
Its august light blankets the universe.  
There the myriad gods pay homage,  
There all sentient beings of the three-realms take refuge.

Our master has given the order,  
 How dare any wicked spirit disobey?  
 We wish to take the precepts with you,  
 All of us vow to support the sangha.

After Lý Thái Tổ ascended the throne, he paid a visit to the temple. Đa Bảo greeted him. When they passed by the side of the temple, Đa Bảo asked in his sonorous voice, "Buddhist, can you pay homage to the new Son of Heaven?" Immediately on the bark of the tree appeared a verse:

The emperor's virtue is as immense as heaven and earth,  
 His authority and prestige awe the eight regions into  
 obedience.  
 In the underworld we benefit from his favor,  
 The kindness of this visit soars to heaven.

Lý Thái Tổ then conferred upon the genie the title Xung Thiên Thần Vương [the Celestial King Storming the Sky] and ordered that a statue of the genie be made and sacrifices offered to it.<sup>36</sup>

In another episode the author of the *Việt Điện* claims to quote from the *Bảo Cục Truyện* [Records of Declaring the Unfathomable]. When Lý Thái Tổ moved his capital from Hoa Lư to Long Biên, he often dreamed of a white-haired man standing before the throne, bowing and acclaiming him. Amazed by this, the emperor asked his name and learnt that the old man was the genie of the river Tô Lịch. Lý Thái Tổ said, "Can you genies keep incense and fire burning for a hundred years?" The genie answered, "We wish your dynasty the solidity of rock, Your Majesty boundless longevity, the court and the city great peace. We genies keep incense and fire burning not just for a hundred years." Lý Thái Tổ then conferred upon the genie the title of the Great King Patron of the capital city of Thăng Long.<sup>37</sup>

The *Việt Điện* also records that under Lý Nhân Tông (r. 1072–1127) the Song invaded Vietnam. Grand Commandant Lý Thường Kiệt was called upon to lead the Vietnamese troops to resist the enemy. He stationed his troops on the banks of the Nhu Nguyệt River near the temple of the two brothers Trương Hống and Trương Hát—deified national heroes—and awaited the battle. One night a voice was heard from the temple declaiming a verse that nowadays is known by heart by most Vietnamese:

The rivers and mountains of the Nam country are the  
 residence of the King of Nam,  
 It has been so decided clearly in the Celestial Book.  
 How dare you belligerent aggressors invade them?  
 You will soon be defeated and destroyed.

The Song troops were eventually defeated. The victory was thus due as much to the valor of the Vietnamese as to the sacredness of the Vietnamese territory protected by its potent spirits.<sup>38</sup>

I am inclined to go along with suggestions that the Buddhist monks themselves invented these myths and legends as part of their strategy to legitimize the dynastic power and its affinity with Buddhism.<sup>39</sup>

In the Lý synthesis, then, Buddhism had the role of assimilating and in a sense overpowering the deities of local indigenous cults, and transforming them into protectors of the realm.

The Lý court supported Buddhism both materially and ideologically. The (early) Lý kings dedicated substantial funds to Buddhist projects. Old temples were refurbished and embellished, new temples were erected,<sup>40</sup> and official envoys went to China to bring back Buddhist texts so copies could be made and placed in the major temples.<sup>41</sup> Some of the Chinese Zen classics, particularly those of the *chuandeng lu* (transmission of the lamp) and *yulu* (recorded sayings) genres, had found their way to Vietnam and attracted the attention of the learned monks at the capital. It was undoubtedly this sort of Chinese Zen literature that inspired the Vietnamese Buddhists to compose a history of their own tradition along similar lines. (This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter Two and Appendix II).

Although Buddhist scholarship was encouraged by the Lý kings, there was nothing in Vietnam at the time remotely resembling a scholastic tradition of Buddhist philosophy or distinctive schools with well-defined doctrinal outlooks. From the scanty documents available to us, we can draw the following picture of Buddhism in Lý times. We can talk in terms of two main trends.

First, there was the "old" Buddhism, which had been prevalent for almost ten centuries. This Buddhism was composite in character, including Tantrism, ritual and devotional practices, and magic, blended together with elements from Indian and Cham Buddhism and Hinduism, Chinese Buddhism, and indigenous popular religions. Second, there was the "new" court Buddhism, which was inclined toward Chinese Patriarchal Zen. This "new" Buddhism reached a higher point under the Trần, with the Vietnamese elite's appropriation of Chinese Zen literary forms and lineage rituals.

As for the "old" Buddhism, it would be wrong to assume that it was only embraced by rustic village monks and the illiterate masses. We have ample evidence that this trend of Buddhism included many eminent monks who were learned in both Buddhism and the Chinese classics. Literate courtiers also shared the "popular" religious orientation toward ritualism and belief in magical powers. In fact, this form of Buddhism

never lost its grip on people's minds even when Confucianism appeared to overshadow Buddhism at court.<sup>42</sup>

The Confucian literati had by no means been idle during the Lý period. Confucianism was an essential element in the "Lý national culture," and as such also enjoyed royal patronage. Confucian temples were built and Confucian-based civil service examination were given more and more frequently.<sup>43</sup> Similar activities were recorded under the Trần.<sup>44</sup> While the Buddhist monks helped in legitimizing the Lý dynastic power with the populace in general by providing mythical and religious justifications for the Lý cause, the Confucian literati worked to put together an administrative mechanism and an education system that contributed to the centralization of the dynastic power in a more secular way.

### THE TRẦN DYNASTY

The Trần dynasty (1225–1400) also made serious efforts to legitimize its dynastic power. The official examination system encouraged well-born men to become familiar with Confucian ideas of statecraft and channeled members of the royal clan and other powerful clans into the service of the central power.<sup>45</sup> The Mongol invasions<sup>46</sup> early in the Trần period caused a national emergency that helped solidify the role of the Trần kings as the leaders of the nation.

Within Vietnamese Buddhism, Zen learning also became more established in this period with the arrival of Chinese Zen monks and literature. For the Trần rulers, Buddhism represented the most profound soteriological aspect of the Three Religions, whereas Confucianism was more effective and appropriate for worldly affairs.<sup>47</sup> Most of the Trần kings lived out this world view in their own careers: After abdicating the throne to become "retired emperors," they would withdraw to Mount Yên Tử to practice Buddhism and become spiritual leaders of their people.<sup>48</sup>

The kind of Buddhism that the Trần aristocrats embraced was an earnest imitation of the idealistic version of the "new" Buddhism—the Chinese "Patriarchal Zen" that had been finding its way into Vietnam since the Lý dynasty. The Trúc Lâm (Bamboo Grove) Zen school, a genuinely Vietnamese Buddhist "school," was founded by Trần Nhân Tông, the third king of the Trần dynasty. Although the Trúc Lâm School was short-lived,<sup>49</sup> it marked the first serious effort to establish a Zen school in medieval Vietnam.

From the few extant writings of its three patriarchs, we can see that Trúc Lâm Zen harks back to Patriarchal Zen. Encounter dialogues were used as a crucial instructional tool. We see descriptions of the typical motifs that appear in Chinese Zen literature: the transmission of the mind of enlightenment directly from teacher to disciple; the construction

of lineages; the teacher leaving behind instructional verses for his disciples, collectively or individually; the teacher bequeathing his robe and begging-bowl to his principal student; the teacher publicly giving the precepts to both monks and laymen; and so forth.<sup>50</sup> It is clear that Trúc Lâm Zen was principally a form of high-culture Buddhism for aristocrats.

Phúc Điền, a mid-nineteenth-century Buddhist author, reports that starting from around the end of the Lý dynasty, a number of Chinese Zen monks belonging to the Linji and Caodong schools had come to Vietnam to spread Zen Buddhism. Among their disciples were members of the Trần aristocracy, including the kings themselves. Phúc Điền's records show that under the Trần, Zen was popular among the aristocracy and there were a number of temples where Zen was practiced under the guidance of Chinese Zen monks. Unfortunately, all we have now are lists of "lineages" and names of temples where these lineages flourished.<sup>51</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* was composed early in the first half of the fourteenth century. We have no information about its author, but it was probably compiled by royal decree,<sup>52</sup> and at a time when the enthusiasm for Zen reached a high point—when most of the Vietnamese Buddhist elite at the capital had accepted Zen as the orthodox Buddhism. Accordingly, although in fact Buddhism had come to Vietnam from various sources and had existed there in diverse forms, the author of the *Thiền Uyển* portrays Vietnamese Buddhism as the orthodox offshoot of Chinese Zen.

It is within this historical and intellectual framework that the *Thiền Uyển* will be analyzed in Chapter Two.

### The *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* and the Interpretation of Vietnamese Buddhist History

As we have seen, there is evidence that Buddhism made its presence known in Vietnam as early as the first century C.E.<sup>53</sup> However, there is little documentary evidence that could clarify the questions of exactly how and when Buddhism first came to Vietnam, or shed light on how Vietnamese Buddhism developed its distinctive characteristics. The uncertainty that surrounds these issues is due to the complicated political and historical situation of Vietnam in the early centuries of the common era, coupled with the extreme paucity of source materials.

Given the scarcity of historical records on which to draw, the conventional modern presentation of the history of Vietnamese Buddhism blindly follows the *Thiền Uyển*. It usually begins with the formation of the so-called three Zen schools: the Vinītaruci, the Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường as recorded in the *Thiền Uyển*. This version of Vietnamese Buddhist history was self-consciously constructed with the composition of the *Thiền Uyển* in medieval Vietnam, and this constructed history has

been perpetuated by the method of reading this text adopted by modern Vietnamese Buddhist intellectuals.

In modern times, it was the late Trần Văn Giáp who reiterated the historical viewpoint of the *Thiền Uyển* and helped establish the viewpoint of the *Thiền Uyển* in the Vietnamese Buddhist community as a factual account of the history of their tradition. Giáp accidentally discovered this text in 1927. He then wrote a monograph-length article based on the *Thiền Uyển* entitled “Le Bouddhisme en Annam des origines au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” which was published in 1932.

Since that time, studies on Buddhism in Vietnam by modern scholars in Vietnamese, Chinese, and Western languages seem to be more or less merely expansions or abridgements of Giáp’s article.<sup>54</sup> In other words, up to the present time, Giáp’s work on Buddhism in premodern Vietnam is still unsurpassed. But although Giáp’s article shows his usual excellent scholarly skills and care, his work left a legacy that has been more unfortunate than fortunate for the study of Vietnamese Buddhism because it has perpetuated the misconception that an ideologically motivated medieval construction of Vietnamese Buddhist history should be accepted at face value as an account of historical fact.

Giáp was undoubtedly well-versed in the field of Hán-Nôm literature (i.e., Vietnamese literature in Chinese and in the Demotic Script). Nevertheless, his knowledge of Buddhism in general and Chinese Buddhist history and literature in particular left much to be desired. Giáp’s article was mainly a reconstruction of the early history of Buddhism in Vietnam from the Đinh and [Former] Lê dynasties through the Lý and early part of the Trần dynasty. Giáp’s work is basically a paraphrase of the records in the *Thiền Uyển*, whose content he seems to have accepted uncritically as a veridical history.<sup>55</sup> According to the *Thiền Uyển* (at least in Giáp’s interpretation), the type of Buddhism that flourished in Vietnam was Zen, and from the sixth century up to at least the middle of the thirteenth century there were three schools of Zen Buddhism established in Vietnam: the Vinītaruci, Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường schools. This viewpoint, so artfully constructed by the *Thiền Uyển* and perpetuated by Trần Văn Giáp, has been accepted for more than half a century.

However, after a careful analysis of the literary style, content, and structure of the *Thiền Uyển* from both historical and interpretive perspectives, I find it impossible to accept this by-now traditional viewpoint.

First of all, the *Thiền Uyển* is not a homogeneous text. It is rather a composite work by an author of the Trần dynasty, who compiled biographies of eminent monks from various sources and of different literary genres that had been gradually pieced together and grafted onto the

genealogical tree of Chinese Zen by some Vietnamese Buddhist authors prior to him.

Second, Trần Văn Giáp and other authors have constructed a history of Vietnamese Buddhism by relying on the *Thiền Uyển*, which they implicitly accept as a biographical work of the Zen “transmission of the lamp” genre. Curiously enough, none of them has made any effort to investigate the origin and structure of this literary genre in Chinese Buddhism, or of when and how it was appropriated into Vietnamese Buddhism. In short, they have never investigated the motives of the compiler(s) of the *Thiền Uyển* or the nature of the model they followed. This has resulted in an utterly naive reading of the *Thiền Uyển* as if it constituted a veridical report of the historical facts of Vietnamese Buddhism.

The *Thiền Uyển* is undeniably a uniquely valuable text for the study of the history of Buddhism in Vietnam from the sixth to the thirteenth century and for the study of medieval Vietnamese intellectual history in general. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that no single text is as crucial for the understanding of a particular country’s Buddhist tradition as the *Thiền Uyển* is to the understanding of Vietnamese Buddhism. That is why it is such an important task to read the *Thiền Uyển* critically and evaluate it carefully, to trace its sources and recognize the design that guided its construction, and to look past its compiler’s ideological agenda to the wealth of information revealed in the text.

## Chapter Two

# Reading the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*: A Historical Analysis of the Zen Tradition of Vietnam

For more than half a century the *Thiền Uyển*'s interpretation of the history of Vietnamese Buddhism as a history of the three Zen schools of Vinītaruci, Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường in Vietnam has had the status of an "official history" among the Vietnamese Buddhist elite, modern scholars of Vietnamese studies, and the Vietnamese Buddhist community in general. But upon closer scrutiny, I have found that this viewpoint was never universally, unquestioningly accepted by medieval Vietnamese Buddhist authors. Actually, the *Thiền Uyển* represents only one possible interpretation of Vietnamese Buddhist history. The *Thiền Uyển*'s view of Vietnamese Buddhist history was all but forgotten for six hundred years, during which the text itself was left in oblivion, until it was revived in this century by Trần Văn Giáp after his rediscovery of the text.

At first the *Thiền Uyển*'s viewpoint as paraphrased by Trần Văn Giáp was accepted as a factual account by the handful of Vietnamese and French scholars who had some interest in Vietnamese Buddhism, providing them with a ready-made, convenient framework for the study of Vietnamese Buddhism. This was quite understandable, since at that time the scholarly study of Vietnamese Buddhism had barely begun. (It would not be incorrect to say that it has barely begun even now.)

Since Trần Văn Giáp published his work, this viewpoint has become the basis for a rediscovered sense of identity and orthodoxy among Vietnamese Buddhists.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it was accepted enthusiastically in the mid-1960s in South Vietnam by the Vietnamese Buddhist community in the wake of its presumed "political victory."<sup>2</sup> This resulted in a self-conscious rethinking on the part of the Vietnamese Buddhist elite of the role of Buddhism in Vietnamese history, and an urge toward a reassertion of this role in modern times. Since Nguyễn Lang published his book<sup>3</sup> sentimentally and confidently reaffirming the *Thiền Uyển*'s account as veridical history, it has become the "official viewpoint" on



Vietnamese Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> Vietnamese Buddhists nowadays, both clerical and lay, approach the *Thiền Uyển* with an atavistic reverence. Even scholars in North Vietnam—so far behind and out of touch with the rest of the world in the field of the study of religion—also subscribe to this viewpoint.

From a critical perspective, this viewpoint is a result of the marriage between the writing of the author of the *Thiền Uyển* and the reading of the *Thiền Uyển* (a text) itself by a Vietnamese Buddhist “community of interpreters.” Eager to confirm a certain meaning, these readers interpret the reading of the author(s) of the *Thiền Uyển*—in the form of a text—from a particular horizon of expectation. Both the composition of the *Thiền Uyển* and its modern-day acceptance as literal history are part of an expression of a will to orthodoxy.

First, I will investigate in what sense the *Thiền Uyển* was purported to be and constructed as a “transmission of the lamp” text for Vietnamese Buddhism. To do this I will analyze the content and style of the text and examine the pertinent literary and historical evidence. This is an effort to undo the traditional reading of the *Thiền Uyển* as an original “transmission of the lamp” or “lamp history” text, that is, as a document that records the “history” of the transmission of the enlightenment experience directly from teacher to student in the style typical of one genre of Chinese Zen literature. Of course we are well aware that the “history” perceived and recorded (or rather “read”) by the “lamp history” texts does not necessarily coincide with “facts” or a more critical way of reading.

Second, I will document the influences of the Chinese “transmission of the lamp” literature, particularly the *Chuandeng lu*, on the composition and content of the *Thiền Uyển*. This will serve to illustrate the model and method of reading and understanding Buddhist history on part of the Vietnamese Buddhist authors.

### The *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* as a “Transmission of the Lamp” Text

Our first concern here is to investigate in what way the *Thiền Uyển* is purported to be a “transmission of the lamp” text.

The *Thiền Uyển* in its present form available to us records the genealogies of the three schools of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam: the Vinītaruci school, the Vô Ngôn Thông school, and the Thảo Đường school. For the latter school the text gives no biographies but only a list of names of five generations of successors. In all the *Thiền Uyển* records the biographies of sixty-six<sup>5</sup> eminent monks belonging to the two schools of Vinītaruci and Vô Ngôn Thông (thirty-seven belong to the Vô Ngôn Thông and twenty-nine to the Vinītaruci).

I remarked previously that the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* expressly intended it to be a “transmission of the lamp” text, recording the transmission of the mind of enlightenment from teachers to students. He modeled his work particularly upon the *Chuandeng lu*, the locus classicus of this literary genre in Chinese Zen.<sup>6</sup> The *Thiền Uyển* was explicitly intended to be a record of the Zen lineages in Vietnam, which according to its compiler had their roots in China. Thus, to understand the structure and intention of the *Thiền Uyển*, it is necessary to look into the “transmission of the lamp” literature in Chinese Buddhism.

Shunning the attempts of other Chinese Buddhist schools to classify the entire spectrum of Indian Buddhist literature known to them into systems of thought based on the authority of a particular scripture, Zen presented itself as a new Buddhism to the Chinese. Although one famous motto of this new Buddhism is “a separate transmission outside the scriptures,” Zen by no means rejected the scriptures; rather, it represents a new attitude toward the scriptures.<sup>7</sup> Instead of categorizing the scriptures according to their contents, as the other sectarian scriptural schools did in their *panjiao* (“dividing the teachings”) schemes, Zen Buddhists saw the underlying unity of the scriptures in the experience of the mind of enlightenment.

For Zen, all the scriptures share the same objective: to lead us to enlightenment. As the Zen saying goes, all scriptural teachings share the same flavor, the flavor of enlightenment.<sup>8</sup> Enlightenment means realizing the true nature of the mind, its enlightened essence, or Buddha-nature. Consequently, the true meaning of scriptures is to be realized based on awakening to the enlightened essence of the mind.

Zen shares the common Mahayana belief that all sentient beings possess Buddha nature (or pure mind); thus one must realize enlightenment (bodhi) oneself. Fully aware of the fact that human beings differ in spiritual capacity, Zen emphasizes direct, personal experience and not abstract categorization. Although it emphasizes “not relying on words,” Zen eventually produced its own literature as a pedagogic tool to express its new attitude toward scriptures and practice.

The massive corpus of Zen literature falls for the most part into three major genres. Listed according to the chronological order of their development, these are (1) the “transmission of the lamp” texts, (2) the “recorded sayings” texts (*yulu*), and (3) the “public case” (*gong’an*) anthologies.

They can be explained briefly as follows:

1. “Transmission of the lamp” texts<sup>9</sup> consist of works recording the “history” of the direct transmission of the enlightenment experience (subsequently called the mind-seal) from “certified” Zen masters within certain genealogies or schools to their disciples. These texts relate cru-

cial instructions given by the teachers as well as selected encounter-dialogues between masters and disciples and between Zen masters and Buddhists of other sects.

2. “Recorded sayings” texts are anthologies of the teachings and actions of particular Zen masters. They contain short essays, public talks, sermons, letters, records of oral exchanges between the Zen master and disciples, and often poetry. A good example of this genre is the *Mazu lu* [Recorded Sayings of Mazu (709–788)],<sup>10</sup> probably one of the first of its kind in Chinese Zen.

3. The “public-case” anthologies are pedagogic tools composed primarily of short selections of crucial encounter-dialogues between the Zen masters and their disciples. The selected “public cases” are usually followed by the commentary of one or more later masters. The aim of these anthologies is to provide students of Zen a set of topics to help them achieve enlightenment, and to map out landmarks on the path. The best-known work of this genre is the *Biyān lu* [Blue Cliff Records].<sup>11</sup>

Most relevant to our discussion of the *Thiền Uyển* is the “transmission of the lamp” genre. The “transmission of the lamp” texts serve three purposes:

1. They give an abstract outline of a moment in the process of enlightenment of the Zen adepts of the past.

2. They attempt to legitimize the status of the adepts they chronicle by showing that they have received enlightenment and “certification” directly from the enlightened ones (buddhas) of the past.

3. They rationalize the existence and origin of Zen by showing that Zen carries on the line of transmission of Buddhism since time immemorial. This is Chinese Zen’s claim to orthodoxy and antiquity. We find this same intention on the part of the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* and his predecessors.

Among the Chinese “transmission of the lamp” texts, the one that most influenced the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* and his predecessors in Vietnam was the *Chuangdeng lu*.<sup>12</sup> These Vietnamese Buddhists used the *Chuangdeng lu* as both a reference and a model for composing their own “transmission of the lamp” texts. The *Chuangdeng lu* is probably the pattern-setting work of its genre in Chinese Zen, since it is broader in content than other “transmission of the lamp” texts and is also more ambitious in connecting Zen to the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and even beyond. The *Chuangdeng lu* contains records of (1) seven Buddhas of antiquity,<sup>13</sup> culminating in Śākyamuni; (2) twenty-eight Indian Patriarchs, beginning with Śākyamuni and ending with Bodhidharma; (3) six Chinese Patriarchs, from Bodhidharma to Huineng; and (4) subsequent Chinese masters descended from Huineng and other early figures, listed according to generations and lineages.

This formula set the pattern for the composing of “lamp history” texts in medieval Vietnam.

Efforts by Buddhists in China to establish the identity of their own schools as legitimate successors of Indian Buddhism are part of the intellectual activity of Chinese Buddhism in general and not exclusive to Zen. The Zen school was not the only Chinese school of Buddhism that created a “transmission history,” a religious genealogy, connecting it to Śākyamuni Buddha and beyond.<sup>14</sup> Still, the “transmission of the lamp” or “transmission history” seems to occupy a more prominent place in Zen than in other schools, probably because Zen emphasizes the transmission of the enlightenment experience directly from teachers to students. Unlike the schools based on a particular scripture, the Zen school intentionally avoids identification with any scriptural tradition. Zen presents itself as a “separate transmission outside the scriptural teachings” and as “not relying on words.”

The mere fact that the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* connects Vietnamese Buddhism to Zen does not necessarily mean that Zen was actually a dominant school of Buddhism in Vietnam or that Zen was the main kind of Buddhism that was first introduced to Vietnam. Rather, it reflects both the absence of a sustained, active, lasting scriptural school in Vietnam, and the compiler’s own intention to portray Zen as the original and main stream of Vietnamese Buddhism. By tracing Vietnamese Buddhist history to Zen origins “outside the scriptural teachings,” the *Thiền Uyển* can proceed to construct its “history” unembarrassed by the lack of a tradition of tangible, scriptural schools in Vietnamese Buddhism.

Thông Biện, who could be considered responsible for devising the historical typology of Buddhism in Vietnam, in his talk to the empress dowager in 1096 vaguely ascribed scriptural traditions to the second- and third-century figures Mou Bo and Kang Senghui.<sup>15</sup> Yet there is no evidence whatsoever of any doctrinal school that could be traced back to these two figures. Neither Mou Bo nor Kang Senghui seems to have harbored any intention to establish any school or lineage. And their literary activities do not provide sufficient materials on which to build any tradition or school.<sup>16</sup>

Since one main objective of the “transmission of the lamp” texts is to illustrate that each Zen master’s realization was catalyzed and authenticated by the enlightened wisdom of his teacher, it is natural that these texts focus on biographical incidents featuring key interactions between the seeker and his or her teachers.

In understanding the *Thiền Uyển*, we should take note of the differences between the biographies contained in the “transmission of the

lamp” texts and the biographies recorded in works of the “biographies of eminent monks” genre, such as the *Gaoseng zhuan* [Biographies of Eminent Monks] (composed around the first half of the sixth century) and the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* [Continuation of Biographies of Eminent Monks] (composed around 664).

The “biographies of eminent monks” genre is broader in content and less sectarian, since it encompasses the entire spectrum of Buddhist activity by recording biographies of translators, exegetes, meditators, ritualists, thaumaturges, and so on. The “biographies of eminent monks” are devoted to describing the lives and works of eminent monks and are not overtly concerned with establishing cohesive genealogies.

In contrast, in the “transmission of the lamp” texts the biographies are organized into lineages and tend to focus on the enlightenment experiences and master-disciple interactions. Although in both cases the biographies are “demand biographies,”<sup>17</sup> the “biographies of eminent monks” genre is more avowedly historical and less factionally tendentious than the “transmission of the lamp” genre.

Even before the *Thiền Uyển*, other texts were composed in Vietnam on the “transmission of the lamp” model, representing earlier efforts to establish the continuity of Vietnamese Buddhism with Chinese Zen. The Buddhist intelligentsia in Vietnam took from the *Chuandeng lu* a conceptual model for Buddhist history and the transmission of the Buddhist teaching. The compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* utilized earlier texts as source materials for his own book. These texts are no longer extant, but taking into account their titles, the few brief notices of descriptions of their contents that are available, and extant fragments, it seems they fit into the “transmission of the lamp” genre: the *Chiếu Đối Lục* [Collated Biographies], *Huệ Nhật Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngữ* [Essential Sayings of the Patriarchs Composed by Huệ Nhật], the *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ* [Diagram of the Succession of the Dharma of the Southern School], and the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* [Summarized Diagram of the Zen Schools]. Their common theme is to connect Vietnamese Buddhism to Zen history as constructed by the “transmission of the lamp” texts. In this pattern, Zen is traced back to Śākyamuni Buddha’s transmission of “the treasure of the eye of the true Dharma, which is the wondrous mind of Nirvana” to his disciple Mahākāśyapa, from whom it was passed down through twenty-eight generations in India to Bodhidharma, who brought the Zen teaching to China. According to the Vietnamese versions of the “transmission of the lamp,” the Zen teaching was subsequently brought to Vietnam by disciples of the Chinese Zen Patriarchs.

Unfortunately, except for the *Thiền Uyển*, none of the other Vietnamese “lamp history” texts is extant except in fragments or in brief references in other literary works.

The fact that the authors of the various “lamp history” texts did not offer compatible accounts of Vietnamese Zen, and apparently did not even know of each other, demonstrates that in reality Vietnamese Buddhism at that time was not at all what these authors made it out to be: a coherent, unified transmission derived from some Chinese Zen lineages. Rather, Vietnamese Buddhism consisted of different groups, stationed at different temples, under the influence of émigré monks belonging to different traditions of Chinese, Indian, or Central Asian Buddhism. When the Vietnamese authors recorded what they observed (or heard), they structured their accounts to conform to the Zen lineage model that they believed to be orthodox.

A critical reading of the *Thiền Uyển* shows us that its model of Vietnamese Buddhist history is based on interpretations derived from the *Chiếu Đối Lục*, a text of the “lamp history” genre composed by Thông Biện, now lost. Although at present the viewpoint of the *Thiền Uyển* is accepted by the Vietnamese Buddhist community as the “official view,” the writings of Phúc Điền show that up to the middle of the nineteenth century the *Thiền Uyển*’s account of Vietnamese Buddhist history was not accepted unquestioningly as it is nowadays.

### The Chinese Zen “School” and the History of Vietnamese Zen

A careful perusal of the Vietnamese “lamp history” texts shows that the authors based their interpretations of Vietnamese Buddhist history on their Chinese predecessors’ model of the “school” (*zong*). In the last few decades, however, scholars of Buddhism in general and Zen in particular have realized that the traditional way of looking at the history of Buddhism in terms of well-defined schools does not accurately reflect Buddhist reality.<sup>18</sup> The notion of clear-cut schools characterized by continuity and unity in doctrine and practice is a fiction imposed by chroniclers within the tradition on a more complex, less definable historical reality characterized by many hidden cross-currents and interminglings. (At times, of course, the notion of “school” is just a convenient shorthand for labeling trends, particularly in modern Vietnamese Buddhism.) But we must realize that in general it is impossible to find in Buddhist history cohesive, well-defined, unified entities in the sense implied by the traditional idealized notion of “schools.”

To clarify the nature of Vietnamese Buddhism in both traditional and

critical contexts, it is important for us now to investigate the implications of the term “school.” Modern scholars have rightly criticized the traditional way of categorizing the “historical” unfolding of ideas and practices into fixed, conceptually static “schools.” This kind of division artificially imposes a forced uniformity and false immobility onto fluid realities.

Stanley Weinstein states that full-fledged Chinese Buddhist schools such as Chan, Tiantai, and Huayan, with founders, lineages, supposedly orthodox transmissions of doctrine, and large numbers of followers, only appeared in the second half of the Tang dynasty.<sup>19</sup> But T. Griffith Foulk makes the case that, on closer scrutiny from a critical historical perspective, the concept of the “school” in most cases refers to entities that belong partly or wholly to the realms of religious ideology and mythology. Ostensibly historical lineages were fabricated to fulfill certain religious or cultural/political purposes.<sup>20</sup> Foulk also draws a distinction between “lineage” and “school,” according to which “school” is a term with larger connotations denoting movements or groups “united in a self-conscious manner by a common set of beliefs, practices, and/or social structure,” whereas “lineage” signifies the genealogy of individuals “related by virtue of their inheritance of some sort of Dharma from a common ancestor.”<sup>21</sup> In the context of Zen, “lineage” refers to the “core members” (i.e., the patriarchs) of a “school,” those who transmit the mind of enlightenment handed down by the first patriarch, Bodhidharma.<sup>22</sup> I find Foulk’s distinction useful, since throughout the *Thiền Uyển* and other Vietnamese “lamp history” texts, the term “tông” (*zong*) seems to cover both “school” and “lineage” in the above sense of the terms.

Foulk concludes his essay by saying: “The overall picture of the Sung Ch’an school that emerges is that of individual members of an elite, highly prestigious, mythologically charged fraternity (the Ch’an lineage) holding high monastic office and having around them a wide circle of followers of varying ranks and social standings.”<sup>23</sup> This description applies equally well to a medieval Vietnamese Zen “school.”

From what I have observed, even today, in most cases when a Vietnamese Buddhist claims that he belongs to the Zen school, it simply means he believes in the Zen lineage and gains inspiration from Zen ideals and world view.<sup>24</sup> As for the abbot, what really matters and defines him as a “Zen master” is not necessarily his specific practices (which are generally no different from other “schools” and do not much resemble the typical Zen practices described in the Zen classics). Rather, what defines him as a “Zen master” is his cherished memory of the sacred lineage to which he or, more properly, his teacher belongs.

Foulk's observation that the conversion of Chinese Buddhist temples into "Zen monasteries" in the Song period was nothing but a formality is also relevant in the context of Vietnamese Buddhism. So-called Zen temples in both medieval and contemporary Vietnam are largely indistinguishable in their organization and operation from other Buddhist temples.<sup>25</sup>

### Influences of the *Jingde chuandeng lu* on the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*

I pointed out earlier that the uncritical acceptance by modern scholars of the *Thiền Uyển* as a veridical, univocal "transmission of the lamp" text has distorted their interpretation of Vietnamese Buddhism. In light of the foregoing historical and literary analysis, even a casual reading of the biographies in the *Thiền Uyển* shows us that the *Thiền Uyển* is definitely not a homogeneous "transmission of the lamp" text like the *Chuandeng lu*.

A careful examination of the Vietnamese "lamp history" texts, particularly those that the *Thiền Uyển* draws on, shows that the *Chuandeng lu* was the model for Vietnamese Buddhist authors. For instance, we have evidence that the *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngũ* drew heavily on the *Chuandeng lu*. Even scholars after the time of the *Thiền Uyển* took the *Chuandeng lu* as their model. When Như Sơn composed the *Kế Đăng Lục* in 1734, he also based himself on the *Chuandeng lu*. Because the *Chuandeng lu* was composed in the early Song (in 1004)<sup>26</sup> and was included in the Song printing of the Buddhist canon by royal order, the text became an authoritative source on Zen history for later Zen followers, including the Lý Buddhist elite in Vietnam.

The records of the Zen masters in the *Chuandeng lu* vary in both length and content. Some entries contain somewhat detailed biographies of their subjects together with their instructions and encounter dialogues with their students. Some contain only a few short selective dialogues or instructions. However, the records in the *Chuandeng lu* are uniform in the sense that the main goal is always to portray the transmission from teachers to students within their lineages and the various expressions of the enlightenment experience.

In contrast, the biographies recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* are obviously of various different literary genres. The majority belong to the "biographies of eminent monks" genre, although some might be considered as belonging to the "transmission of the lamp" type. A few (for instance, the biographies of Đạo Hạnh, Giác Hải, and especially Không Lộ) obviously draw on or borrow almost entirely from folktales.<sup>27</sup> As for the biography of Viên Chiếu, it is not just a biography, but comprises one of his entire works.<sup>28</sup>



In terms of dates and contents, the biographies in the *Thiền Uyển* do not constitute clear lineages. Gaps between generations and lost (or unrecorded) biographies make it almost impossible to establish a coherent lineage for any of the three schools. Some eminent monks are claimed by more than one school: Không Lộ and Giác Hải were claimed by both the Vô Ngôn Thông and the Thảo Đường schools. Some important temples were associated with more than one school: the Thiên Phúc, Vạn Tuế, and Lục Tổ temples were associated at different times with both the Vinītaruci and the Vô Ngôn Thông schools. The Phúc Thánh Temple was associated at different times with both the Vô Ngôn Thông and the Thảo Đường schools. The Khai Quốc Temple was associated at different times with all three schools.<sup>29</sup>

It appears that all the biographies in the *Thiền Uyển* were not written (to be more correct, “rewritten”) by one author with a preconceived intention. Among the sixty-six biographies recorded, only twenty-four could be considered to be of the “transmission of the lamp” genre. The remaining ones fall neatly into the “biographies of eminent monks” genre.

Even in those twenty-four biographies that have some “transmission of the lamp” coloring, most of the encounter dialogues that give them the air of the “transmission of the lamp” biographies can easily be identified as borrowings from the *Chuandeng lu*. It is obvious that most of the biographies, restored from various sources both written and oral, had been rewritten by authors earlier than the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển*, and during this process encounter dialogues borrowed from the *Chuandeng lu* were added to them.

To illustrate this point, let us take the biographies of Tịnh Không and Nguyễn Học as examples. Let us first examine the case of Tịnh Không.

As mentioned above, even the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* notes that encounter dialogues and instructional verses in Tịnh Không’s biography are identical with those in the biography of Jiashan in the *Chuandeng lu*. If we retain only the biographical notes, we have the following story about Tịnh Không:

Zen Master Tịnh Không of Khai Quốc Temple, Thiên Đức Prefecture, was originally of Phúc Xuyên. His family name was Ngô. At first he was ordained at Sùng Phúc Temple in his native district.

At the age of thirty, he traveled to the south and settled down at Khai Quốc Temple. For five or six years he devoted himself to austerities. Each day he ate only one grain of sesame and one grain of wheat. He would sit [in meditation] all night without sleeping. Whenever he entered *samādhi* (meditative concentration), it would go on for a few days before he arose from it. Donors from all over brought him

mountains of gifts. Some came to spy on him with the intention of stealing, but Tịnh Không would tell them where to get what they wanted.

When Princess Nam Khương wanted to leave the mundane world, she privately prepared offerings and invited Tịnh Không to preside over her ordination. The emperor [Lý Anh Tông] learned about this and issued a decree to arrest him. Yet when Tịnh Không arrived at the court, his countenance was calm. The emperor had even more respect for him and honored him as a great monk of eminent virtue. Tịnh Không persistently declined to be at court.<sup>30</sup>

This reads like a reliable biography because of its stylistic similarity to many short biographies of other eminent monks scattered in various medieval sources.<sup>31</sup> Besides, there are details related to history and the biography also presents a very common trait in the practice of Vietnamese Buddhism: the practice of austerities.

One can come to the same conclusion about Nguyễn Học, whose biography was recorded as follows in the *Thiền Uyển*.

Zen Master Nguyễn Học of Quảng Bảo Temple, Chân Hộ Village, Như Nguyệt, hailed from Phù Cầm. His family name was Nguyễn. When he was young he studied the Dharma with Master Viên Trí of Mật Nghiêm Temple. After he got the message of the teaching, he first lived in seclusion on Mount Vệ Linh, devoting himself to purification practices for twelve years. Whenever he entered *samādhi*, he would arise only after three days. He always recited the *Hương Hải Đại Bi Đà La Ni* [The Dhāraṇī of the Fragrant Ocean of Great Compassion] and was always effective in curing illness and praying for rain. Emperor Lý Anh Tông admired his supernatural powers and issued a decree granting him free access to the imperial palace so he could apply his *mantras*' power whenever necessary.<sup>32</sup>

After this are recorded in addition two verses instructing his students before he passed away. It seems obvious that these verses are similar to those spoken by Huisi in the *Chuangdeng lu*.

Many of the *Thiền Uyển* biographies appear to belong basically to the "biographies of eminent monks" genre, with a few Zen elements grafted on. According to his biography, Nguyễn Học is also described as a mediator who devoted himself to practicing austerities, chanting dhāraṇīs, curing illness by supernatural powers, praying for rain, etc.—much like the practices ascribed to many of the eminent monks whose biographies are recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* and other sources. Nothing typical of Zen such as contemplating *gong'an* [public cases] or *huaou* [meditation sayings] is mentioned. Based on the biographical data minus fabrications and borrowings from the *Chuangdeng lu*, we can see that Nguyễn Học

appears exactly like the monks that are called “thaumaturges” in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*.<sup>33</sup> The same can be said about many other Vietnamese eminent monks in the *Thiền Uyển*: Biographies of some of the most respected monks in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism, such as Khuông Việt, Định Không, Đạo Hạnh, Giác Hải, and Không Lộ, do not at all seem to be of the Zen-style “transmission of the lamp” genre.

Upon examination, it is evident that the biographies recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* fit more into the “biographies of eminent monks” genre, since, among other things, most of them do not contain the kind of encounter dialogues expressing the enlightenment experience typical of the Chinese “transmission of the lamp” texts. Some of the biographies do contain verses and instructions on the Dharma, but either these do not seem akin to Zen in their contents at all, or, if they do, they can easily be identified as borrowings from the *Chuangeng lu*.

We can thus conclude that the *Thiền Uyển* is not a homogeneous collection of “Zen biographies” composed/compiled by one author as is the case of the *Chuangeng lu*. It is rather a compilation of biographical notes of eminent monks from various historical sources, both written and oral, blended with hagiographical elaborations from other sources. The Vietnamese authors recast these materials into Zen biographies and imagined lineages, and then grafted them onto the genealogical tree of Chinese Zen.

In sum, the “Zenification” of Vietnamese Buddhism was a gradual process that started with Thông Biện toward the end of the eleventh century, continued through Thường Chiếu in the thirteenth century, and culminated in the fourteenth century with the compilation of the *Thiền Uyển*. Clearly recognizing that the *Thiền Uyển* is not a homogeneous “lamp history” text but rather a polyphonic pastiche is crucial for a critical understanding of medieval Vietnamese Buddhism.

Thông Biện was the first Vietnamese Buddhist thinker to attempt to cast the history of Vietnamese Buddhism in the mold of the Chinese Zen “lamp history” paradigm of Buddhist history: Zen as something distinct from the scriptural schools—“the separate transmission of the mind-source outside the scriptural teachings.” He also cast Vietnamese Buddhist history in the Zen framework of the mind-to-mind transmission of enlightenment down through generations of successors.<sup>34</sup>

Though many of his contemporaries among the Vietnamese Buddhist intelligentsia may not have known or approved Thông Biện’s model of Vietnamese Buddhist history, it was later taken up by the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* and as re-created in that text went on to have a decisive influence in shaping what has now become the traditional understanding of Vietnamese Buddhist history.

### An Evaluation of the Vietnamese Authors' Methodology

It is clear that the viewpoint on Vietnamese Buddhist history adopted by Vietnamese authors such as Thông Biện, Thường Chiếu, Huệ Nhật, the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ*, the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển*, Như Sơn, and Phúc Điền is based on a tacit acceptance of the paradigm of Buddhist history put forth in Chinese Zen, as epitomized in the *Chuandeng lu*. The basic premise is that the core of the history of Buddhism is the history of the transmission of Zen, more specifically the transmission of the sudden enlightenment "Southern Zen" of Huineng, based on the concept "one patriarch per generation."

The Vietnamese authors, particularly Thông Biện, the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển*, and Phúc Điền, like their predecessors and contemporaries in China, certainly did not conceive of the formation of the Zen school as something to be understood in secular social science terms, as a religious phenomenon based on individual creativity embedded in a matrix of cultural, intellectual, economic, and social conditions. They did not compare the source materials they used with other historical sources (except to gather biographical notes of the "Zen masters") and non-Zen documents. Rather, they uncritically accepted a "historical reality" constructed in the "lamp history" texts of the Chinese Zen tradition. In cases where they made use of materials outside the Zen school, these were looked at from the perspective of Zen. (This is most obvious in the case of Phúc Điền.)

Thus, for these Vietnamese authors, the history of Buddhism is the history of Zen, because in their minds Zen represents an unbroken lineage transmitting the mind of enlightenment that can be traced back to the historical Buddha and even beyond.

But as I show in the appendixes, there are instances in which some of these Vietnamese authors openly expressed their confusion about the exact contours of this lineage. They themselves sometimes found it difficult to squeeze what they observed or read (from other sources) into the historical framework they had chosen.

Efforts to force events, books, ideas, and individuals into the "lamp history" model have caused considerable difficulties in the recording and interpretation of Vietnamese Buddhist history. Having been pressed into this interpretive framework, Vietnamese Buddhist history has been "pre-written" and "predetermined" in the imagined history of Chinese Zen.

Zen was adopted by the elite class, which convincingly presented it as the orthodox school of Buddhism. They did this in the absence of a sustained, developed "scriptural school," and blinkered by their limited exposure to Buddhist literature besides a number of Song "lamp history"

texts. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that eventually most educated Vietnamese Buddhist monks and lay *littérateurs* would choose to align themselves with Zen.

### A Reevaluation of the Three Zen Schools in Medieval Vietnam

The foregoing textual, historical, and methodological analysis of the *Thiền Uyển* should be taken as the first part of our understanding of the text's author, the text itself, and the traditional reading of the text.

As the second part of our reading, let us now reexamine the so-called three schools of Zen in medieval Vietnam. Our aim is to develop a more critical and reliable picture of Vietnamese Buddhist history.

Although the *Thiền Uyển* records the biographies of the eminent monks of the Vô Ngôn Thông school before those of the Vinītaruci, I will follow a chronological order, examining the Vinītaruci school first, then the Vô Ngôn Thông, and finally the Thảo Đường.

#### THE VINĪTARUCI SCHOOL

Tradition has it that the oldest Zen school in Vietnam was founded by an Indian monk named Vinītaruci. Vinītaruci's biography is translated in its entirety in the second part of this study. For the purpose of the present analysis, however, I quote from it here at some length:

Zen Master Vinītaruci of Pháp Vân Temple, Cổ Châu Village, Long Biên Province, hailed from South India. He belonged to a Brahman lineage. As a young man he already harbored the aspiration to go beyond the conventional world: he wandered throughout India searching for the seal of the Buddha-mind. However, his affinity for the Dharma was not met there, so he carried his monk's staff to East Asia.

In the sixth year, *nhâm ngọ*, of the Dajian era (574) of the Chen dynasty, Vinītaruci first arrived in Chang'an [the capital of North China] right at the time when Emperor Wu of the Zhou dynasty was trying to destroy Buddhism. He then traveled to Ye [the capital of South China].

At that time the third Zen Patriarch Sengcan, in order to escape political disturbances, had taken his robe and bowl and hidden himself on Mount Sikong. When Vinītaruci met Sengcan and saw his uncommon behavior, his attitude was one of deep respect: three times he came before Sengcan and stood with folded arms. Sengcan just sat there with his eyes closed, saying nothing.

While Vinītaruci stood there pondering, he emptied through and seemed to have attainment, so he prostrated himself three times. Sengcan only nodded his head three times. Vinītaruci took three steps

backward and said, "I come here at a very inconvenient time, yet I beg you, Venerable Sir, to show compassion and permit me to serve by your side." Sengcan said, "You should immediately go south to receive students, it's not fitting for you to remain here too long."

Vinītaruci then bid farewell to Sengcan and traveled alone to Zhi Zhi Temple in Guangzhou. He remained there for about six years and translated the *Gayāśirṣa*, the *Differentiation of Karmic Reward*, and other works.

In the third month of the second year, *canh tí*, of the Daxiang era (580) of the Zhou dynasty, he arrived in our country [Vietnam] and settled down at Pháp Vân Temple. He retranslated the *Dhāraṇī-Sūtra* in one volume.

One day, Vinītaruci called his advanced student Pháp Hiền to his private room and said, "The mind-seal of the Buddhas surely does not deceive us—it is as perfect as space, without lack or surplus, without going or coming, without gain or loss. It is neither one nor many, neither permanent nor impermanent. It has no origination or annihilation, it is neither detached nor not detached. Names are only established provisionally according to temporary circumstances. All the Buddhas of past, present, and future rely on this to attain enlightenment, and so do the successive generations of patriarchs. I rely on this to attain enlightenment, and so do you, and so do all sentient and nonsentient beings—they all rely on this to attain enlightenment. Moreover, when my patriarch Sengcan transmitted this mind-seal to me, he told me to go south quickly to communicate it, because it was not right for me to remain there [in China] too long. It's been a long time since then, and now I have met you. After all, this agrees with his prediction. Now you must preserve it well. It's time for me to leave this world."

After speaking these words, Vinītaruci joined his palms and passed away. Pháp Hiền cremated his body, collected his five-colored relics, and built a stupa to house them. It was the fourteenth year, *giáp dần*, of the Kaihuang era of Emperor Wen of the Sui dynasty (594).<sup>35</sup>

Another text in Vietnamese Buddhist literature, the fourteenth-century *Cổ Châu Pháp Vân Phật Bản Hạnh Ngũ Lục* [henceforth referred to as *Cổ Châu*] gives the following account of Vinītaruci: "Between the Eastern Jin (317–419) and the Dajian era (569–582) there was a monk named Vinītaruci, originally from Western India, who, by his journeys through many countries, knew that Buddhism already existed in this country [i.e., Giao Châu, Vietnam]. He came to dwell at Pháp Vân Temple. Here he established a sect, admitted students, and spread the Dharma. Because of this the Buddha-Dharma flourished in Vietnam and became prosperous."<sup>36</sup>

The name Vinītaruci is also mentioned in the following works in Chinese Buddhist literature: the *Lidai sanbao ji*, the *Datang neidian lu*,

the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, and the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*.

The earliest Chinese source that mentions Vinītaruci, the *Lidai sanbao ji*, gives us the following account of him:

The Tripiṭaka Master Vinītaruci was a native of Wuzhang country, North India. His name means “Miexi” [joy of annihilation of faults] in Chinese. After hearing that our emperor was restoring the Three Jewels, he undertook a trip of five hundred yojanas to come [to China] to see how Buddhism was flourishing here. He was summoned into the court and asked to translate Buddhist texts at the Da Xingshan Temple (the *Gayāśīrṣa-Sūtra* and the *Mahāyānaśālistambasūtra*). Two persons, Daobao and Tanmi, the younger son of Prajñāruci, were assigned as his assistants. A monk at Da Xingshan Temple, Shi Faquan, a native of Chang-an, wrote down the translations in Chinese, edited them, and compared the meanings. The monk Yanzun wrote prefaces for both translations.<sup>37</sup>

The accounts in the *Datang neidian lu* and the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*<sup>38</sup> are almost the same as that in the *Lidai sanbao ji*. The account in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*<sup>39</sup> is almost the same as that in the *Lidai sanbao ji* and informs us that the above *sūtras* “were translated in the second year of the Kai-huang era under Emperor Wen [582].” It adds a correction, stating that “Fei Changfang [i.e., the author of *Lidai sanbao ji*] said the translation took place at Da Xingshan Temple. This is incorrect.” The *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* version is the same as the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*.<sup>40</sup>

Except for the name Vinītaruci and the titles of the two scriptures allegedly translated by him, the Chinese versions of Vinītaruci’s biography do not seem to accord with the *Thiền Uyển* version. The *Lidai sanbao ji* was composed in 597, around fifteen years after Vinītaruci’s arrival in Chang-an, whereas the *Thiền Uyển* was compiled around 1337, more than six hundred years after Vinītaruci’s time. The only Vietnamese source prior to the *Thiền Uyển* that mentions the name Vinītaruci is Thông Biện’s *Chiếu Đối Lục*. Unfortunately, the *Chiếu Đối Lục* is lost, so there is no way for us to know where Thông Biện got his information about Vinītaruci. It is obviously not from the Chinese sources known to us.<sup>41</sup> The Chinese sources differ among themselves on some details regarding the *sūtras* that Vinītaruci translated and where he translated them. However, they all agree that Vinītaruci came from North India, whereas Vietnamese sources report that he came from South or West India. Chinese sources also mention nothing about his encounter with Sengcan.

An analysis of the account of Vinītaruci in the *Thiền Uyển* shows that it is rife with technical errors and anachronisms and full of borrowings from the *Chuangdeng lu*. The result is that the *Thiền Uyển*’s “biography”

of Vinītaruci cannot be accepted as an authentic account. Let us review the evidence:

1. The *Thiền Uyển*'s biography uses technical terms and refers to pedagogic techniques that did not exist during the time of Vinītaruci. In Vinītaruci's instruction to Pháp Hiền, the term "mind-seal" (*xinyin*) is used twice. We know that this technical term was not used in early Zen and probably appeared for the first time in the biography and Recorded Sayings of Mazu.<sup>42</sup>

2. The *Thiền Uyển* records an encounter dialogue between Vinītaruci and Pháp Hiền when he first came from Guangzhou to Pháp Vân Temple that is almost identical with the dialogue between Daoxin and Hongren, the Fourth and Fifth Patriarchs of Chinese Zen.<sup>43</sup> An encounter dialogue involving Vinītaruci in the sixth century is anachronistic, since this kind of dialogue only developed late in the eighth century and became widely used in Zen literature after that.

3. The Chinese sources do not mention the length of time of Vinītaruci's sojourn in China. The *Thiền Uyển* states that after bidding farewell to Sengcan, Vinītaruci traveled alone to Zhi Zhi Temple and remained there for six years translating scriptures. "Six years" is a conventional interval reflecting the period of time that, according to legend, Śākyamuni Buddha spent practicing asceticism before attaining enlightenment. This "six years of training" became a convention in the literature of Chinese Zen.<sup>44</sup> This stereotypical period of practice was also apparently adopted by Vietnamese authors, especially the compiler(s) of the *Thiền Uyển*.<sup>45</sup>

4. The most serious error committed by the (original) compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* was to portray Vinītaruci as a disciple of Sengcan, probably because he was relying on Thông Biện. Modern scholars specializing in early Zen have discovered that Zen sources earlier than the eighth century do not mention Sengcan as the Third Patriarch, and these scholars consider this tradition fictitious. The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* mentions only a certain meditation master Can in the list of successors in the entry on Fachong. The biography of Sengcan as the Third Patriarch probably is a fabrication based on this list.<sup>46</sup> The *Chuanfabao ji* [Annals on the Transmission of the Dharma-Treasure],<sup>47</sup> a text written around 712, is the first text to make Sengcan the Third Patriarch and teacher of Daoxin. The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* contains the earliest biography of Daoxin, yet it does not connect him to Sengcan.

What can we conclude from these points? It appears likely that some Vietnamese Buddhists eager to claim orthodoxy for Vietnamese Buddhism endeavored to connect Vinītaruci to Pháp Hiền, after describing Vinītaruci as a disciple who had received the "mind-seal" directly from Sengcan, the Third Patriarch of Chinese Zen.

The reader may still suspect that there must be some historical basis



for the Vinītaruci legend in Vietnam. The only plausible explanation I can produce at the present time is as follows:

Nguyễn Duy Hinh has pointed out convincingly through archaeological evidence that by the second century Pháp Vân Temple had become a significant center of Buddhism in Vietnam that housed Buddhist missionaries from India.<sup>48</sup> The kind of Buddhism that flourished at Pháp Vân at that time—and in subsequent centuries at a system of three sister temples—was a mixture of popular Indian Buddhism and elements of Brahmanism that came from either India or Champa.<sup>49</sup> Thus, from the period between the second and sixth centuries there might have been an Indian or Cham monk by the name of Vinītaruci who came to dwell at Pháp Vân. Later Vietnamese authors have identified him with the Tripitaka Master Vinītaruci, the translator of Da Xingshan Temple, and constructed a legend about him as a Zen patriarch.

One can still argue that Vinītaruci the translator did arrive in Vietnam and subsequently came to dwell at Pháp Vân Temple. Later Vietnamese authors, eager to connect Vietnamese Buddhism to Chinese Zen, erroneously related him to the legendary Third Patriarch Sengcan. Even so, this would not alter my contention that Buddhism came to Vietnam quite early from different sources, and Zen was only one among various trends that came later. In any case, the story of Vinītaruci as recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* cannot be taken as factual.<sup>50</sup>

#### ĐỊNH KHÔNG AND THE PHÁP VÂN LINEAGE

Nineteen generations of Dharma successors of the Vinītaruci School—from Vinītaruci to Y Sơn—are recorded in the *Thiền Uyển*. However, from Vinītaruci to Định Không (eighth generation), the biographies of only two masters, Pháp Hiền (second generation) and Thiện Hội (fourth generation), are recorded. There is absolutely no information about the third, fifth, sixth, and seventh generations. A brief analysis of the structure of these two biographies will shed some light on this school.

Pháp Hiền's biography appears to be reconstructed from notes taken from the biography of Thông Biện<sup>51</sup> combined with an enlightenment story in the form of an encounter dialogue typical of Song Zen and probably borrowed from a dialogue (traditionally believed to have taken place) between Daoxin and Hongren, the Fourth and Fifth Patriarchs of Chinese Zen, related in the *Chuandeng lu*. Thanh Biện's biography follows the same formula. The encounter dialogue in his biography is obviously based on a dialogue between the Chinese Zen Master Dazhu Huihai and his disciple, which can also be found in the *Chuandeng lu*.<sup>52</sup>

At present we have no further information about Pháp Hiền and Thanh Biện. But we do have a hint about how the (original) author of the *Thiền*

*Uyển* established the existence of these two monks: He might have found records of them in Thông Biện's *Chiếu Đối Lục* and then assigned them their respective places in the Vinītaruci school based either on Thông Biện's information or on the dates of events or of their deaths.

For the time being I suggest that we can go along with tradition and accept their historicity for the following reasons:

1. Excluding the encounter dialogues borrowed from the *Chuandeng lu*, the biographies of both Pháp Hiền and Thanh Biện seem to contain some historical facts, that is, events recorded in non-Buddhist history texts.

2. According to his biography, when Pháp Hiền first entered religious life, he was a disciple of a monk named Quán Duyên at Pháp Vân Temple. Although nothing else is known about Quán Duyên,<sup>53</sup> it is hard to see why the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* should fabricate his existence. Again, he might have taken it from Thông Biện's *Chiếu Đối Lục*.

3. A brief biographical note of Pháp Hiền is recorded in the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* [Sourcebook of Annam].<sup>54</sup> Although it was inadvertently ascribed to Nguyễn Học, we know that it is about Pháp Hiền, since it is almost identical to a passage in the latter's biography in the *Thiền Uyển*.<sup>55</sup>

4. It is mentioned in Pháp Hiền's biography that Emperor Gaozu of the (Chinese) Sui dynasty "dispatched an envoy to bring Buddha relics and five boxes of official credentials, and ordered Pháp Hiền to build a *stupa* to worship them. Pháp Hiền built a *stupa* at Pháp Vân Temple, Luy Lâu, and at famous temples in Phong, Hoan, Trương, and Ai provinces."<sup>56</sup> This event is also recorded in Chinese sources. According to Tanqian's biography, Emperor Gaozu sent out relics three times in all. The first time he gave to thirty prefectures in the sixth month of 601, the second time to fifty-one other prefectures in the first month of 602. The third time, in the first month of 604, he ordered the building of more than one hundred *stupas* to receive relics. Pháp Hiền's relation with Thiện Chứng Temple is also confirmed.<sup>57</sup>

The remaining biographies—from Định Không (?–808, eighth generation) to Y Sơn (nineteenth generation, the last master of the "Vinītaruci school")—seem to present a picture of a coherent trend of Buddhism, describing a Buddhism that features thaumaturgy, asceticism, and ritualism, while being very engaged in the world.<sup>58</sup> In short, these biographies depict a Buddhism that does not even remotely resemble the practice of Zen as the Zen classics present it to us.<sup>59</sup>

The fact that Định Không's biography seems to mark the beginning of a coherent trend has led some to conclude that the so-called Vinītaruci school never existed, and that instead there was a school founded by Định Không.<sup>60</sup> This conjecture is not unreasonable, given the historical and literary evidence that disproves the traditional view that Vinītaruci

came to Vietnam and founded a Zen school bearing his name. However, such an interpretation would entail denying the presence of Pháp Hiền and Thanh Biện and a tradition of Buddhist practices and activities at Pháp Vân Temple prior to the time of Định Không, and I think denying this is neither necessary nor correct.

Taking into consideration all the evidence presented above, I am inclined to believe that a Buddhist center (and perhaps a lineage, in a loose sense) certainly existed at Pháp Vân Temple at the time of the alleged arrival of Vinītaruci in Vietnam (sixth century). The fact that Pháp Hiền was assigned to receive the Buddha relics and build a *stupa* there to house them indicates that Pháp Vân Temple was probably a significant center of Buddhism. Although Vinītaruci (the translator) never came to Vietnam and the so-called Vinītaruci Zen school is a mere fiction, there was indeed a line of Buddhism whose center was Pháp Vân Temple. The Buddhism they practiced there, as reflected in the activities of its eminent monks such as Định Không, Pháp Thuận, Vạn Hạnh, Đạo Hạnh, and others, combined meditation, asceticism, magic, wonder-working, and ritualism, a far cry from the Southern school of Chinese Zen.

Even if we do not deny the historicity of Pháp Hiền and Thanh Biện, we can still draw some conclusions from the inconsistency and dissimilarity in both content and literary style between the extant biographies of Định Không and eminent monks after him, and those of the first three figures of the so-called Vinītaruci school:

1. The biographies of the eminent monks from Định Không on were probably derived from historical records other than Thông Biện's *Chiếu Đối Lục*.

2. The construction of Vinītaruci's biography and the interpolation of encounter dialogues of the "transmission of the lamp" genre into the biographies of his alleged immediate religious descendant Pháp Hiền and Thanh Biện, the fourth generation of the lineage, is simply another effort to locate the roots of this Vietnamese line of Buddhism in Chinese Zen.

## THE VÔ NGÔN THÔNG SCHOOL

The (original) compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* seems reluctant to approve of the "Vinītaruci school" as Zen and only recognizes the Vô Ngôn Thông school, when he notes at the end of Vô Ngôn Thông's biography that "the Zen school in our country [Vietnam] began with Vô Ngôn Thông."<sup>61</sup> However, if one studies Vô Ngôn Thông's biography carefully, one cannot help question whether the traditional account of a man named Vô Ngôn Thông and his activities in Vietnam is at all believable. The issue

of Vô Ngôn Thông's coming to Vietnam is not at all as clear as some might think.<sup>62</sup>

Vô Ngôn Thông's biography is recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* as follows:

Zen Master Vô Ngôn Thông (Wu Yan Tong) of Kiến Sơ Temple at Phù Đổng District, Tiên Du Prefecture, was originally from Guangzhou. His family name was Zheng. From a tender age he respected Buddhist lore and did not attend to the family property. He entered religious life at Shuanglin Temple in Wuzhou. By disposition he was generous, profound, and a man of few words. He silently comprehended and realized the true nature of things, so his contemporaries called him Vô Ngôn Thông (i.e., Wordless Realization) or Bất Ngữ Thông (Bu Yu Tong) according to the *Transmission of the Lamp*.

Every day Thông paid homage to the Buddha. One day [as he was doing so] a Zen Master asked him, "Venerable Sir, what are you paying homage to?" Thông said, "To the Buddha." The Zen man pointed to the Buddha-image and said, "But what is this one?" Thông had no reply.

That night he went with full formal deportment to the Zen man. After bowing politely Thông said, "What was the meaning of what you asked me before?" The Zen man said, "How many summers since you left home [to become a monk]?" Thông said, "Ten summers." The Zen man said, "Have you ever really left home yet?" Thông became even more confused. The Zen man said, "If you can't understand even this, what good are a hundred summers?" He then took Thông to see Mazu. But when they arrived in Jiangxi, Mazu had already passed away, so Thông went to call on the Zen Master Baizhang Huaihai.

Once [when Thông was present] there was a monk who asked Baizhang, "What is the Great Vehicle doctrine of enlightenment?" Baizhang said, "When the mind ground is empty, the sun of wisdom spontaneously shines." At these words Thông had attainment. He then returned to Guangzhou and became abbot of Hua An Temple.

Once someone asked him, "Are you a Zen Master or not?" Thông said, "This poor monk has never studied Zen." After a long silence, Thông called out to the questioner and he responded. Thông pointed to a coir-palm tree, and the man had no reply.

Once when Zen Master Yangshan was still a novice, Vô Ngôn Thông called out to him, "Hey Ji, move the bed over here for me." Yangshan moved the bed over to him. Thông said, "Now put it back where it was." Yangshan did as he was told. Thông again asked, "Ji, what is there over there?" Yangshan said, "Not a thing." Thông said, "What is there over here?" Yangshan said, "Not a thing." Thông called him, "Hey Ji!" Yangshan said, "Yes?" Thông said, "Go away."<sup>63</sup>

Except for the introduction of Vô Ngôn Thông as a monk of Kiến Sơ Temple, this account is identical to the biography of Bu Yu Tong,<sup>64</sup> a

disciple of Baizhang, in the *Chuangdeng lu*. The compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* notes that Vô Ngôn Thông is also called Bất Ngữ Thông (Bu Yu Tong) in the *Chuangdeng lu*, but the *Chuangdeng lu* and other Chinese Zen sources never mention that Bu Yu Tong is also called Wu Yan Tong (Vô Ngôn Thông).

The *Thiền Uyển* continues:

In the ninth month, autumn, of the fifteenth year, *canh tí*, of the Yuanhua era (820) of the Tang dynasty, Vô Ngôn Thông came to Kiến Sơ Temple and planted his staff there. Except for his two simple meals, Thông was absorbed in the joy of meditation. He generally sat facing the wall without uttering a single word. Even after many years, no one knew him except for a monk named Cẩm Thành who lived at the temple. Cẩm Thành honored and revered Vô Ngôn Thông and served by his side, coming into intimate contact with his mystic potential, and receiving his essential teaching in full.<sup>65</sup>

How credible is the above passage? Is Vô Ngôn Thông of the *Thiền Uyển* one and the same as Bu Yu Tong of the *Chuangdeng lu*? This is not a trivial matter. In fact, as long as this question cannot be answered, the Vô Ngôn Thông issue cannot be considered solved.

The traditional argument for the authenticity of Vô Ngôn Thông's presence in Vietnam rests on two premises:

1. The fact that the *Chuangdeng lu* does not record Vô Ngôn Thông's activities in Vietnam or the date and place of his death indicates that Thông left China for Vietnam later in his life.

2. The record of Thông's activities in Vietnam is credible because the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển*, being a Vietnamese, must have been more aware of Thông's works in Vietnam than the Chinese authors.

I find it hard to agree with this argument for the following reasons:

1. The absence of date and place of death in the biographies of the Zen masters in the *Chuangdeng lu* is not restricted only to the case of Vô Ngôn Thông.

2. When the author of the *Thiền Uyển* describes Vô Ngôn Thông, he says that after Vô Ngôn Thông settled down at Kiến Sơ Temple, "he generally sat facing the wall without uttering a single word." This description seems artificial. The phrase "without uttering a single word" appears to be a dramatization of the *Chuangdeng lu*'s description of Bu Yu Tong that he was "a man of few words and he silently comprehended and realized the true nature of things."<sup>66</sup> Ascribing the practice of "sit facing the wall" to Vô Ngôn Thông seems to be another desperate effort on the part of the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* to connect Cẩm Thành and the Kiến Sơ line to the orthodox Zen of Bodhidharma.

It is true that some Chinese Zen sources ascribe this practice to Bodhidharma,<sup>67</sup> but it is variously interpreted even in these sources. Actually,

two different expressions are used in the original Chinese: *biguan* [literally means “wall contemplation”] and *mianbi* [facing the wall]. A closer scrutiny of these two terms will not only clarify some aspects in Zen doctrine and practice in general but also shed light on our immediate issue of Vô Ngôn Thông.<sup>68</sup>

The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (composed in 664) only uses the expression *biguan*, whereas in the *Chuandeng lu* we find both *biguan* and *mianbi*. The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* interprets *biguan* as a method of pacifying the mind (*anxin*) that Bodhidharma taught his two disciples, Huike and Daoyu.<sup>69</sup> *Biguan* is also connected with the famous teaching of “entrance [into the Dharma] through principle (*li*) and practice (*xing*)” traditionally ascribed to Bodhidharma. It is a method of contemplation that helps the practitioner get rid of discrimination between “self” and “others” and to realize the equality of the mundane and the supramundane.<sup>70</sup> Here I am inclined to follow Tang Yongtong’s interpretation that *biguan* does not mean “wall contemplation” in the sense of contemplating the wall; rather, it denotes a firm, unshakable, nondual contemplation.<sup>71</sup> Note again that in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *biguan* is not at all connected with *mianbi* or interpreted to mean physically sitting facing a wall.

In the *Chuandeng lu* (composed around 1005), both *biguan* and *mianbi* appear. According to this text, Bodhidharma came to China during the time of Liang Wudi (502–550) to teach Buddhism. When he found out that nobody could understand his teaching, Bodhidharma went to dwell at Shaolin Temple on Mount Song, where he “sat silently all day facing the wall (*mianbi*). Nobody could fathom him, so they called him *biguan*-Brāhmaṇa.” A few lines after that we also read that “the master [Bodhidharma] sat upright facing the wall (*mianqiang*) without teaching him [Huike] anything.”<sup>72</sup> Note that here the word *qiang* (wall) is used. Thus, we observe that for the author of the *Chuandeng lu*, *biguan* is identical to *mianbi*, and he does not seem to be aware of other technical implications of the expression *mianbi*.

Briefly, the *Thiền Uyển* description of Vô Ngôn Thông—that “he generally sat facing the wall (*mianbi*) without uttering a single word. Even after many years, no one knew him”—seems to be inspired by the passage on Bodhidharma in the *Chuandeng lu*. Note that this “wall contemplation” or “wall facing” is not ascribed to the other Zen patriarchs after Bodhidharma, nor to Baizhang, Vô Ngôn Thông’s alleged teacher. We find absolutely no trace of this practice in Vô Ngôn Thông’s successor Cảm Thành, or, for that matter, in Vietnamese Buddhism, ancient or modern, although the Vô Ngôn Thông school is traditionally referred to as the “Wall-Contemplation school” (*Quần Bích*) in Vietnam.

Because of the abundance of borrowings and fabrications in the *Thiền*

*Uyển* we cannot uncritically accept the authenticity of Vô Ngôn Thông or the identity of this alleged Vô Ngôn Thông with the Bu Yu Tong of the *Chuangdeng lu*. The *Thiền Uyển* was constructed with the aim of bringing an orthodoxy to Vietnamese Buddhism. Together with other factors that will be discussed below, this leads me to believe that—as in the case of Vinītaruci—the *Thiền Uyển* story of Vô Ngôn Thông's coming to Vietnam to establish a Zen sect bearing his name is nothing more than a construction.

Consider another factor. The *Chuangdeng lu* gives biographies for only thirteen of Baizhang Huaihai's thirty-one successors. These are: (1) Guishan Lingyou, (2) Huangbo Xiyun, (3) Daci Huanzhong, (4) Tiantai Pu-an, (5) Junzhou Changguan, (6) Shishuang Xingkong, (7) Fuzhou Da-an, (8) Guling Shenzan, (9) Guangzhou He-an Tong (i.e., Bu Yu Tong), (10) Longyun Tai, (11) Weiguo Dao, (12) Zhenzhou Wansui, and (13) Hongzhou Dongshan.<sup>73</sup>

To connect Cẩm Thành and the Kiến Sơ Temple with the Chinese Zen tradition and the lineage of Baizhang belonging to the orthodox Southern school (at least according to tradition), the author of the *Thiền Uyển* had to choose one among these thirteen Zen masters as Cẩm Thành's teacher. Guishan, Huangbo, Huanzhong, and Shenzan are very well-known personages in Chinese Zen literature, and all have complete biographies that make it difficult to fabricate anything more about them. As for the remaining eight (not including Bu Yu Tong), five lack clear biographies, and the other three are listed with either the places of their deaths or both places and dates of death. This leaves Bu Yu Tong (i.e., the alleged Vô Ngôn Thông of the *Thiền Uyển*), whose short biography contains neither date nor place of death, as the most convenient figure to connect with Cẩm Thành and the Kiến Sơ lineage of Vietnamese Buddhism. This supports the thesis that tales of Vô Ngôn Thông's works in Vietnam are apocryphal.

A final note: It is highly likely that the author of the *Thiền Uyển* derived his information from Thông Biện's *Chiếu Đối Lục*. It is conceivable that Thông Biện himself had evidence upon which he based the story of Vô Ngôn Thông in Vietnam. But, unfortunately, the *Chiếu Đối Lục* is not extant, and with the evidence available to us we cannot but distrust this traditional account.

#### VÔ NGÔN THÔNG SCHOOL OR KIẾN SƠ LINEAGE

The fact that the author of the *Thiền Uyển* strove to find a master in the Chinese Zen tradition contemporary with Cẩm Thành to establish an orthodox Southern Zen lineage in Vietnam strongly implies the historicity of Cẩm Thành.

In Cẩm Thành's biography it is said that he built Kiến Sơ Temple. In the story of Xung Thiên Thần Vương [the God King Storming the Sky] in the *Việt Điện*, an important text on Vietnamese myth and history, there was a monk named Chí Thành who dwelt at Kiến Sơ Temple.<sup>74</sup> I am inclined to believe that Chí Thành and Cẩm Thành are one and the same. Cẩm Thành's biography in the *Thiền Uyển* tells us that when he first entered religious life his Dharma-name was Lập Đức. The name Cẩm Thành was given to him by Vô Ngôn Thông. Note that Cẩm Thành [Moving Sincerity] and Chí Thành [Utmost Sincerity] are almost synonymous.

In considering Cẩm Thành's biography, we need to discount borrowed passages, as we did with Pháp Hiền's biography. If we omit the fabricated instruction allegedly given to him by Vô Ngôn Thông—which is identical with a passage from the *Chuangteng lu*<sup>75</sup>—Cẩm Thành's biography seems consistent in many respects with the biographies of other Vietnamese eminent monks and appears to contain historical facts:

1. At first Cẩm Thành's Dharma-name was Lập Đức. He devoted himself to chanting *dhāraṇīs* and reciting *sūtras*.

2. Cẩm Thành was offered land by a lay Buddhist to build a temple. He repeatedly declined the offer until an immortal appeared to him in a dream<sup>76</sup> and persuaded him to accept.

3. Cẩm Thành built Kiến Sơ Temple at Phù Đồng Village. The temple was named after "Phù Đồng Thiên Vương" [the Celestial King of Phù Đồng, a legendary hero of Vietnam.] The *Việt Điện* states that the monk Chí Thành dwelt at Kiến Sơ Temple, which was built to worship "Phù Đồng Thiên Vương."<sup>77</sup>

Lý Tế Xuyên, who compiled the *Việt Điện* in 1329, seems not to have known of any connection between Chí Thành (Cẩm Thành?) and any Chinese Zen school or a Zen master named Vô Ngôn Thông.

These facts indicate that Cẩm Thành was the "founder" of Kiến Sơ Temple, which evolved into a sacred place in Vietnamese religion and the center of a Buddhist lineage that lasted until the middle of the thirteenth century. An analysis of the biographies of the monks in this lineage and their activities and practices reveals a kind of Buddhism not much different from that of the Pháp Vân lineage.

#### HIỆN QUANG AND THE LINJI (LÂM TẾ) ZEN SCHOOL

The notion of a Vô Ngôn Thông Zen school in Vietnam seems to have originated with Thông Biện. None of the other works of the same "transmission of the lamp" genre after Thông Biện speak of a Chinese Zen monk named Vô Ngôn Thông as the founder of a school or lineage.

The *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* was composed around 1310–1313 by an author who obviously belonged to the Trúc Lâm school. In addition to his own school he also mentioned three other schools: the first transmitted



by Vương Chí Nhân, the second by Nhật Thiển, and the third by Tianfeng. Among the transmitters of this last school were Dadeng and Nansi. The author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* did not know of the situation of the transmission before Thiền Nguyệt (or Thiền Lão)—who according to the *Thiền Uyển* belonged to the sixth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school. In explaining his own lineage (Trúc Lâm) he traced it back to Thông Thiền (died 1228)—thirteenth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school according to the *Thiền Uyển*. He did not explicitly claim that the Trúc Lâm school derived from the Linji school, but he did mention a certain Tianfeng as the (Chinese) transmitter of the Linji school in Vietnam.

The writings of Phúc Điền should help shed some light on the issue. In his *Kế Dẫn Lược Lục*, he mentioned a number of eminent Song monks who came to Vietnam during the Trần dynasty to transmit the orthodox teachings of the Linji school. These were Dadeng, Yingshun (Ứng Thuận), Tianfeng, Yuanzheng, Xiaoyao, and Huizhong (Huệ Trung).

According to Phúc Điền, Emperor Trần Thái Tông first studied with Yuanzheng but afterward received the transmission from Tianfeng. Thái Tông's son Trần Thánh Tông received the transmission from National Preceptor Dadeng. Trần Nhân Tông, Thánh Tông's son and the founder of the Trúc Lâm School, received the transmission from the Eminent Huizhong (Huệ Trung).<sup>78</sup> From Phúc Điền's records we learn that Trần Nhân Tông himself belonged to the sixth generation of the lineage of Hiện Quang of Vân Tiêu Temple, Mount Yên Tử, Hải Dương Province, who was the first patriarch of the Linji school in Vietnam.

Thus, according to Phúc Điền, toward the end of the Lý dynasty there had been Chinese Zen monks of the Linji lineage coming to Vietnam to spread their message. By the end of the Lý and in the early period of the Trần, Linji Zen—or what was perceived and practiced by its Vietnamese adherents as Linji Zen—was taking root in Vietnam. There were various lineages and temples spreading the perspectives and practices of the school. This was the beginning of the lasting influence of this school—at least from the traditional standpoint—on Vietnamese Buddhism.

There are, however, some discrepancies between the records of Phúc Điền and those of the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ*. According to this author, a proclaimed adherent of the Trúc Lâm School, Trần Nhân Tông, its founder, belonged to a Zen lineage that began with Thông Thiền (died 1228)—a monk of the thirteenth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school, according to the *Thiền Uyển*—who transmitted the Dharma to Túc Lự, to Yingshun (Ứng Thuận), to Xiaoyao, and to Huizhong (Huệ Trung). Trần Nhân Tông received the Dharma from Huizhong (Huệ Trung). These six masters do not necessarily represent six generations. The author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* also did not

identify his Trúc Lâm school with Linji Zen, only remarking that a certain Layman Tianfeng, who transmitted the Dharma to National Preceptor Dadeng, was a transmitter of Linji Zen.

Phúc Điền, a self-avowed Linji monk, also listed Trần Nhân Tông as the sixth generation of the Vietnamese Linji lineage, which began with Hiện Quang as the first patriarch. The five generations before Trần Nhân Tông were Hiện Quang, Yuanzheng, Dadeng, Xiaoyao, and Huihui (Huệ Huệ).

The two lineage lists are as follows:

The <i>Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ</i> list	Phúc Điền's list
Thông Thiền	Hiện Quang
Tức Lự	Yuanzheng
Yingshun (Ứng Thuận)	Dadeng
Xiaoyao	Xiaoyao
Huizhong (Huệ Trung)	Huihui (Huệ Huệ)
Trần Nhân Tông	Trần Nhân Tông

The two lists agree with one another from the fourth generation on, although Huizhong (Huệ Trung) became Huihui (Huệ Huệ) in Phúc Điền's list.<sup>79</sup> The author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* agreed with Phúc Điền that Dadeng was the teacher of Trần Thánh Tông, but unlike Phúc Điền, he did not include Dadeng in the Trúc Lâm lineage. I am inclined to think that Phúc Điền's records are more credible, since they seem to reflect still observable Vietnamese Buddhist realities. Phúc Điền's approach also appears to be more valid because he derived his information not only from older texts but also from facts gathered at various temples.

Let us sum up: Toward the middle of the Lý dynasty educated Vietnamese monks began to come into contact with Chinese Zen literature and Chinese monks. In China at the time, Zen was the most intellectually prestigious form of Buddhism. By the time of the early Trần dynasty Buddhism had been well received by the elite class and there had been learned Chinese monks arriving at the Vietnamese capital to teach. The fact that some of them claimed membership in the Linji lineage is not surprising because asserting such claims was a common practice in China. The fact that Vietnamese Buddhists claimed to belong to the Linji tradition only shows that Vietnamese Buddhists came into contact with Chinese monks purporting to be representatives of this Chinese Zen school.

Despite what the records tell us, however, in reality the Vietnamese absorption of Linji Zen seems to have taken the form of adopting certain styles of thought and practice taught by different teachers in different localities. There is no reliable evidence for the traditional belief that there were cohesive lineages established and uniform sets of doctrines transmitted. Present-day Vietnamese Buddhism still claims an affiliation

to Linji Zen, but in reality, it practices a kind of easygoing, emotionally reassuring, composite Buddhism that scarcely reflects the uncompromising abstractness and iconoclasm associated with the Linji spirit.

### THE THẢO ĐƯỜNG SCHOOL

It is strange that modern scholars in Vietnam write on the history, development, and doctrine of the Thảo Đường Zen school, in the absence of any data about this school except for a list of names of the monks in the lineage.

In what appears to be an appendix to the *Thiền Uyển*, next to the title “Zen Master Thảo Đường of Khai Quốc Temple in the Capital of Thăng Long” there is a note saying “transmitting the lineage of the Xuedou Mingjue school,”<sup>80</sup> yet absolutely no details about Thảo Đường are provided. So far we have not been able to locate any Vietnamese sources that record his teaching. Kawamoto Kunye reported that according to the *Chanlin baoxun* [Precious Instructions from the Zen Forest], Zen Master Caotang (Thảo Đường), the founder of the Thảo Đường school in Thăng Long, was the same as Zen Master Caotang Shanqing, the disciple of Zen Master Huitang Zuxin who belonged to the twelfth generation of the line of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng’s disciple Nanyue Huairang. Thảo Đường transmitted the lineage of Yunbao Zhongxian.<sup>81</sup> While there are records of some instructions of a Zen Master Caotang in the *Chanlin baoxun*,<sup>82</sup> I have not been able to verify Kawamoto’s identification of this Caotang with the Thảo Đường in Vietnam in the same work.

The earliest Vietnamese historical record that mentions the name Thảo Đường is the *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3, chapter on “Immortals and Buddhist Monks”:

Zen Master Thảo Đường was very virtuous and well versed in Buddhist literature. The Lý King made him his teacher. Subsequently, Thảo Đường passed away sitting upright.<sup>83</sup>

The *An Nam Chí Lược* [Brief Records of An Nam] is the earliest source for the legend about Thảo Đường that has been accepted uncritically by scholars in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism. The *An Nam Chí Lược* gives the following account of Thảo Đường:

Thảo Đường followed his teacher to live in Champa. King Thánh Tông of the Lý dynasty, in an expedition against Champa, captured him and gave him to a monk scribe as a servant. One day the monk scribe was composing a text when he had to go outside. Thảo Đường secretly corrected the text. The monk thought his servant most extraordinary and reported it to Lý Thánh Tông. The latter subsequently made Thảo Đường National Preceptor.<sup>84</sup>

Historical records<sup>85</sup> tell us that during his reign Lý Thánh Tông made only one expedition against Champa, in 1069. If the story about Thảo Đường in the *An Nam Chí Lược* is accurate, he must have been captured in 1069 and made National Preceptor<sup>86</sup> sometime in the next two years, since early in 1072 Lý Thánh Tông fell seriously ill and subsequently died.<sup>87</sup>

There is a strong case for doubting the veracity of the traditional picture of the Thảo Đường School:

1. We saw that Thông Biện, in his dialogue with Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Linh Nhân at a vegetarian feast held at the National Temple in 1096, only mentioned Vinītaruci and Vô Ngôn Thông when speaking about the Zen schools in Vietnam. He said nothing about the Thảo Đường school. This seems odd, since Thông Biện appears to have been a conscientious “historian,” despite his limited exposure to Chinese Buddhist historical sources.

2. We learn by way of Thần Nghi’s biography that in his *Chiếu Đối Lược* Thông Biện mentioned the existence of all the secondary sects that he knew of, although he did not record their transmissions in detail. Perhaps he did not consider the “Thảo Đường school” as a Zen school at all.

3. If the Thảo Đường school flourished in aristocratic circles, as is the opinion of most Vietnamese scholars, how could it be that Thông Biện—who was also National Preceptor—did not know anything about Thảo Đường? Thông Biện should have known Thảo Đường well since they were almost contemporaries.<sup>88</sup>

4. Thảo Đường might have taught a kind of Buddhism that Thông Biện did not find palatable. This would explain why he ignored Thảo Đường, just as he did the lineages of Nguyễn Đại Diên and Nguyễn Bát Nhã, which according to some had a Tantric bent. Yet it is strange that Phù Thánh Linh Nhân herself did not seem to know anything about Thảo Đường and his (Zen) school.<sup>89</sup> This is somewhat strange, considering the fact that Phù Thánh Linh Nhân was a devout Buddhist, as was Lý Thánh Tông’s principal concubine. According to tradition, it was Thánh Tông who made Thảo Đường National Preceptor and who also succeeded Thảo Đường as a patriarch of the first generation of the school. Kawamoto also reported some relationships between Lý Thánh Tông and Thảo Đường as recorded in the *An Nam Chí Lược*, yet I have not been able to locate them in the same book.<sup>90</sup>

5. The list of successors of the school does not seem to be right either: Không Lộ and Giác Hải are also recorded as belonging to the school, though we know that these two monks belonged to the Vô Ngôn Thông school. Moreover, I believe that these two figures should be classified as thaumaturges rather than Zen masters.

6. Another apparent anomaly is that Lý Cao Tông (r. 1175–1210) is also recorded by the *Thiền Uyển* as a “patriarch” belonging to the fifth

generation of the Thảo Đường school.<sup>91</sup> Lý Cao Tông ascended the throne in 1175 when he was only two years old and reigned for thirty-six years. Historical records tell us that Cao Tông indulged in luxury, and it was during his reign that the Lý dynasty began to disintegrate.<sup>92</sup> Cao Tông once followed the advice of Grand Tutor Đàm Dĩ Mông, a mediocre, opportunistic Confucian scholar,<sup>93</sup> and passed some harsh laws restricting the Buddhist monks. This incident is recorded as follows by the *Việt Sử Lược* (3: 12b–13a):

[In 1194] Đàm Dĩ Mông reported to the King [Lý Cao Tông], “Monks are now as numerous as laborers. They form groups as they please, choosing their own leaders, and flocking together in groups. They commit many odious acts, such as deliberately drinking wine and eating meat in austere places and monasteries or fornicating in monachal alcoves and meditation halls. They disappear by day and appear at night like foxes and rats. Perverting morals and defiling religion is becoming a habit with them. It is time to put an end to such conduct, otherwise, they will only get worse in the long run.” The king was in agreement. Dĩ Mông then summoned clergymen from all over the country to a public granary, chose some tens of them of repute as monks, and had the rest marked on the hand and sent back to lay life.<sup>94</sup>

It is clear that Đàm Dĩ Mông’s report bespeaks his personal antipathy toward Buddhism more than it directly reflects the actual situation. It is hard to understand why, if he had really been a “patriarch” of a Zen school, Lý Cao Tông could take such a report seriously and move against his own religion. Historical records also report many incidents toward the end of his life where Lý Cao Tông behaved more like a psychopath than a “Zen patriarch.”<sup>95</sup> Neither the *Việt Sử Lược* nor the *Toàn Thư* mentions anything about Cao Tông’s involvement with any Zen school.

There is another feasible explanation of the existence of a monk named Thảo Đường in Lý Buddhism. As we saw, *An Nam Chí Nguyên* is the first source to mention Thảo Đường, describing him as “very virtuous and well versed in Buddhist literature” and stating that Lý Thánh Tông made him his teacher. Historical sources portray Lý Thánh Tông as an emperor with an ecumenical spirit, and religious activities in Vietnam under his reign were most interesting. Although he was a devout Buddhist, Thánh Tông strongly supported Confucianism and other religions. According to court chronicles, in 1057 Lý Thánh Tông had two temples built (Thiên Phúc and Thiên Thọ), where golden statues of Brahmā and Śakra (Indra)—the two eminent deities of Brahmanism—were worshipped.<sup>96</sup>

Thảo Đường thus might have been the Sino-Vietnamese name of a monk who came from either Champa or India and subsequently became Lý Thánh Tông’s personal religious teacher. Thảo Đường might have

taught a kind of Buddhism that was a mixture of Mahāyāna and Brahmanism. Some among the supposed successors of the “Thảo Đường lineage” had Indian names, and quite a few were laymen. This would explain the report that he was well respected by the court. This could also explain why later scholars like Lê Trắc, the author of *An Nam Chí Lược*, came up with the story of Thảo Đường being captured in Champa, and why the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* went one step further to connect him with the Zen school of Xuedou Mingjue.

In conclusion, therefore, until evidence is found to confirm traditional belief, I am inclined to think that the so-called Thảo Đường Zen school is as specious as the Vinītaruci and the Vô Ngôn Thông schools.<sup>97</sup>

### Conclusion

Even with all the arguments presented above, I am not unaware of the possible counterargument that it is not necessary to deny the actual presence in medieval Vietnam of Vinītaruci, Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường and their Zen schools simply because their biographies and the records of them contain contradictory, inaccurate, and anachronistic elements.

One might argue that these three Buddhist teachers indeed came to Vietnam and established their own schools, and that the dubious character of their biographies results from the work of later Vietnamese Buddhist authors who tinkered with whatever data they might have had at their disposal about the lives of these three masters. It would be no surprise that these medieval Buddhist authors shaped the images of those masters by following the paradigmatic method of biographical writing determined by the interest of their time and their communities. Inevitably, they were writing a “history” of Vietnamese Buddhism from a particular horizon of expectation.

I am not suggesting that after subtracting borrowed passages from the *Chuangdeng lu* from the biographies of the Vietnamese eminent monks in the *Thiền Uyển*, what remains really represents the “hard” historical facts of their lives. These facts, nevertheless, do give us more reliable biographical images<sup>98</sup> of these Vietnamese monks. In the context of Vietnamese intellectual history, these biographies (minus borrowed passages from the *Chuangdeng lu*) reflect more directly the images of those eminent monks in the Vietnamese Buddhist communities before there was the need to connect Vietnamese Buddhism to Chinese Zen.

What is beyond dispute is that the historical facts and evidence still do not support the traditional view on the existence and activities of the Vinītaruci, Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường “Zen schools” in Vietnamese history. Vinītaruci, Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường were not what the

traditional Vietnamese authors, both medieval and modern, have claimed them to be. Nor did these “Zen masters” play the kind of roles in Vietnamese Buddhist history that those authors made them appear to play. And even if Vinītaruci, Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường were actually present in Vietnam, their positions and significance in Vietnamese Buddhist history must be looked at from a different perspective. This can only be appropriately done when pertinent historical and other data have been gathered and their value critically analyzed.

Toward the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907), Zen became so dominant a school intellectually in the China-centered world that in most intellectuals’ minds Buddhism was almost identical to Zen.<sup>99</sup> With its powerful approach to Buddhist thought and practice and its poetic brilliance, by the Song dynasty (960–1297) Zen held a fascination for many East Asian intellectuals, including some of the most eminent Confucians of the period.

During the Lý dynasty, Chinese Zen literature began to be brought to Vietnam and caught the fancy of the elite class of the day, including some high-born Buddhist monks, most of them with background in Confucian learning. This development was reflected in the composition of texts of the “transmission of the lamp” genre initiated by Thông Biện. With the composition of the *Chuandeng lu* in China in 1004, “lamp history” began to supersede the “biographies of eminent monks” style and even influenced the composition of sectarian history, in the form of biographies, in other Buddhist schools.<sup>100</sup>

The construction of Vietnamese Buddhist history in terms of supposed Zen schools stems from the efforts of the elite eager to establish a notion of Zen-centered orthodoxy for Vietnamese Buddhism. Chinese Buddhists in general and Zen sectarians in particular endeavor to justify their orthodoxy by connecting their own school to an Indian lineage that can presumably be traced back to the historical Śākyamuni himself; Vietnamese Buddhists do so by connecting themselves to a school of Chinese Buddhism that they believe to be orthodox. Since for the medieval Vietnamese Buddhist elite Zen is the legitimate school of Buddhism, Buddhism is Zen *tout court*, and their own familiarity with Zen literature is tantamount to involvement in the heart of Buddhism.

## Chapter Three

# Rereading the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*: Buddhism in Medieval Vietnam

Through a close reading of the *Thiền Uyển*, and of its traditional reading, I have made the case that one cannot rely uncritically on this text to reconstruct the historical transmission of Vietnamese Buddhism or to arrive at an accurate idea of the fundamental characteristics of Vietnamese Buddhism. Unfortunately, the standard view of Vietnamese Buddhist history and thought put forward by scholars and believers during the last fifty years has in fact been based on a naive and uncritical reading of the *Thiền Uyển*. Therefore, rereading this book also means reevaluating the received view on Vietnamese Buddhist history. Identifying what is spurious in this critical text is an important contribution to rewriting early Vietnamese Buddhist history.

The careful analysis of both the content and literary genre of the *Thiền Uyển* in the previous chapter has revealed that this text should not be accepted uncritically. Abandoning the interpretation of the *Thiền Uyển* as a “transmission of the lamp” text means reinterpreting Vietnamese Buddhist history. Reevaluating the historical significance of this text does not mean denying its historical value altogether. By the same token, to demonstrate that Vietnamese Buddhism has not always centered on Zen does not in any sense denigrate Vietnamese Buddhism. Though Zen was the most intellectually prestigious form of Buddhism in the East Asian world for many centuries, and in particular during the time when the *Thiền Uyển* was compiled, we do not need to subscribe to this evaluation. From a contemporary secular perspective and, for that matter, from a pan-Buddhist perspective, Zen does not “outrank” other forms of Buddhism, and the composite reality of medieval Vietnamese Buddhism is not in any sense a “lower form” of the religion than Zen.

I have shown that after subtracting borrowed passages (mostly from the *Chuangdeng lu*), the biographies of eminent monks recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* seem to reflect historical events. These records give a picture



of the fundamental characteristics of Vietnamese Buddhism that is in some sense fragmentary, but—in its own context—also remarkably cohesive.

The observation I have offered is that the Buddhism pictured in the *Thiền Uyển* shares many common features with modern Vietnamese Buddhism, particularly from the perspective of practice. This may be the best testimony to the fact that the *Thiền Uyển* is a useful historical document and not just a collection of fantastic but formulaic Zen stories. The records in the *Thiền Uyển* reveal to us valuable information about the mentality, attitude, and aspirations of the Buddhist intelligentsia and the Buddhist masses.

Of course, to reconstruct a true multidimensional history of Vietnamese Buddhism is a project that would have to draw on sources from many disciplines—anthropology, archaeology, art history, epigraphy, and fieldwork. In this chapter, therefore, I present what amounts to a prolegomenon for a history of Buddhism in medieval Vietnam.

A historical/critical reading of the *Thiền Uyển* yields significant data regarding the role of Buddhism in medieval Vietnam that can be summarized under the following categories: Buddhism and literary life, Buddhism and sociopolitical life, Buddhism and popular religion, and especially, the image of the monk in medieval Vietnam. The *Thiền Uyển* also provides a general but useful picture of Buddhist doctrine and practice in medieval Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

Although I reject the traditional uncritical reading of the *Thiền Uyển* as a “lamp history” text that records the actual historical transmission of Zen teaching in Vietnam, the text does show us how the Zen school was being constructed or imagined in medieval Vietnam.

### Buddhism and Literary Life

Concerning Vietnamese poetry, Maurice Durand and Nguyễn Trần Huân stated that before Nguyễn Trãi (1380–1443, a significant author of the [Later] Lê dynasty, 1428–1788), “very little Vietnamese writing . . . has survived. It consists mainly of *nôm* poems, some of whose titles are known; and though a few texts exist which have been ascribed to this period, their authenticity cannot be accepted without reserve.”<sup>2</sup> Durand and Huân add that “the period in question covers the Tran (1225–1400) and Ho (1400–1407) dynasties.”<sup>3</sup>

This is a rather surprising remark, overlooking as it does the many poems in classical Chinese written by eminent monks of the Lý and Trần dynasties.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the two scholars were unaware of the *Thiền Uyển*, the *Toàn Việt Thi Lục* [A Complete Record of Vietnamese Poetry], or the *Hoàng Việt Thi Tuyển* [Collected Poems of Vietnam].<sup>5</sup> In fact, the

first thing a reader with background in Vietnamese culture would notice when reading the *Thiền Uyển* is the influence of Buddhism on Vietnamese literary life. Besides being a collection of biographies of eminent monks, the *Thiền Uyển* is also a precious sourcebook for some of the earliest extant examples of Vietnamese literature.

Vietnam had come into contact with Chinese culture and classical Confucian learning no later than 111 B.C.E. Historical records tell us that during the period of Chinese hegemony there were Vietnamese intellectuals who received Chinese education and held administrative positions in China.<sup>6</sup> Curiously, though, there are scarcely any extant records of any literary work by a Vietnamese author prior to the Lý dynasty. This may be because writings by Vietnamese authors during the time of Chinese domination did not survive in the absence of indigenous Vietnamese state institutions to support and preserve them, and the early independent Vietnamese dynasties in the two centuries before the Lý were too short-lived and preoccupied with political struggles to play the role of patrons of literature. Not until the time of the Lý was the Vietnamese concept of a national identity of sufficient concern and the court sufficiently organized to establish literary institutes to preserve writings by Vietnamese authors.

While Buddhism only added some novel inspirations, images, and expressions<sup>7</sup> to an already rich literature in China, especially during the Tang and Song, it played a more significant role in literary life of medieval Vietnam. Buddhist allegiances inspired the composition of what were probably the first written pieces of literature in Vietnam. Both premodern and modern collections of Vietnamese (written) literature usually begin on the eve of the Lý dynasty.<sup>8</sup> The greater part of Lý literature consists of writings of eminent Buddhist monks. These writings range from poems and short essays to commentaries on Buddhist texts and independent works on various Buddhist topics. Unfortunately, most of these works have been irretrievably lost. In his *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, which contains short biographical notes of Vietnamese authors and lists of their writings, Trần Văn Giáp begins with Khuông Việt Thái Sư, an eminent monk of the Đinh and [Former] Lê dynasties.

According to the *Thiền Uyển*, Khuông Việt studied the Confucian classics as a boy, but when he grew up he turned to Buddhism and eventually became a monk at Khai Quốc Temple. When he was in his forties, Đinh Tiên Hoàng made him *Tăng Thống* (General Supervisor of Monks), a rank he continued to hold even under the succeeding dynasty, the [Former] Lê. When the Song envoy Li Jue visited Vietnam, Lê Đại Hành asked Khuông Việt to receive the Chinese diplomat. The literary exchange between them has become a renowned event in Vietnamese

literature. When Li Jue went back to China, Khuông Việt wrote him a farewell poem, which reportedly won him Li Jue's admiration:

Embroidered sails extended in the auspicious sunshine and  
the fair wind,  
The spirit immortal returns to the sovereign's home.  
Thousands of miles across the blue waves,  
The road home to the ninth heaven is long.  
How sad human feelings are as we face the cup of parting,  
Fondly we try to hold you back, illustrious Sir.  
We hope you will exercise your profound intent on behalf  
of this southern land,  
Report clearly to our sovereign.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that Khuông Việt had studied the Confucian classics shows that there were Vietnamese intellectuals at that period who had been exposed to Chinese literature for some time.

Khuông Việt left an instructional verse to his disciple Đa Bảo before he was about to die:

The fire was already there in the wood,  
Fire was there, then it came to life again.  
If you say there is no fire in wood,  
How could flames spring up when we drill for fire?<sup>10</sup>

There is a notable absence of grandiloquent Zen phraseology in Khuông Việt's verse. The verse expresses in simple language and imagery the fundamental Mahāyāna teaching that sentient beings are originally possessed of Buddha nature, without which the Buddhist path would be useless.

We learn from the *Thiền Uyển* that before entering the monastic life, most eminent monks had received an education that emphasized Confucian texts. The elevation of Buddhism to the status of state religion, and especially the arrival of Chinese Zen literature, had served as an inspiration for a new literary enthusiasm among the Vietnamese intelligentsia.

Despite the formula that identifies Zen as a separate transmission beyond the verbal teachings, Zen Buddhism left a rich literary legacy. Zen literature contains, among other things, a kind of poetry that is rich in startling imagery, expressing a paradigm of heroic spirituality. Many Zen classics, such as the *Bìyan lu* and the *Wumen guan*, were appreciated as much for their literary elegance as for their philosophical significance. It was exactly the literary brilliance of Zen writings that had attracted Chinese *littérateurs* to Zen, and that was to fascinate the Vietnamese Buddhist elite.<sup>11</sup> There are many examples in Chinese and Vietnamese literature of Confucian scholars who were friends with Zen

monks, although they had no taste for Buddhism as a whole. Some of them composed poems and essays shot through with Zen idioms and metaphors.

Eminent monks in medieval Vietnam began to emulate the Chinese Zen patriarchs and compose poems either in the form of instructional verses for their disciples before passing away or simply as expressions of their spiritual understanding and experience, and their attitudes toward the phenomenal world. Among these poems some are highly original, while others draw heavily on Chinese poetry and classical anecdotes and seem quite derivative.

Quite a few of these poems have become very popular and have been learned by heart by many Vietnamese Buddhists. Foremost among them is probably the verse written by Vạn Hạnh, one of the most beloved eminent monks in the hearts and minds of Vietnamese Buddhists:

The body is like lightning: it's there and then it's not,  
It is like myriad plants and trees—fresh in the spring  
but fading in autumn.  
Trust in your destiny unafraid of ups and downs,  
Because ups and downs are [as evanescent] as drops of dew  
on a blade of grass.<sup>12</sup>

This poem displays the Buddhist spirit of fearlessness in the face of the impermanence of the phenomenal world. This fearlessness is one of the principal virtues of a Bodhisattva, which allows him or her to operate in the world without fearing entanglement or disappointment.

Cửu Chỉ composed this instructional verse before he passed away:

Body and mind are fundamentally quiescent and still,  
But through the transformations of spiritual powers,  
all forms are manifested.  
Both created and uncreated phenomena come from this,  
In worlds countless as the grains of sand on the banks  
of the Ganges,  
Though they fill all of space,  
When contemplated one by one, they are formless.  
For a thousand ages this has been difficult to describe,  
But everywhere in every world it is always luminous  
and clear.<sup>13</sup>

As an expression of his spiritual understanding, Cửu Chỉ's verse contains idioms and metaphors as well as philosophical concepts that would certainly be novel to anyone who had been exposed only to Confucian learning. Clearly, the notions of countless worlds and a formless luminous

One Reality giving rise to an infinite variety of forms filling space are beyond the ken of Confucian classics.

Viên Chiếu, another eminent monk and particularly talented literary man, wrote this verse:

The body is like a wall—  
     it crumbles to the ground,  
 All the worldly people are agitated—  
     none is not distressed.  
 If you comprehend that mind is empty and formless,  
 Then you let form and emptiness, the hidden and the  
     manifest, follow each other in turn.<sup>14</sup>

The Buddhist message is that the phenomenal world is impermanent, and so is one's bodily existence, but if one realizes that the absolute (mind/emptiness) and the phenomenal (form) are identical, then one can wander freely in both ultimate and conventional realms. The poem, in brief, is an eloquent display of the heroic Mahāyāna and Zen Buddhist attitude toward life.

In the same vein Mãn Giác wrote:

When spring goes, the hundred flowers wither,  
 When spring comes, the hundred flowers bloom.  
 One thing after another, life passes before our eyes,  
 Old age comes from above.  
 Don't think that all flowers fall as spring ends,  
 In the courtyard last night a plum branch bloomed.<sup>15</sup>

In this poem Mãn Giác, taking a typical East Asian Buddhist attitude, refers to the flow of natural events as emblematic of ultimate reality. Once one realizes this, one experiences no fear in the face of the constantly changing phenomenal world.

Ngộ Ấn's instructional verse displays in mystical language and beautiful symbolism the fundamental Mahāyāna Buddhist view of the indestructibility of Emptiness or Buddha-nature:

The wondrous nature of Emptiness is inconceivable,  
 Yet with mind empty, it is not at all difficult to realize.  
 A jewel burns on the mountain,  
     its color constantly bright.  
 A lotus blooms in the furnace,  
     its moisture never parched.<sup>16</sup>

Không Lộ shows the free spirit and sense of mastery of an accomplished thaumaturge:

I've found a land of dragon and snakes to settle down in,  
This rustic pleasure brings joy the whole day through.  
At times I climb to the solitary peaks,  
Sending forth a long whistle that chills the universe.<sup>17</sup>

Giác Hải, his companion, displays the same transcendental spirit in his instructional verse:

Spring comes, flowers and butterflies  
know the season well,  
Flowers and butterflies must have their own times.  
But flowers and butterflies are originally illusions,  
Do not occupy your mind with flowers and butterflies.<sup>18</sup>

The nun Diệu Nhân shows the attitude of Patriarchal Zen in her verse before passing away:

Birth, old age, illness and death,  
Have always been the same.  
If you wish to escape from them,  
By trying to untie your bonds,  
you add to your entanglement.  
It's only when you are deluded  
that you search for Buddha,  
It's only when you are confused  
that you look for Zen.  
I seek neither Buddha nor Zen,  
I just close my mouth and keep silent.<sup>19</sup>

Diệu Nhân's verse expresses with Zen flavor the fundamental Mahāyāna view that is the most recurrent theme in the *Thiền Uyển*, that as long as we still harbor a dualistic view, our efforts are delusory. The moment we realize the equality of *samsāra* and nirvana, we spontaneously and effortlessly realize our original Buddha nature.

As I established in the previous chapter, the *Thiền Uyển* is a polyphonic pastiche and not a single, coherent literary work. For instance, the encounter dialogue section in Viên Chiếu's biography appears to contain a great part if not the whole of his short work entitled *Tham Đồ Hiển Quyết* [Revelations of the Decisive Secret for Students]. Viên Chiếu showed through this work that he was a talented and learned literary man who was versed in classical anecdotes both Buddhist and non-Buddhist and could draw upon them freely. Viên Chiếu died in 1090, which shows that

the composition of Zen-inspired poetry and treatises had begun in Vietnam no later than the early decades of the Lý dynasty.

Most of the authors who figured in the collections of Lý poetry were Buddhist monks. Among the few lay writers were some of the Lý emperors and aristocrats. The *Thiền Uyển* records a total of nine poems written by lay Buddhist litterateurs: one by Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Linh Nhân, two by Lý Thái Tông, three by Lý Nhân Tông, and three by Đoàn Văn Khâm.

Phù Thánh Linh Nhân (died 1117), was a principal concubine of Lý Thánh Tông as was the mother of Lý Nhân Tông, Thánh Tông's heir. She was known as a great patron of Buddhism. According to the *Thiền Uyển*, Phù Thánh Linh Nhân studied Buddhism with the celebrated Thông Biện and had attained some spiritual awakening. She once composed a verse on enlightenment:

Form is emptiness, so emptiness equals form,  
Emptiness is form, so form equals emptiness.  
Only when you are not attached to either,  
Do you mesh with the true source.

The verse shows her familiarity with the *Heart Sūtra*, probably the most frequently chanted scripture in East Asian Buddhism. It also displays the Zen spirit of nonattachment.

Lý Thái Tông was the second emperor of the Lý and reigned during its heyday. He was a brilliant man who loved martial arts as well as literature and music. He was also well versed in the Buddhist teachings. Lê Quý Đôn (1726–1784), arguably the greatest Confucian scholar in Vietnamese history, once compared Lý Thái Tông to Emperor Guang Wu of the Han dynasty.<sup>20</sup> Of the two poems written by Lý Thái Tông, one was an instruction on the essence of Zen to Zen students:

*Prajñā* is really without a source,  
It teaches the emptiness of both persons and phenomena.  
The Buddhas of the past, present, and future,  
Are identical in Dharma nature.<sup>21</sup>

My own opinion is that we should not be too hasty to read profound mystical attainment into these short Zen poems and sayings—most of them are quite formulaic and conventional within the Zen frame of reference. In most cases these Zen poems should be considered as poetic, literary expressions rather than as philosophical statements. Lý Thái Tông's poem, however, shows that at least he was familiar with some of the main technical terms and concepts of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The second one is a poem Lý Thái Tông wrote to commemorate Vinītaruci, the alleged founding patriarch of the first Zen school of Vietnam:

When you first came to this southern country,  
 Everyone knew that you had practiced Zen for a long time.  
 You had to open the way for faith in the Buddhas,  
 So that people of later generations could live in accord  
     with the one mind, the source.  
 The moon over Lanka is bright,  
 The Lotus flower of transcendent wisdom is fragrant,  
 When can I see you face to face  
 So we can discuss the arcane lore together?<sup>22</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* relates that after Vạn Hạnh died, the court literati and many common people were present at the cremation. Later, Emperor Lý Nhân Tông wrote a commemorative poem:

Vạn Hạnh fused present, past, and future,  
 He matched the workings of ancient prophecies.  
 His native village was Cổ Pháp,  
 He planted his staff there to guard the royal territory.<sup>23</sup>

Lý Nhân Tông also composed a verse in commemoration of monk Sùng Phạm:

Sùng Phạm hailed from the southern country,  
 He returned home successful with mind empty.  
 Long ears reflect his auspicious quality,  
 [He realized that] all phenomena are inherently detached  
     [from all forms] and extremely subtle.<sup>24</sup>

Once, after witnessing a magical feat displayed by the two monks Thông Huyền and Giác Hải, Lý Nhân Tông was so amazed that he wrote a poem to praise them:

Giác Hải's mind is like the ocean,  
 Thông Huyền's way is mysterious.  
 Full of supernatural powers and magical skills,  
 One is Buddha, the other an immortal.<sup>25</sup>

The other lay Buddhist writer who was credited with three poems was Đoàn Văn Khâm of the Lý dynasty. Not much is known about him except that he was Minister of Public Works under Lý Nhân Tông. His poems show that he was a devout Buddhist and a talented poet in his time.

The first poem was in praise of the eminent monk Quảng Trí:

Hanging his staff on a perilous peak,  
 he has left behind the dusts of the senses.



As I dwell silently amidst dreamlike illusion,  
 I ask the floating clouds:  
 I am earnest, but there is no way for me to study  
 with Fo Tu Teng and Kumārajīva,  
 Entangled as I am with high society,  
 that flock of ostentatious storks.<sup>26</sup>

In this poem Đoàn Văn Khâm displays his utmost admiration for Quảng Trí by likening him to Fo Tu Teng and Kumārajīva.<sup>27</sup> The *Thiền Uyển* tells us that Quảng Trí was an ascetic who made his abode on Mount Từ Sơn. He always wore a patched robe and fed himself on pine nuts. Quảng Trí had a spiritual companion, a hermit-monk named Minh Huệ. His contemporaries said that they were the reincarnations of the illustrious Tang dynasty Zen companions Hanshan and Shide.

When Quảng Trí passed away, Đoàn Văn Khâm composed a poem in his honor:

He escaped from the capital and dwelt in the forest  
 till his hair turned white,  
 He shook out his sleeves [rejecting conventional society]  
 for the high mountains,  
 The more remote, the higher his reputation.  
 How often I wished to don simple garb and go to his side!  
 Now suddenly comes the news that he has departed  
 and his Zen retreat is closed,  
 Now in the courtyard of his temple the birds cry in vain  
 to the moon.  
 Who can compose the inscription for his tomb?  
 Companions in the Path should not be sad as he departs  
 forever,  
 The mountains and rivers in front of his retreat are his  
 true portrait.<sup>28</sup>

Đoàn Văn Khâm also wrote a poem to commemorate Chân Không, another eminent monk of the Lý:

His lofty virtue spread pure wind over the capital and  
 among the people,  
 Those who came leaning on their staffs [to study with him]  
 were like evening clouds gathering around a dragon.  
 The mansion of humane benevolence was suddenly shaken  
 because the wisdom pillar collapsed,  
 The forest of Dharma will always lament the fall  
 of a great pine tree,  
 Green grass surrounds his grave and the new stupa.  
 In the river reflecting the green mountains we recognize  
 his former face,

How quiet his Zen gate is—who will be knocking  
 anymore?  
 Passing by I sadly listen to the bells of evening.<sup>29</sup>

The fact that the elite class was inspired by Buddhism and its eminent monks to compose poetry shows that by this time the monk had acquired an image of heroism and virtue worthy of emulation and praise. We will return to this topic later in this chapter.

When an independent state was established in Vietnam after ten centuries of Chinese suzerainty, the Buddhist monks from well-off families, most of them with a background in the Confucian classics, emerged as the new class of intelligentsia. They found in Buddhist literature, and especially in the rich imagery of Zen literature, with its rich imagery and idioms, a new medium for their literary talents and their Buddhist world view. Other intellectuals of the time followed suit.

The writing of Buddhist poetry, and eventually Zen poetry, became a familiar practice among the Vietnamese Buddhist elite, a practice that has continued up to modern times.<sup>30</sup> A learned monk, regardless of his practice in real life, would likely at some point compose poems employing Zen phrases and ideas. It is thus not necessarily accurate to describe a monk as a Zen adherent simply because he composed or left behind some “Zen poems.” We can say that Zen in Vietnam has been more of a (religious) literary movement than a real sectarian school with distinctive doctrines, practices, and genealogies.

Besides the short verses quoted above, we also learn from the records in the *Thiền Uyển* that Buddhism, particularly Zen, has inspired learned Vietnamese monks to compose “lamp history” texts such as *Chiếu Đối Lục* by Thông Biện, *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ* by Thường Chiếu, and *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngữ* by Huệ Nhật (all discussed in Chapter Two). The *Thiền Uyển* also mentions some treatises on various Buddhist topics composed by medieval Vietnamese eminent monks.

For instance, it is reported in Viên Chiếu’s biography that he composed a work called *Dược Sư Thập Nhị Nguyện Văn* [The Twelve Vows of the Medicine King Buddha] and presented it to Emperor Lý Nhân Tông. Nhân Tông gave it to the envoy from the Song court, who sent it along to the Chinese Emperor Zhezong (r. 1086–1110). The *Thiền Uyển* relates that “Zhezong summoned an eminent Chinese monk to evaluate the text. After he had read it, the Chinese monk joined his palms and bowed in homage and remarked that a living Bodhisattva had appeared in the south and was well qualified to expound the Dharma; he could not add or subtract anything. The Chinese emperor then had another copy made and returned the original.”<sup>31</sup> Viên Chiếu also penned other works such as *Tân Viên Giác Kinh* [Eulogy on the *Complete Enlightenment Sūtra*], *Thập*

*Nhị Bồ Tát Hạnh Tu Chứng Đạo Trường* [Enlightenment Realized by the Twelve Bodhisattva Practices], and *Tham Đồ Hiển Quyết* [Revelation of the Decisive Secret for Students]<sup>32</sup> as well as his collection of poems that were in circulation during the time of the composition of the *Thiền Uyển* but are now lost.

The *Thiền Uyển* also mentions works composed by other eminent monks, such as *Bồ Tát Hiệu Sám Hối Văn* [A Bodhisattva's Words of Repentance] by Pháp Thuận; *Pháp Sư Trai Nghi* [Ritual Forms for Dharma Services and Vegetarian Feasts] and *Chư Đạo Trường Khánh Tân Văn* [Celebrations and Eulogy of the Site of Enlightenment] by Huệ Sinh; *Ngộ Đạo Ca Thi Tập* [Collected Songs and Poems on Enlightenment] by Khánh Hỷ; *Tuyển Chư Phật Tích Duyên Sự* [Selected Stories of Buddha's Past Lives]; *Hồng Chung Văn Bi Ký* [Great Bell Inscriptions]; and *Tăng Già Tập Lục* [Miscellaneous Records of the Sangha] by Viên Thông.

All these works were said to have been circulated widely during medieval times, but unfortunately, none of them is extant nowadays. Together with many other works by Vietnamese scholars, these writings probably perished during the devastating military incursions of the Mongols and the Ming dynasty armies during the Trần and Lê dynasties.<sup>33</sup> The fact that most of these eminent monks and talented litterateurs were at one time learned in Confucian classics who subsequently turned toward Buddhism shows that Buddhism was providing new nourishment not only for their spiritual lives but also for their literary imaginations.

### Buddhism and Sociopolitical Life

The *Thiền Uyển* provides valuable accounts of the impact of Buddhism on social and political life in medieval Vietnam. It shows us the appropriation of Chinese Buddhist institutions into Vietnamese Buddhism and the degree to which Buddhism had penetrated into Vietnamese social and political life.

Vegetarian feasts were a regular part of Buddhist life in Vietnam (as in China).<sup>34</sup> They were held on various occasions. Sometimes they were organized to express gratitude for a monk.<sup>35</sup> Sometimes vegetarian feasts were an occasion for a monk to lecture. Some feasts were arranged to pray for a deceased person, and to dedicate the merit earned by providing the feast to the dead person. This kind of vegetarian feast is still popular in modern Vietnamese Buddhism. Kenneth Ch'en is correct when he points out that "whether the sponsors of vegetarian feasts be members of the imperial family or private individuals, it can be said that they were motivated by one underlying concern, the accumulation of merits by their acts."<sup>36</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* describes three occasions on which vegetarian feasts were held. Emperor Lý Thái Tông had great admiration for the monk Thiền Lão, the leader of one of the most flourishing Buddhist communities of his time. He eventually dispatched an envoy to bring Thiền Lão to court, but by then Thiền Lão had already passed away. The emperor deeply mourned his death and had a vegetarian feast arranged in his honor.<sup>37</sup>

A vegetarian feast was given in 1096 by Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Linh Nhân for the monks at the National Temple. It was on this occasion that Thông Biện gave his memorable lecture on Vietnamese Buddhist history.<sup>38</sup> On another occasion, when the monk Chân Không passed away, the empress dowager, Princess Thiên Thành, and Chân Không's disciple, the nun Diệu Nhân, organized a vegetarian feast in commemoration of him that lasted two days.<sup>39</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* also makes passing references to state-established Buddhist institutional ranks that were clearly modeled after Chinese institutions overseeing Buddhism. On three occasions an eminent monk was honored with the title National Preceptor (*Quốc Sư*): Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Linh Nhân was pleased with Thông Biện's lecture on the history of Vietnamese Buddhism, so she honored him with the title National Preceptor and rewarded him munificently.<sup>40</sup> After Minh Không cured Lý Thần Tông of a strange disease, the emperor made Minh Không National Preceptor and the beneficiary of services from hundreds of households as a reward.<sup>41</sup> Viên Thông, a younger contemporary of Minh Không, was also made National Preceptor by Lý Thần Tông.<sup>42</sup>

The title National Preceptor seems to have had different meanings in individual cases. In the cases of Thông Biện and Minh Không, it appears as simply an honorific title, since neither of them appears to have served at court. Phù Thánh Linh Nhân gave Thông Biện the title National Preceptor out of respect for him. Lý Thần Tông made Minh Không National Preceptor as a token of gratitude. Viên Thông, on the other hand, held different positions at court. The *Thiền Uyển* relates that "In 1143 Viên Thông was promoted to the rank of Superintendent of the Monk Academy on the Left and Right, Inner Servitor Magistrate in charge of Religion, National Preceptor and Protector of the Realm, Expounder of the Canon."<sup>43</sup> In any case, this title was only bestowed on monks who were learned in the Buddhist lore.<sup>44</sup>

The practice of giving an eminent monk a purple robe and granting him the title "Purple-Robed Great Monk" as a token of respect and gratitude was also modeled after similar practices.<sup>45</sup> Thông Biện was given a purple robe by Phù Thánh Linh Nhân.<sup>46</sup> Mãn Giác was granted the sobriquet "Purple-Robed Great Monk" by Lý Nhân Tông.<sup>47</sup> At Chân

Không's funeral, another eminent monk, Nghĩa Hải, offered a purple robe.<sup>48</sup> Viên Thông was also given the title "Purple-Robed Great Monk" by Lý Thần Tông.<sup>49</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* also mentions the Monk Academy and other official religious ranks, such as *Tăng Thống* (General Supervisor of Monks),<sup>50</sup> *Tăng Lục* (Monk Scribe),<sup>51</sup> and *Tăng Quan* (Monk Officer). The first monk to hold the office of General Supervisor of Monks was Khuông Việt. It is recorded that Đinh Tiên Hoàng instituted ranks for Buddhist monks and Daoist priests in 971 and honored Khuông Việt with the rank of General Supervisor of Monks.<sup>52</sup> This appears to have been the highest rank for monk-officers at court. However, there is no reason for us to believe that there was an organized sangha at that time and that the General Supervisor of Monks was the head of such a sangha. The extent of political power and administrative duties of the General Supervisor of Monks also appears to have depended on the degree of respect that the emperor had for him, and what services the emperor needed from him.

There is some evidence to suggest that by the middle of the Lý dynasty these institutions had become well established. For instance, Đạo Hạnh's biography states that his father held the office of General Supervisor of Monk-Officers.<sup>53</sup> Đạo Hạnh himself passed the royal examination for monk-officers.<sup>54</sup> It is recorded in Thiền Nham's biography that his family had been Monk Officials for generations,<sup>55</sup> and that during the Hội Phong era (1092–1110) Thiền Nham participated in the royal examinations on the *Lotus* and *Perfection of Wisdom* literature and both times passed with highest honors.<sup>56</sup> This implies that by that time examinations had been organized to select learned monks for official positions in the state-sponsored institutional framework for Buddhism.

### Buddhism and Popular Religion

Evidence from many lands shows that Buddhism has adapted itself quite well to the cultural and religious background of any new country in which it was propagated. The attitude of Buddhism toward preexisting indigenous religions was usually one of incorporating elements from them rather than excluding them. This had a great effect on the characteristics of the various local Buddhist traditions as they developed in South and Southeast Asian countries outside the Indian subcontinent.

Scholars of religion have observed that the geographical and physical conditions of a country also contribute to the formation of its religious belief, especially its symbols, images, and rituals. For instance, since India is essentially a land of farmers, water eventually became a significant element and symbol in Hindu worship. This type of phenomenon reflects

the fact that religion is concerned not only with transcendental and ultimate concerns but also with mundane and practical issues.

### THE RITUAL OF PRAYING FOR RAIN

Vietnam is basically an agricultural society, a land of farmers. Rain water and river water have always played significant roles in Vietnamese mythology. When Buddhist beliefs and practices first came to ancient Vietnam (i.e., Jiaozhou) and were being adopted by the indigenous people, local deities and cults and holy sites were often given a Buddhist coloration. The previous array of supernatural authorities was amalgamated with new and more powerful ones, as old local deities were included in the Buddhist pantheon. This pattern continued to shape both Buddhism and popular religion of independent Vietnam from the tenth century on.<sup>57</sup>

Early Vietnamese Buddhism was closely connected with the goddesses of rain and thunderstorms (who were subsequently elevated to the rank of Buddhas). I mentioned in Chapter One the legend of Man Nương (or A Man)—the female mysterious power of the earth symbolizing the indigenous agricultural culture—and her union with the Buddhist monk Khâu Đà La, representing the new power, Buddhism. This eventually led to the building of the system of four temples for the worship of the four goddesses Pháp Vân (Dharma Cloud), Pháp Vũ (Dharma Rain), Pháp Lôi (Dharma Thunder), and Pháp Điện (Dharma Lightning), Man Nương's daughters. The most important among these was Pháp Vân Temple, where Pháp Vân Lady Buddha was worshipped. Whenever there was a drought Pháp Vân Buddha would be escorted in a ceremonial procession to the National Temple (or a main temple in the capital) where ritual prayers for rain took place conducted by an eminent monk in the presence of the emperor.

This ritual was practiced throughout the Lý period. The Trần dynasty was inclined more toward Confucianism in its state rites, so this ritual became less frequent, but it was by no means completely abolished. Even under the [Later] Lê, when Confucianism had assumed the status of a state ideology, during a drought Pháp Vân Buddha was escorted to a temple in the capital and the emperor would preside over a ritual of praying for rain.<sup>58</sup> This is an indication that this form of syncretic worship had sunk deep roots in the collective consciousness of the country. In fact, this ritual is still practiced today in various localities in North Vietnam. It is interesting to note that the ritual is performed not as a symbolic festival but as an actual prayer for rain.<sup>59</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* relates that several of the monks its chronicles were experts in praying for rain. One of the better-known stories is about

Tịnh Giới. According to the *Thiền Uyển*: “In 1177 under the reign of Lý Cao Tông there was a drought. Lý Cao Tông summoned all the eminent monks to the capital to pray for rain, but their efforts were to no avail. The king had heard about Tịnh Giới for some time, so he dispatched an envoy to bring him to Báo Thiên Temple in the capital. At midnight, Tịnh Giới stood in the garden and burnt incense, and immediately rain started to fall. Lý Cao Tông rewarded him munificently and conferred on him the title ‘Rain Master.’”<sup>60</sup>

Other eminent monks such as Đạo Hạnh and Thiền Nham also possessed this supernatural power, according to the *Thiền Uyển*, and put it into practice during times of drought.<sup>61</sup>

#### THE CULT OF VAIŚRAVAṆA AND THE BUDDHIST INCORPORATION OF POPULAR DEITIES

The relationship between Buddhism and Hinduism evolved in an intricate, ongoing process at both philosophical and religious levels. It was a process in which each tradition sometimes incorporated and sometimes excluded the ideas, practices, and symbols of the other tradition.

By the first centuries of the common era, Buddhism had managed to incorporate some of the Brahmanical gods into its own pantheon. For instance, Brahmā and Śakra became Buddhist gods in the form of Dharma-protectors. In the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra*, to name only one principal Mahāyāna *sūtra*, the four celestial kings, originally Hindu deities, became the four Dharma-Protectors of Buddhism.<sup>62</sup>

When Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism spread to China and other parts of Asia, it brought these Hindu gods with it, and they were eventually appropriated into popular worship in these regions. It is not uncommon to find instances in which gods of Hindu origin became cultic figures in popular Buddhism in China and Vietnam. Some of these gods might have come to Vietnam by way of Chinese Buddhism.

We saw in Chapter One that under the reign of Lý Thánh Tông (1054–1072) there were temples erected for the worship of Brahmā and Śakra. Other Buddhicized Brahmanical elements also found their way into Vietnamese Buddhism. They might have come either directly from Indian Buddhism, from Cham religion (which was very much influenced by Indian patterns), or from Tang and Song Chinese Buddhism. Unfortunately, the worship of Hindu deities in Vietnamese Buddhism and popular religion has not been well documented, and still awaits further studies.

The *Thiền Uyển* records a remarkable story in Khuông Việt’s biography that might shed light on some aspects of medieval Vietnamese Buddhism and popular religion, though it has seemingly escaped the attention of

scholars of Vietnamese Buddhism. For the purpose of our analysis, let me quote the entire story:

Khuông Việt often visited Mount Vê Linh in Bình Lỗ Prefecture and grew to love the elegant scenery there. He wanted to build a hermitage and settle down there. One night he had a dream in which he saw a spirit wearing golden armor, holding a golden lance in his right hand and a jewel stupa in his left hand. He was accompanied by ten or more fearsome-looking attendants. The spirit came and told him: "I am the Celestial King Vaiśravaṇa, and my attendants are all *yakṣas*. The lord of heaven has ordered us to come to this country to protect its border and enable the Buddha-Dharma to flourish. I have a karmic affinity with you, so I have come to entrust this task to you."

Khuông Việt woke up in astonishment. He heard the sound of shouting in the mountains. He thought the whole thing very strange. When dawn came, he went into the mountains and saw a great tree more than a hundred feet high, with many branches and luxuriant foliage. Above it was an auspicious cloud. Khuông Việt had some workmen cut it down, and he had it carved into the image of what he had seen in his dream. It was housed in a shrine.

In the first year of the Tianfu era (981), the Chinese army of the Song regime invaded Vietnam. Emperor [Lê Đại Hành] had heard of [Khuông Việt's story] before, so he ordered Khuông Việt to go to that shrine and pray [for national salvation]. The enemy took fright and fled to the Ninh River in Bảo Hựu. Wild waves arose, raised by the wind, and flood-dragons appeared leaping and prancing about. The Chinese army fled in complete disarray.<sup>63</sup>

Who was Vaiśravaṇa, and what can Khuông Việt's dream tell us about his significance in Vietnamese religion? Vaiśravaṇa originally was an Indian god, but eventually his cult was transmitted to Khotan, China, and Japan, and also to Vietnam, where he was given different roles.<sup>64</sup>

Vaiśravaṇa was the patronymic of Kubera, a popular, multifaceted Hindu god. Kubera was a Vedic god. In the *Vedas* he was mentioned as the prince of demons and spirits that live in the shadows.<sup>65</sup> Kubera was known in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as the lord of thieves and criminals.<sup>66</sup> In other contexts, Kubera became a patron of merchants and one of the four world guardians (*lokapālas*) or eight guardians of the directions (*dikpālas*).<sup>67</sup> He was also known as the king of the *yakṣas*.<sup>68</sup> At a later stage, Kubera became primarily the guardian deity of wealth and treasure. In Buddhism Vaiśravaṇa was one of the Four Celestial Kings who vowed to protect the Dharma.<sup>69</sup> In brief, Kubera was associated with fertility, abundance, and kingship. These two main characteristics Kubera or Vaiśravaṇa retained as he became a cultic figure in other parts of Asia.

In Khotan he was known as Vaiśravaṇa, the protector of the Khotanese



royal family and kingdom. Vaiśravaṇa (Pi Sha Men) came to China from Khotan and was being worshipped in his own right by around the seventh century C.E.<sup>70</sup> In China he was associated with walls and gates and was worshipped as the guardian of cities and monasteries.<sup>71</sup> By the end of the Song dynasty in the thirteenth century, Vaiśravaṇa was worshipped in this capacity all over China.<sup>72</sup>

According to the passage in Khuông Việt's biography quoted above, the cult of Vaiśravaṇa (or Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương in Vietnamese) first appeared in Vietnam toward the end of the tenth century with Khuông Việt's dream. But the fact that Khuông Việt had a dream about Vaiśravaṇa seems to suggest that he must have been known and worshipped in Vietnamese Buddhism and popular religion before Khuông Việt's time. Since the cult of Vaiśravaṇa had become widespread in China during the Song dynasty, it is quite possible that Vaiśravaṇa might have come to Vietnam from China. Iconographical description of Vaiśravaṇa in Khuông Việt's dream seems to confirm this: he wears golden armor, holds a golden lance in his right hand and a jewel stupa in his left hand, and is accompanied by the *yakṣas*.<sup>73</sup> In fact, Vaiśravaṇa in Vietnam combines both Indian and Chinese as well as Buddhist and popular elements. Vaiśravaṇa or Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương became the protector of Buddha-Dharma and the country of Vietnam. He responded to the prayer of the Vietnamese emperor and helped him turn away the Chinese invaders.

The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, an encyclopedia of Vietnamese geography composed during the Nguyễn dynasty, reports that there was a temple of Vaiśravaṇa at Ninh Tảo Village, Từ Liêm Prefecture (North Vietnam). According to this work, however, the god's name was Sóc Thiên Vương, and his title was the Celestial King Vaiśravaṇa. Note that in some other works composed after the *Thiên Uyển*, Vaiśravaṇa was also referred to as Sóc Thiên Vương. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* relates that Lê Đại Hành had more shrines erected to worship him. Under the Lý a shrine was erected at Minh Tảo Village near the West Lake. The Lý kings also conferred on Vaiśravaṇa the title "Supreme Deity."<sup>74</sup>

The story of Khuông Việt's dream of Vaiśravaṇa is also recorded in later texts on Vietnamese mythology and popular religion such as the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập* [Potent Spirits of the Viet Realm] and the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái* [Strange Stories from Lĩnh Nam]. This story, along with other stories recorded in these two works, sheds some light on how Buddhism incorporated indigenous gods and provides clues about the origin and development of nationalism in medieval Vietnam. The *Việt Điện* (fourteenth century) is a collection of legends of kings, loyal subjects, gods, genies, and human heroes who served the country since antiquity up to the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>75</sup> The *Lĩnh Nam* (fifteenth

century) is a work of the same genre that appears to rely considerably on the *Việt Điện*. These two works were composed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the compilers seem to have only put together most of the stories that were in circulation during the Lý dynasty.

In these stories legendary and historical heroes, and the gods and genies who were personifications of natural phenomena and forces, were given titles by the Lý emperors and were worshipped in shrines. Some of the gods were worshipped in Buddhist temples and became protectors of Buddhism and the country.<sup>76</sup> In some cases, however, Buddhist elements were either inadvertently or intentionally omitted, probably because the stories had gone through Confucian editorial hands.

The story of Khuông Việt's dream was reproduced by different editions of both the *Việt Điện* and the *Lĩnh Nam*. In these various versions Vaiśravaṇa was referred to as Sóc Thiên Vương and eventually was identified with Phù Đổng Thiên Vương (Celestial King of Phù Đổng), the legendary hero of ancient Vietnam. This is probably because in the *Thiền Uyển* Vaiśravaṇa was connected with Mount Vệ Linh, the site where Phù Đổng Thiên Vương ascended to heaven after defeating the Chinese troops to liberate Vietnam.<sup>77</sup>

Let me give a brief comparison between the story of the encounter between Khuông Việt and Vaiśravaṇa in the *Thiền Uyển* and the versions of the story recorded in the *Việt Điện* and *Lĩnh Nam*. Note that all these versions are entitled “Sóc Thiên Vương Truyện” (Story of Sóc Thiên Vương) and invariably begin with the phrase “according to the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*.”

1. The *Việt Điện U Linh Tục Tập* [Continuation of the Potent Spirits of the Việt Realm]<sup>78</sup> gives almost the same version as the *Thiền Uyển*, with a few differences. In this variant, the god is accompanied by a thousand *yakṣas*, and he claims that he is Sóc Thiên Vương obeying the Lord of Heaven's order to protect the people of this land. There is no mention of a stupa in his left hand.

2. The version in the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên* [Complete Continuation of the Potent Spirits of the Việt Realm]<sup>79</sup> is almost the same as the *Thiền Uyển*, especially in that the god refers to himself as Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương. The compiler relates another story about Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương that is identical to the legend of Phù Đổng Thiên Vương. The commentary to the story asserts that Sóc Thiên Vương, Vaiśravaṇa, and Phù Đổng Thiên Vương were one and the same.

3. The *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái Liệt Truyện* [Various Strange Stories of Lĩnh Nam]<sup>80</sup> seems to draw from both the above two versions. In this version, however, the name Khuông Việt is mistakenly recorded as Cự Việt and Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương as Quỷ Sa Môn Thiên Vương and is also identified with Phù Đổng Thiên Vương.

4. The *Thiên Nam Vân Lục* [Cloud Records of Thiên Nam]<sup>81</sup> gives a variant that is almost the same as (3). Yet in this version Khuông Việt, whose secular name was Ngô Chân Lưu, is referred to simply as Mr. Ngô, and the compiler does not even seem to know that he was a Buddhist monk. Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương is referred to as Tỳ Sa Minh Vương and is also identified with the legendary Phù Đổng Thiên Vương. The Song invasion is recounted as taking place under the Đinh and not the [Former] Lê as in the above three versions.

Some of the *variae lectiones* regarding the personal names in these four versions can be attributed to scribal errors. However, the fact that in all of them the phrase “enable the Buddha-Dharma to flourish” in Vaiśravaṇa’s words to Khuông Việt was invariably omitted seems to reflect Confucian bias on part of the compilers/editors rather than just an editorial mistake. In the *Thiền Uyển*, Vaiśravaṇa, a Dharma-Protector (of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism) promises to protect the Dharma and the country of Vietnam. In the *Việt Điện* and *Lĩnh Nam* (despite some mistakes concerning the name Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương in the latter) Vaiśravaṇa or Sóc Thiên Vương is equated with Phù Đổng Thiên Vương.

Why did Vaiśravaṇa become identified with Sóc Thiên Vương and Phù Đổng Thiên Vương? The compilers of the *Việt Điện* and *Lĩnh Nam* seem implicitly to suggest that Sóc Thiên Vương was just another name of Tỳ Sa Môn Thiên Vương (Vaiśravaṇa), and Sóc Thiên Vương himself was Phù Đổng Thiên Vương. As pointed out above, this identification was probably due to the connection of Vaiśravaṇa to Mount Vệ Linh. Besides, most of the compilers/editors of the *Việt Điện* and *Lĩnh Nam* were Confucian scholars who were not knowledgeable about Indian religion and mythology. For instance, if Vaiśravaṇa (or Sóc Thiên Vương) was none other than Phù Đổng Thiên Vương, why then would Phù Đổng Thiên Vương have those Indian and Buddhist qualities? Stupas and *yakṣas* were not of Vietnamese origin. Besides, the story of Phù Đổng Thiên Vương is also recorded in the *Việt Điện* and *Lĩnh Nam*. This perhaps only betrays the clumsiness of these writers who either intentionally or unintentionally tried to eliminate Buddhist (or foreign) elements from the story. What is revealing is that a mythical national hero becomes the protector of the country rather than an Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist deity.

In sum, the story of Khuông Việt’s dream in the *Thiền Uyển* reveals an example of the initial effort on the part of the Vietnamese Buddhist elite to unite all the “potent spirits” under Buddhism in order to protect the autonomy of Vietnam as a (Buddhist) country. This motif can also be detected in the prophetic words of some other eminent monks, such as Định Không and La Quý, which will be discussed in some detail in the next section.

## THE IMAGE OF THE MONK IN MEDIEVAL VIETNAM

The *Thiền Uyển* is first and foremost a collection of biographies of eminent monks in medieval Vietnam. Although the compiler made an effort to turn it into a “transmission of the lamp” text along the lines of the Song *Chuangeng lu*, a careful textual analysis of the *Thiền Uyển* has shown us that biographical notes of these eminent monks have been gleaned from various written historical sources and oral traditions. The life stories in the *Thiền Uyển* appear to be more multifarious than those in the Chinese work.

I observed in Chapter Two that these biographies in the *Thiền Uyển* can be characterized in Paul Murray Kendall’s term as “demand biography.” Kendall defines a “demand biography” as “biography produced to satisfy the requirements of the predilections of an age, to act as a beast of burden for ends other than the illumination of life.”<sup>82</sup> Peter Lee explains further in his work on biographies of Korean eminent monks that such biographies are “instruments for conversion and propagation of faith” because “they uphold the values of eminent monks as a model for emulation.”<sup>83</sup>

Similar observations help define our approach toward the understanding of the records of the *Thiền Uyển* and its significance in the context of Vietnamese intellectual history and religion. We might never be able to determine the exact historicity of these biographies or, for that matter, of any accounts of “historical events.” However, after we subjected the book to a rigorous historical-critical-textual analysis, what remains should be considered a core of data that can serve as our source material for reconstructing the history of medieval Vietnamese Buddhism, at least until we have more reliable evidence to modify our knowledge.

The *Thiền Uyển*, in a historical-critical reading, tells us of the emergence of a new intelligentsia, its role, and the encompassing influence that it was able to exercise on the cultural, political, and social life of the time. The monks were men of letters, protectors of the Dharma and the country. They were able to convert popular deities, subdue malevolent forces, and conquer all adversaries.<sup>84</sup> The biographies in the *Thiền Uyển* delineate for us the image of the adept monk in the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people in medieval times. When the *Thiền Uyển* gathered together tales of the lives of monks, these were meant to highlight their virtues and accomplishments as worthy of respect or emulation. In the hearts and minds of modern Vietnamese Buddhists, some of the eminent monks in the *Thiền Uyển* are fondly remembered more for their patriotic and cultural contributions than for their philosophy or spirituality. These monks appeared on the scene to offer their services when the Vietnamese state was in its infancy. They assisted the early sovereigns in political

and cultural tasks—not only in building the ruling system, but also in protecting it against the much bigger and stronger enemy from the north: China. One of the primary efforts of the *Thiền Uyển* is to portray the eminent monk as the protector of the Dharma and the country. In some biographies the eminent monks are depicted as possessing magical powers that are more than a match for any adversaries coming from China.

Khuông Việt was the first eminent monk who was directly involved with the imperial court. According to the *Thiền Uyển*, Khuông Việt received Confucian education when he was young, but when he grew up he embraced Buddhism and entered monastic life at Khai Quốc Temple, where he subsequently became abbot. In his forties word of his fame reached the imperial court.

Emperor Đinh Tiên Hoàng summoned Khuông Việt to the capital for an audience. Đinh Tiên Hoàng was impressed with him and honored him with the rank *Tăng Thống* (General Supervisor of Monks). It was Đinh Tiên Hoàng who granted him the sobriquet Khuông Việt Thái Sư [which means “the Great Master Who Brings Order to Việt”]. Khuông Việt continued to hold the same rank under the reign of Lê Đại Hành. He was consulted in all military and court affairs. Khuông Việt was well known for the incident when he encountered the Song envoy Li Jue and won his respect.<sup>85</sup>

After Lý Thái Tổ ascended the throne he often invited Khuông Việt's disciple Đa Bảo<sup>86</sup> to court to ask him for lessons in Buddhism. The emperor would reward Đa Bảo with generous donations. Đa Bảo was also consulted about all court and political matters.

Another of the earliest monks involved with the imperial court was Đỗ Pháp Thuận, who assisted Emperor Lê Đại Hành with political and diplomatic matters. His legendary literary exchange with the Song envoy Li Jue has become a beloved anecdote among Vietnamese Buddhists. The *Thiền Uyển* states: “When the [Former] Lê dynasty started to establish itself, Pháp Thuận was instrumental in deciding its political policies. When independence was gained and the country was at peace, he did not hold any office, nor did he accept any reward. Lê Đại Hành respected him more and more. He never called him by his name but always referred to him as Đỗ Pháp Sư [‘Dharma Master Đỗ’] and entrusted him with literary responsibilities.”<sup>87</sup> According to the *Thiền Uyển*, Lê Đại Hành once asked Pháp Thuận how long the good fortune of the state would last. Pháp Thuận spoke a verse:

The good fortune of the country is like a spreading vine,  
In the southern land there is great peace.  
If Your Majesty stays in the palace without contrived activity,  
Then everywhere the clash of weapons will cease.<sup>88</sup>

The answer reflects the Daoist ideal of ruling through *wuwei* (nonaction). This is indicative of the fact that most of these eminent monks had studied Daoism and Confucianism before they turned to Buddhism.

There are also monks who offered their knowledge and talent to the kings without holding any official rank at court. Vạn Hạnh was known for his uncanny power to foretell the future. Vạn Hạnh extended his help to both Lê Đại Hành and Lý Thái Tổ. The *Thiền Uyển* records that in 980 the Song troops invaded Vietnam. Lê Đại Hành summoned Vạn Hạnh to the capital and asked: "Are we going to win or lose?" Vạn Hạnh said: "The enemy will withdraw within twenty-one days." This later turned out to be true. When Lê Đại Hành wanted to conquer Champa, it was reported that he held long discussions with court officials without reaching any decision. Vạn Hạnh learned of this and immediately submitted a memorial advising the emperor to act quickly and not miss the opportunity. Afterward, Lê Đại Hành did win the war.<sup>89</sup>

Vạn Hạnh was also well known for masterminding the ascent to the throne of Lý Công Uẩn (who later became Lý Thái Tổ, the founder of the Lý dynasty). The *Thiền Uyển* relates the following story: "At this time Lê Ngọa Triều [the son of Lê Đại Hành who murdered his older brother, the crown prince] was on the throne, a cruel tyrant. Both Heaven and men detested his behavior. Emperor Lý Thái Tổ was then his bodyguard and had not ascended the throne. During those years strange omens appeared incessantly in many forms: a white dog with hair in his back that looked like the characters *thiên tử* (Son of Heaven) appeared in the Hàm Toại Hall, Ứng Thái Tâm Temple, Cổ Pháp Prefecture; lightning struck a kapok tree and left writings on its trunk; sounds of chanting at night were heard around the grave of Great Lord Hiên Khánh; insects gnawed at the bark of a bastard banyan tree at Song Lâm Temple forming the character *quốc* (nation). All these events were interpreted as omens that the [Former] Lê dynasty was going to collapse and the Lý was going to flourish."<sup>90</sup>

The traditional view is that the events that led to Lý Công Uẩn becoming emperor confirmed the prophecies made years before by Định Không and La Quý, the predecessors of Vạn Hạnh in the so-called Vinītaruci school. Some modern scholars are of the opinion that it was Vạn Hạnh himself who arranged for these "strange omens."

There are also eminent monks who were considered protectors of the country yet were not involved directly with the imperial court. Among them, the most celebrated were some of the monks supposedly belonging to the so-called Vinītaruci school. These were the monks who looked to Buddhism as a sacred force for protecting the territorial integrity of Vietnam and safeguarding its autonomy against the perennial threat from China.

We read in the *Thiền Uyển* of Định Không, who used his uncanny talents to foretell the future and contribute to the construction of a national discourse. During the Zhenyuan era (785–804) of the Tang dynasty, Định Không had the people of his village excavate the ground to lay the foundation for a new temple. They unearthed one incense burner and ten musical instruments, and Định Không asked his people to wash them in the river. One of them fell into the water and sank down to the earthen bed of the river.

In the typical manner of explaining omens by analyzing the characters that stand for the things or events involved, Định Không remarked: “The character *thập* (十: ten) together with *khẩu* (口: mouth, also a classifier of instruments) become the character *cổ* (古: ancient), while *thủy* (水: water) and *khử* (去: go) become *pháp* (法: Dharma). *Thổ* (土: earth) is where we are living, these instruments came from the earth.”<sup>91</sup> He then changed his village’s name, Diên Uẩn, into Cổ Pháp (Ancient Dharma) and composed a verse:

This land offers Dharma vessels,  
Purest first class bronze.  
It is a site where the Buddha-Dharma flourishes,  
Therefore, I give this district the name Cổ Pháp.<sup>92</sup>

Based on these omens, Định Không prophesied that a man named Lý (i.e., Lý Công Uẩn) would become emperor and guide the people and protect the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha). Định Không’s message is clear: Vietnam is the land of the Dharma; if the Dharma is well preserved, in the future a just king will surely arise to protect the country. When Định Không was about to pass away he warned his disciple, Thông Thiện, to be on guard against a Chinese man (the Tang general and magician Gao Pian) who would use his magic skills to destroy Vietnam. He also instructed Thông Thiện to preserve the Dharma and later on to transmit it to a man named Định.<sup>93</sup>

La Quí, whose secular name was Định, received the Dharma from Thông Thiện. He fulfilled Định Không’s prophecy in continuing to uphold Buddhism and to protect Vietnam. The story in the *Thiền Uyển* goes like this:

After receiving the Dharma, La Quí travelled all over teaching and converting people. He chose a piece of land and built a temple. Every word he uttered was sure to be prophetic. . . . When he was about to pass away, he instructed his disciple Thiền Ông, “Formerly Gao Pian constructed a fortress by the Tô Lịch River because he knew that our territory Cổ Pháp has a royal aura. He excavated and disconnected nineteen locations such as the Diêm River and the Phù Chấn Pond, in

order the suppress this. I have advised Khúc Lãm to fill in [the excavations] and restore [the natural contours of the landscape]. I have also had a kapok tree planted at Minh Châu Temple to secure those disconnected locations. I know that in the future a good king is sure to appear to support and nourish our true Dharma. After I die, you should try to build an earthen stupa and hide the Dharma in it. Do not let [unworthy] people see it.”<sup>94</sup>

When La Quí planted that kapok tree, he wrote a verse:

On the great mountain the dragon's head rises,  
The baby dragon's tail hides the jewel's light.  
Eighteen sons will succeed—  
The kapok tree shows a dragon's form.  
In the month of rat, day of rooster, hour of rabbit,  
We're sure to see the sun come forth in purity.<sup>95</sup>

In his verse La Quí made a prophetic hint at the emergence of Lý Công Uẩn and the Lý dynasty. La Quí belonged to the line of monks who, relying on prophecy, established Vietnam as an autonomous land protected by the Dharma and the Vietnamese emperor as the person invested with this protective power.

This motif, also found in some of the narratives in the *Việt Điện*, began to emerge during the Lý dynasty when certain Vietnamese leaders and their partisans among the local elites started to feel the need to construct a national identity. The Dharma is the sacred force that protects Vietnam from destructive adversaries (represented by the Chinese Gao Pian). The king is the one who supports and nourishes the Dharma. That is the reason why all the gods and genies who were guardians of the territory (mountains and rivers) are brought under his aegis. Monks like Định Không and La Quí were sources of religious and supernatural support standing behind the Dharma and the Vietnamese monarchy.

We can glimpse the way in which Buddhist discourse contributed to the construction of a national identity for Vietnam in these stories of eminent monks like Định Không, La Quí, and Vạn Hạnh predicting future events of key political significance. The vessels Định Không unearthed in his native village indicated that this was “a site where the Buddha-Dharma flourishes” and would be the birthplace of a just king who would nourish the Dharma and defend the country against its enemies. Later, “conforming to the ancient prophecies,” Vạn Hạnh recognized the royal potential of Lý Công Uẩn and assisted him to ascend the throne and establish the Lý dynasty.

La Quí told his disciple Thiền Ông that after he died Thiền Ông should built a stupa and hide the Dharma in it, awaiting the day when a worthy



successor would come forth to receive and sustain it. La Quí's biography also relates that when Thông Thiện, his teacher, was about to pass away, he instructed La Quí: "Formerly, my teacher Định Không had instructed me to preserve our Dharma, and to pass it on to a man named Đinh." It turned out that La Quí's secular name was Đinh.

These monks had the magical power to know the future in advance, and thus predict and in effect guarantee that Vietnam would survive as an independent state despite the constant threat from China. The Dharma was revealed as the sustainer of the country, and these eminent monks knew how to preserve the Dharma. In adverse times, a teacher would hide it away, and when the time was ripe, he would hand it on to a capable disciple who would rely on it to safeguard the country.<sup>96</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* also portrayed monks in the role of the teachers of the Dharma. It records quite a few biographies of eminent monks who were not directly involved with political affairs, but instead served the nation primarily in the capacity of religious teachers.

The story goes that Sùng Phạm spent nine years traveling all over India to broaden his knowledge of Buddhism. He returned home an adept in both precepts and meditative concentration, and he settled in Pháp Vân Temple to propagate these two methods. Students came to him in droves. Emperor Lê Đại Hành often invited him to court to inquire about the essential message of Buddhism and treated him with appropriate etiquette, rewarding him munificently.<sup>97</sup>

The monk most celebrated as a teacher was probably the National Preceptor Thông Biện. He was famed for his lecture on Vietnamese Buddhist history to Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Linh Nhân delivered at a vegetarian feast held at the National Temple in the capital Thăng Long in 1096. The empress dowager was so impressed with Thông Biện's knowledge that she gave him a purple robe and rewarded him richly.<sup>98</sup>

(I argued in the previous chapter that it was Thông Biện who initiated the practice of interpreting Vietnamese Buddhist history on the model of traditional Chinese Zen history, which was to have an unfortunate impact on future generations of Vietnamese Buddhist historians, who took an ideologically motivated construct as literal history. In its own time, on the other hand, Thông Biện's account of Vietnamese Buddhist history undoubtedly played a positive role in the effort to establish the claim that Vietnam constituted an independent cultural entity equal in status and dignity to China.)

Another eminent monk who functioned primarily as a teacher was Mãn Giác, one of the Buddhist leaders of his time. He was of aristocratic lineage and had studied and mastered Confucianism and Buddhism. Mãn Giác was a popular teacher—everywhere he went, students flocked

to him. Emperor Lý Nhân Tông and the Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Linh Nhân became his disciples. They had a temple built for Mãn Giác in the vicinity of the royal palace to make it convenient to visit him to learn the Dharma. Eventually Lý Nhân Tông conferred on him the rank of Inner Palace Teacher of Enlightenment and the sobriquet Purple-Robed Great Monk.<sup>99</sup>

Viên Thông, who served at court under both Lý Nhân Tông and Lý Thần Tông, was a deeply learned man. He passed the national examinations in the Three Teachings and other subjects with highest honors and was appointed to various religious offices at court. Lý Nhân Tông offered him positions of political power many times, but Viên Thông persistently declined—he would only accept positions concerned with religious matters. He was eventually promoted to the rank of Superintendent of the Monk Academy on the Left and Right, Inner Palace Superintendent, Inner Servitor Magistrate in charge of Religion, National Preceptor and Protector of the Realm, and Expounder of the Canon.<sup>100</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* relates that on one occasion Lý Thần Tông summoned Viên Thông to court to inquire about the principles of political order and upheaval, prosperity and decline in the world. Viên Thông addressed the following remark to the emperor and his courtiers:

The world is like an instrument. Put it in a safe place, and it is safe; put it in a perilous place, and it is in peril. It all depends on how the leader of the people behaves himself. If his benevolence is in harmony with the hearts and minds of the people, then they will love him as a parent and look up to him like the sun and the moon. This is putting people in a safe place.

Order or chaos depends on [the behavior of the] officials. If they can win the people over, then there is political order; if they lose the people's support, then there is upheaval. I have observed [the activities of] emperors of previous generations. No one succeeded without employing true gentlemen, or failed unless he employed petty men.

When we trace how these things come about, they do not happen overnight, but develop gradually. Just as heaven and earth cannot abruptly produce cold and hot weather, but must change gradually through the seasons like spring and autumn, kings cannot suddenly bring about prosperity or decline: rather it is a gradual process depending on their good or bad activities.

The sage kings of old knew this principle, and so they modeled themselves on Heaven and never ceased to rely on virtue to cultivate themselves; they modeled themselves on Earth and never ceased to rely on virtue to pacify the people. To cultivate oneself means to be cautious within, as cautious as if one were walking on thin ice. To pacify people means to respect those who are below, to be as respectful as one riding a horse holding worn-out reins.

If one can be like that, one cannot but succeed; if not, one cannot but fail. The gradual process of prosperity or decline depends on this.<sup>101</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* also tells us that Lý Thần Tông never neglected Viên Thông's advice and entrusted everything to him. The Confucian character of Viên Thông's political address is very apparent. Unlike Đinh Không, La Quí, and others, Viên Thông referred to the "sage kings" and not to the Dharma—the "sage kings" being the legendary rulers of ancient China, Yao and Shun. The content of Viên Thông's advice, and the fact that it was included in the *Thiền Uyển*, indicates that toward the end of the Lý Confucianism had started to assert itself alongside Buddhism at the imperial court.

Hitherto many eminent monks had been educated men who turned from Confucianism to Buddhism. Here we see a Buddhist monk harking back to the fundamental principles of Confucian statecraft—the ruler patterning himself on the impartiality of Heaven, in order to win the hearts of the people by his virtue. This may prefigure the shift in ideological fashion that occurred later when the Trần succeeded the Lý, and Confucianism began to replace Buddhism as the official state ideology. As I argued briefly in Chapter One, this may have been due, among other things, to the Vietnamese Buddhist elite's lack of exposure to Buddhist literature other than Chinese Zen texts. Buddhist texts dealing explicitly with the role of the monarch and the state were simply not known to the Vietnamese Buddhist elite.

The *Thiền Uyển* also contains stories of many eminent monks who were reluctant to serve, or who even declined to serve at court, yet who still offered their service to the kings and were honored as teachers by them.

One example is Huệ Sinh, who was well versed in both Confucian and Buddhist lore yet preferred to lead the life of a mystic. The story goes that every time he entered *samādhi* it would go on for five days, and his contemporaries called him a bodhisattva in the flesh. Lý Thái Tông heard of him and dispatched an envoy to summon him to the capital.

Huệ Sinh gave the envoy a response reminiscent of the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi: "Haven't you seen a sacrificial animal? At first they dress it with embroidered silk and feed it with fine sweet grass. But when they drag it into the royal temple, though it may wish to be just an orphan animal, even that is unattainable, much less anything better."<sup>102</sup>

At first Huệ Sinh firmly refused to come to the imperial court, but after repeated invitations from Lý Thái Tông, he at last presented himself at court and was given the rank of Monk in Palace Service. Many court officials, princes, and nobles became his students. Huệ Sinh was finally raised to the office of General Superintendent of the Academy of

Monks, with the same rank as a marquis.<sup>103</sup>

Cửu Chỉ preferred to remain on Mount Tiên Du practicing austerities, but his reputation as a Buddhist teacher still reached the imperial court. Lý Thái Tông invited him to the capital several times, but Cửu Chỉ declined. Lý Thái Tông personally paid three visits to his temple to inquire after him. Eventually Cửu Chỉ conceded and became an abbot of a temple in the capital.<sup>104</sup>

Chân Không attained insight by studying the *Lotus Sūtra*, and then came to Mount Từ Sơn to settle down. He kept to the precepts and for twenty years did not leave his temple. Nevertheless, his fame spread far and wide. Lý Nhân Tông heard about him and invited him to the imperial palace to lecture on the *Lotus Sūtra*. Many aristocrats including Grand Commandant Lý Thường Kiệt, treated him with the greatest respect and often donated money to him. Chân Không always used everything given to him to repair temples, build stupas, and cast big bells for posterity.<sup>105</sup>

It is true that at least up to the end of the Lý dynasty, the eminent monks of medieval Vietnam were known for their involvement with the imperial court, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or reluctantly. Nonetheless, most of the eminent monks whose biographies are recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* were wandering ascetics who firmly turned down invitations to serve at court or only made occasional appearances there. Some were village monks who showed no interest in coming to the capital. Others simply preferred to lead the ascetic life. Still, these monks were revered as paragons of purity, renunciation, virtue, selflessness, and exertion. For the Buddhist masses who did not (and still do not) know or care much about Buddhist philosophy, a monk's virtue represented (and still represents) the consummation of his role as part of the Sangha, one of the Three Jewels.

Bảo Tĩnh and Minh Tâm devoted themselves to chanting the *Lotus Sūtra* unstintingly for more than fifteen years. They only appeared at the imperial court when they were about to pass away. It is recorded that the two masters organized an assembly to explain the scriptures and then together "entered the *samādhi* of firelight" by immolating themselves. The story goes that the bones that remained were all transformed into the seven kinds of jewels. Emperor Lý Thái Tông ordered that these precious relics be kept in Trường Thánh Temple and offerings be made to them.<sup>106</sup>

After grasping the message of the Dharma, Tín Học wandered by himself for years before settling down at Quán Đỉnh Temple. He would burn his fingers in front of the Buddha statue and repeat a vow: "I have wandered about in the defiled world for many aeons. I vow not to create any karma that will bind me to it again." He devoted himself to the

practice of the three contemplations according to the *Complete Enlightenment Sūtra*. He ate only one meal a day, so his body and face became pale and emaciated. He persisted in his ascetic practices for many years without a sign of growing weary of it, and he deeply attained the true essence of the three contemplations. Nobles, courtiers, and commoners all respected and honored him highly and vied to serve him.<sup>107</sup>

Tĩnh Không spent six years practicing austerities at Khai Quốc Temple. Each day he ate only one grain of sesame and one grain of wheat. He would sit in meditation all night without sleeping. Whenever he entered *samādhi*, it would go on for a few days before he arose from it. Donors from all over brought him mountains of gifts. When from time to time people came with the intention of stealing from him, Tĩnh Không would simply tell them where to get what they wanted. Tĩnh Không made only one appearance at the imperial court, to preside over the ordination of a princess. He won Lý Anh Tông's admiration but persistently declined to serve at court.<sup>108</sup>

Trường Nguyên entered Mount Từ Sơn to live in seclusion. He wore straw garments and ate only chestnuts. The whole day long he had only streams and stones, apes and monkeys for companions. He spent all his hours cultivating body and mind, fusing them into one whole. He devoted himself to chanting the scriptures. Five or six years passed, and no one had ever caught a glimpse of him. Emperor Lý Anh Tông heard about Trường Nguyên, admired his religious virtue, and wanted to meet him. Trường Nguyên refused, so the emperor ordered Trường Nguyên's old friend, the court official Lê Hối, to convince him to come to the capital. One night as the two men were on their way to the capital Trường Nguyên regretted having assented to come to the capital and escaped back to his mountain.<sup>109</sup>

Some of these monks devoted themselves to austerities and used their spiritual attainment to help the people in both religious and social matters. Trí Bảo was an uncle of Tô Hiến Thành, the famous Grand Commandant under the reign of Lý Anh Tông. Trí Bảo abandoned the mundane world and entered the Buddhist Order. He often wore rags and ate coarse food. The story goes that sometimes he went for ten years without changing his clothes and for three days without lighting his cooking stove. Whenever he saw a poor man he would fold his arms and make way; whenever he saw a monk he would kneel down to pay respect. He devoted himself to meditation and after six years achieved enlightenment. Trí Bảo then left the mountain with his monk's staff and dedicated himself to good works such as repairing bridges and roads and building temples and stupas, and according to conditions encouraged everyone to embrace the Dharma. He never acted for his own benefit.<sup>110</sup>

Viên Học wore the same patched robe whatever the weather and went everywhere teaching people, living only on alms. He always took the lead in affairs such as repairing bridges and constructing roads. Later in his life he came to Phù Cầm Village, restored Quốc Thánh Temple, and cast a big bell. He was always involved in the effort to transform people by means of the Buddhist teaching.<sup>111</sup>

Some of the most beloved eminent monks in Vietnamese Buddhist history, however, are the wonder-workers, healers, and magicians. These monks were believed to possess magical powers such as prophetic abilities, the ability to cure disease, and the ability to bring rain. Despite their apparent disregard for conventional decorum, these monks were compassionately engaged in the world through the typical Buddhist skillful means. They became popular folk heroes whose stories have been often retold and included in collections of folktales. Some were also worshipped in shrines erected for them in various localities.

The story of Ma Ha best illustrates this category of the wonder-working monk. Ma Ha came from a highly placed Buddhist family, his father having held religious office at the Lê court. Of Champa descent, he mastered both Chinese and Sanskrit. At the young age of twenty-four, Ma Ha settled down at Quan Ái Temple and devoted himself to expounding the *sūtras*. Once upon a time, while he was so engaged, a spirit who functioned as a Dharma-Protector appeared before him and reproached him that he was merely relying on external learning and thus could never comprehend the true meaning of the *sūtras*. As a result, Ma Ha lost his eyesight. He was close to committing suicide until an eminent monk enlightened him. He then moved to Cổ Sơn Temple to study under the celebrated Đỗ Pháp Thuận and devoted himself tirelessly for three years to the practice of repentance and the chanting of mantras. As a result, Ma Ha was cured of his blindness by the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, his mind became more pure and calm, and he attained magical skills.

Emperor Lê Đại Hành had many times invited Ma Ha to the imperial court, but Ma Ha declined every invitation. Pushed further, he would only say, "I'm just a crazy monk of Quan Ái Temple." This enraged Lê Đại Hành, who ordered him to be locked up under guard at Vạn Tuế Temple in the imperial palace. The next morning Ma Ha was seen walking outside the palace, although the doors of his cell remained locked. Lê Đại Hành was amazed and set him free.

On one occasion, the story goes, Ma Ha traveled to Sa Đăng province, Ái Châu, where the people had the custom of worshipping ghosts and spirits. Most of the local people were hunters—taking lives was their profession. When Ma Ha exhorted them not to eat meat, they all said

that they dared not go against their gods, who would inflict misfortunes on them if they were disobedient. The story continues:

"Ma Ha said: 'If you can renounce evil and do good, and there is any harm incurred, I will bear the responsibility for it.' The people in the village said: 'For a long time in this area, there have been many people who die of leprosy. All the medicine men and sorcerers have given up [trying to cure this malady]. If you can cure it, we will follow your advice.' Ma Ha then blessed water with mantras and spat it on them—those who suffered from leprosy were immediately cured."<sup>112</sup>

The episodes in the story of Ma Ha relate messages that were meant to reach the audience in a symbolic but easily intelligible way. First Ma Ha was reproached by a Dharma Protector for focusing on external learning, and as a result lost his eyesight. Relying on words is likened to blindness because one cannot expect to grasp the Buddhist message simply through studying texts and analyzing words. Ma Ha then devoted himself to practicing repentance and reciting mantras and was eventually cured of his blindness through the intervention of Avalokiteśvara.

The implication of this story is that the sincere practice of ritual, direct experience (in the sense of internalization of the teachings), and the support of "other-power," the sustaining power of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas are also indispensable on the path to enlightenment. That Ma Ha declined to serve at the imperial court and was able to free himself from confinement means that an enlightened person must have and does have the strength to transcend all conventional values. The final message is that only one with such a level of spiritual realization is capable of using skillful means to cure sentient beings from their illness.

Another classic description of the enlightened adept in the *Thiền Uyển* runs as follows. Không Lộ always clothed himself in grass clothes and sustained himself with a meager vegetarian diet to the point that he forgot his own body. He could fly in the air and walk on water, tame tigers and conquer dragons. His supernatural powers were such that no one could fathom them.<sup>113</sup> Giác Hải, who appears in many popular tales as Không Lộ's Dharma heir and companion, was treated with the etiquette due a teacher by Emperor Lý Nhân Tông. Giác Hải would come to court and display his magical skills.<sup>114</sup>

The *Thiền Uyển* also relates the story of Giới Không. At the outset of his religious quest, Giới Không spent five years practicing quiet meditation. After traveling around to preach the Dharma for some time, he went into a cave and devoted himself to austerities for another six years. He reached the point that he could command gods and demons and tame wild beasts.

Emperor Lý Thần Tông summoned Giới Không to the capital many times. After repeatedly declining to no avail, Giới Không finally came. Once there was a great plague, and Giới Không was called upon to cure it. He blessed water with mantras and used it to cure the plague. Thousands of sick people were cured in his presence every day.<sup>115</sup>

The power of these eminent monks to command gods and demons and to tame wild beasts illustrates two themes: the universal sovereignty and the compassion of Buddhism. The eminent monks, emblems of Buddhist enlightenment, were able to transform all peripheral forces and to exert compassion toward all sentient beings.

This following anecdote in Trí Nhân's biography exemplifies this principle:

One day Trí Nhân was sitting in meditation when he saw a tiger chasing a deer toward him. Trí Nhân said to them, "All sentient beings cherish their lives—you should not harm each other." The tiger bowed its head to the ground as if he were taking refuge [with a teacher], and then went away. Afterward, Trí Nhân built a retreat at the foot of the mountain and accepted students. Donors from all over brought gifts aplenty. In the vicinity of the mountain there was a barbarian tribe whose people would band together to raid and pillage. Every time Trí Nhân went outside, a huge tiger would squat in front of the retreat, so that raiders did not dare to break in. Many among them were guided back to a virtuous life by him.<sup>116</sup>

No hero is more popular in Vietnamese folklore than Đạo Hạnh. Among other magical skills, due to his knowledge of the principle of karma, he had foreknowledge of future events extending into his next lifetime. As a young man Đạo Hạnh once went into the mountains to live in seclusion. His intention was to develop magical powers in order to avenge his father's murder. After he got his revenge, Đạo Hạnh turned to Buddhism. The *Thiền Uyển* tells us that he was effective in everything he did: he tamed multitudes of mountain snakes and wild beasts, burnt his finger to pray for rain, and blessed water with mantras to cure sickness. Đạo Hạnh was best known for deliberately directing his rebirth so that he was reborn as the son of Marquis Sùng Hiền, Emperor Lý Nhân Tông's brother, and subsequently became the Emperor Lý Thần Tông.<sup>117</sup> Even now there are still shrines and temples in North Vietnam where Đạo Hạnh is worshipped as the tutelary god in some localities.<sup>118</sup>

Minh Không was a disciple of Đạo Hạnh. He served Đạo Hạnh for seventeen years and received his teaching. When Đạo Hạnh was about to pass away, he told Minh Không he would be reborn again in this world as a king, but due to a karmic debt he would contract a strange disease and Minh Không would come and save him. After Đạo Hạnh's death,



Minh Không returned to his native village and took to farming for more than twenty years, unconcerned with fame and fortune. At length the Emperor Lý Thần Tông (the reincarnation of Đạo Hạnh) contracted a strange disease that made him growl and moan. Noted physicians from all over the country came to court in response to the royal edict, but no one could cure him.<sup>119</sup>

In the meantime children were heard singing popular songs suggesting that only a man named Minh Không could cure the emperor. The court sent emissaries to search among the common people for Minh Không and finally they found him. The *Thiền Uyển* tells the story as follows:

When Minh Không arrived at court the renowned physicians were performing their arts in the palace. Seeing how crude and rustic he looked they did not bother to greet him. Minh Không took a nail five inches long and planted it into a column of the palace, shouting: "He who can pull the nail out will get to do the job first." He repeated it again and again, but no one dare accept the challenge. Minh Không then used two fingers of his left hand and pulled on the nail and it came out easily. Everybody present was struck with admiration. When he saw the emperor, Minh Không cried out with a stern voice: "Worthy man, you are foremost among the people, why do you act crazy like this?" The emperor trembled with fear. Minh Không had a big cauldron brought in, filled it with water, and boiled it again and again. Then he stirred it with his hand four times and had the emperor bathe in it. The emperor recovered instantly.<sup>120</sup>

As seen in the preceding examples, stories that portray various ideal images of Buddhist monks make up a considerable part of the *Thiền Uyển*. Buddhist monks assumed the roles of prognosticators, rain-makers, magicians, and political counselors, meeting the demands of the people around them for supernatural help and protection. The Buddhist adepts portrayed in the *Thiền Uyển* have moved beyond the ordinary limitations of human life as a result of their dedicated religious practice, but the special powers they gain as religious virtuosi are nevertheless put to use in the service of the Vietnamese people and state.

### Doctrine and Practice of Vietnamese Buddhism

Reading the *Thiền Uyển* in its proper historical context and from a correct hermeneutical perspective, we notice that the text presents us with a concentrated but comprehensive panorama of Vietnamese Buddhist doctrine and practice that bears a striking resemblance to modern Vietnamese Buddhism.

Although the *Thiền Uyển* is presented as a "history of the transmission of the lamp"—that is, as a record of the biographies of eminent Zen

monks centering on their enlightenment experiences—it contains relatively few references to Buddhist philosophy. In these references, the most recurrent theme is the Yogācāra/Tathāgatagarbha doctrine of the identity of the originally pure mind with Thusness or Buddhahood, affirming that all sentient beings are originally possessed of this pure mind.

For instance, the *Thiền Uyển* presents the following lesson delivered by Cửu Chỉ:

All Buddhist teachings originally come from your own inherent nature. The true nature of all phenomena originally comes from your mind. Mind and phenomena are One Thusness: fundamentally there is nothing else. All the defilements that bind you are empty. Misdeeds and merits, right and wrong are all illusions. . . .

You see all phenomena, but without any objects of seeing. You know all phenomena, but without any objects of knowing. You know that all phenomena have interdependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) as their basis. You see that all phenomena have true reality as their source.

Even amidst defilement, you understand that the world is like a magical apparition. You clearly comprehend that the true identity of sentient beings is the One Reality—there is no other reality. You do not abandon the karmic realm: you use the proper skillful means to show the uncreated Dharma in the realm of the created, but without differentiating and without the marks of creation. This is because desire is ended, self is forgotten, and conceptual elaborations (*prapañca*) are abandoned.<sup>121</sup>

In the same vein, Trường Nguyên instructed his disciples as follows:

How strange! How strange! How is it that sentient beings are deluded by ignorance and delusion but are endowed with the Tathāgatha's wisdom, and do not see and know [that truth]? I often teach them the Dharma so that they can be forever free from discrimination and attachment to their personal existences—so that they will be able to realize the Tathāgata's vast wisdom with its benefits, its peace and bliss.<sup>122</sup>

Thường Chiếu, in his exposition of the Truth Body (*Dharmakāya*), showed his knowledge of the teachings of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*, *Huayan Sūtra*, and *Samādhinirmocana-Sūtra* in this statement:

Just as one pore contains the whole Realm of Ultimate Reality (*Dharmadhātu*), so do all pores. You should know that there is not the smallest place anywhere in Mind or in space where there is no Buddha-body. Why so? Because the Truth Body manifests itself in the Emanation Body (*nirmāṇakāya*) which attains perfect enlighten-

ment (*samyaksambodhi*), there is no place that the Truth Body does not reach.

Thus, you should know that the Tathāgata, through the sovereign power of mind without origination or revolution, turns the Wheel of Truth (*Dharmacakra*). [The Tathāgata] knows that all phenomena are not originated, so he uses the three dharmas to teach annihilation, yet he turns the Wheel of Truth without relying on annihilation.

[The Tathāgata] knows that all phenomena are free from false views, so he dwells in the realm of separation from desire—but not its annihilation—to turn the Wheel of Truth. The Tathāgata also enters the realm of the emptiness of all phenomena; therefore, without relying on words, he turns the Wheel of Truth. [The Tathāgata] knows that all phenomena are ineffable, so he dwells in the ultimate peace to turn the Wheel of Truth. The Tathāgata knows that all phenomena are originally nirvana—this is called formless true nature, inexhaustible true nature, unborn, undestroyed, selfless true identity, where nothing is not self, true nature without sentient beings, where nothing is not sentient beings, true nature without “bodhisattvas,” without the Realm of Ultimate Reality (*Dharmadhātu*), without “emptiness”—true nature where there is no “achieving perfect enlightenment.”<sup>123</sup>

Through the *Thiền Uyển*, we catch a revealing glimpse of various practices in medieval Vietnamese Buddhism. Phúc Điền, in his *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu* [The Sources of the Three Religions] based on the *Thiền Uyển*, lists various kinds of practices that are followed by each individual eminent monk.<sup>124</sup> But since there are no real lineages or sectarian schools in Vietnamese Buddhism, it is impossible to delineate strictly defined systems of practice. Rather, the practices embraced by Vietnamese Buddhist monks run the entire gamut of East Asian Māhāyāna Buddhism. They included the study and chanting of *sūtras*, mantras, and *dhāraṇīs*; the practice of meditation, austerities, and repentance; and also the contemplation of the Buddha and the Buddha-name.

A very similar list of typical practices could be compiled for contemporary Vietnamese Buddhism. It is curious to note how little change or sectarian development has taken place in either thought or practice in Vietnamese Buddhism for the last ten centuries.

#### THE SŪTRAS

Vietnamese Buddhism lies within the orbit of East Asian Buddhism, which is basically *sūtra*-based Buddhism.<sup>125</sup> Thus the *sūtras* are crucial in Vietnamese Buddhism. *Sūtras* not only are studied, along with their various commentaries, but also are memorized and chanted aloud. *Sūtras* are chanted in both daily and special rituals, both routinely and on special occasions. The physical texts of the *sūtras* are venerated as holy objects

because they contain the words of the Buddha.<sup>126</sup> Many biographies of eminent monks contain accounts of these monks devoting themselves to chanting *sūtras*. Copying the *sūtras* is considered to be a meritorious act of piety. The *Thiền Uyển* relates that Bảo Giám copied by hand the *Tripitaka* that was housed at his temple. The practice of chanting *sūtras* has always been universal within Vietnamese Buddhism, while the practice of copying *sūtras* is still very much alive among modern educated monks.

The *Thiền Uyển* mentions a number of *sūtras* that are still widely studied and read in modern Vietnamese Buddhism. Among these, the *Lotus Sūtra* has definitely been the most read, studied, and recited in Vietnam.<sup>127</sup> The *Thiền Uyển* relates that Bảo Tính and Minh Tâm devoted themselves to chanting the *Lotus Sūtra* for more than fifteen years without ever neglecting it.<sup>128</sup> The celebrated Thông Biện often taught people to practice by relying on the *Lotus Sūtra*, so his contemporaries gave him the sobriquet Ngộ Pháp Hoa, which means "Awakened to the Lotus."<sup>129</sup> Minh Trí studied and mastered the essential message of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>130</sup> Chân Không spent many years searching for the gist of the Dharma only to attain some insight through studying the *Lotus Sūtra*. Later on he was invited to the imperial court to lecture on the *sūtra*.<sup>131</sup>

Another *sūtra* still popular in Vietnamese Buddhism mentioned in the *Thiền Uyển* is the *Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment*. Viên Chiếu always recited the *Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment* and was well-versed in its three methods of contemplation. He composed a commentary on the *sūtra* entitled *Tán Viên Giác Kinh* [Eulogy on the *Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment*].<sup>132</sup> Minh Trí and Tín Học also devoted themselves to this *sūtra* and practiced the three contemplations taught in it.<sup>133</sup> Tịnh Lực often expounded the *Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment* along with various of its commentaries.<sup>134</sup>

The *Diamond Sūtra* is another major Mahāyāna scripture mentioned in the *Thiền Uyển*. Thường Chiếu referred to the *Diamond Sūtra*.<sup>135</sup> Thanh Biện devoted himself to the chanting of the *Diamond Sūtra*.<sup>136</sup> Giới Không often lectured on the *Diamond Sūtra*.<sup>137</sup> The nun Diệu Nhân also showed an understanding of the *Diamond Sūtra*.<sup>138</sup> Besides these scriptures, the *Thiền Uyển* also tells us that the *Huayan Sūtra* and *Benevolent King Sūtra* were also studied in medieval Vietnam.<sup>139</sup>

It is interesting to note that these scriptures are used in exactly the same contexts in modern Vietnamese Buddhism as they were in medieval time: the *Lotus Sūtra* is used in a devotional context, the *Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment* is used for its teaching on meditation, while the *Diamond Sūtra* and *Huayan Sūtra* serve as the foundation for philosophical discourse.

There is also evidence of the practice of mantra and *dhāraṇī* throughout the biographies in the *Thiền Uyển*. In most cases, this practice is closely associated with the attainment of supernatural powers. The recitation of mantra and *dhāraṇī* is usually portrayed as part of a pattern of practice that includes the chanting of *sūtra* and the practice of austerities.

It is reported that Đại Xá made the chanting of the *Huayan Sūtra* and the *Samantabhadra Mantra* his daily practice.<sup>140</sup> Đạo Hạnh went to Mount Từ Sơn to live in seclusion and devoted himself to the chanting of the *Mind of Great Compassion Dhāraṇī* daily. It is related that after he had chanted it 108,000 times he was able to move the Dharma-Protector and to attain magical power.<sup>141</sup> Nguyễn Học always recited the *Dhāraṇī of the Fragrant Ocean of Great Compassion*, and as a result he attained magical power to cure illness and to make rain.<sup>142</sup> Thiền Nham “loved to learn the *dhāraṇīs*, and would memorize them and recite them without missing a single word.”<sup>143</sup>

Sounds, or, more correctly, sacred sounds in the forms of mantras and *dhāraṇīs*, are considered to contain cosmic energy and to constitute the deeper level of reality in Tantric Buddhism.<sup>144</sup> In this context, to recite mantras or *dhāraṇīs* is a way to achieve deeper communion with ultimate reality.<sup>145</sup> At a less profound level, reciting mantras and *dhāraṇīs* is a way to tap into the source of cosmic energy and manipulate it. However, since there is little information about other aspects of Tantric practices in the *Thiền Uyển* (and other Vietnamese Buddhist sources), it is difficult to make any evaluation of Tantric practices in Vietnamese Buddhism. In modern times the recitation of mantras and *dhāraṇīs* is still part of daily practice (or daily chanting) of Vietnamese Buddhists. It is believed that by doing this a devotee will receive the protection of the bodhisattvas and Dharma-Protectors.<sup>146</sup> This is reminiscent of the image of the practice of mantras and *dhāraṇīs* in the *Thiền Uyển*.

According to traditional accounts of the Buddha's life, before attaining enlightenment he went into the snowy mountain and practiced austerities for six years, purifying the six senses. Such practice was considered indispensable on the path to realization in medieval Vietnamese Buddhism.

In this context austerities apparently included the entire Buddhist triple discipline fundamental for the attainment of enlightenment. This triple discipline consists of (1) moral purification, meaning the withdrawing one's senses from mundane objects and conserving one's inner energy; (2) meditation, meaning to reorient this energy toward spiritual goals; and (3) meditative concentration, or the fusion of one's mind with true reality.

### PURE LAND BUDDHISM

Pure Land Buddhism has been another principal school of East Asian Buddhism. Pure Land combines both meditative and devotional practices, probably with more emphasis on the latter. The Pure Land devotees put their faith in the salvific power of Amitābha Buddha, who long ago vowed to grant rebirth in his Pure Land to all sentient beings who simply invoke his name.<sup>147</sup> Amitābha's Pure Land is located in the west. Rebirth in the Pure Land is not considered final liberation, but Amitābha's Pure Land is a paradise where suffering does not exist. Once reborn there, one is virtually assured of eventually reaching perfect enlightenment because one is under the direct guidance of Amitābha.

By the Song dynasty a syncretism of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism had become a common trend in China. By this time, both Zen and Pure Land as well as this syncretic trend had found their way to Vietnam. It was the combined practice of Zen and Pure Land that appears to have been most attractive to the Vietnamese Buddhist elite. Most adherents of Zen used the recitation of Buddha-name as a form of meditative technique rather than a devotional practice.<sup>148</sup> For them the Pure Land is not an external location but a state of purity of mind. For the Pure Land adherents, on the other hand, Zen methods, though correct in principle, were too lofty to meet the needs of most people, and Pure Land practice was to be preferred as the simplest, most widely accessible entry point to salvation.

Although there is ample evidence to conclude that Pure Land practice and belief has always been a central element in Vietnamese Buddhism, the *Thiền Uyển* makes almost no reference to it. The only account that indirectly hints at one of the practices characteristic of Pure Land is found in Tịnh Lực's biography. Tịnh Lực built a straw retreat and spent all his time there "paying homage to the Buddha and practicing repentance, and deeply attained the *samādhi* of Buddha-contemplation."<sup>149</sup> He also instructed his disciples to contemplate Buddha-qualities and recite the Buddha-name. But in this story there is no mention of Amitābha or the Pure Land. This scant mention of Pure Land Buddhism in the *Thiền Uyển* may be due to the compiler's concern to present his work as a purely Zen book.

In sum, the records in the *Thiền Uyển* give us a very believable picture of a syncretic Buddhism in Vietnam, resting on the Triple Discipline (morality, meditation, concentration), including ritual worship and devotional practices, and featuring the chanting of *sūtras* and mantras, and prayers for supernatural aid.

### ZEN ELEMENTS

The Zen element in the *Thiền Uyển* is mostly derivative. As I demonstrated in Chapter Two, in this text most encounter dialogues supposed

to have taken place between Vietnamese monks or Zen statements and instructional verses spoken by them can be identified as borrowings (in some cases verbatim) from biographies of Chinese Zen masters in the *Chuandeng lu*. Even when we come across original verses written by Vietnamese monks that bear some Zen flavor, it is an open question whether they reflect the monks' fascination with the heroic sentiments and grandiloquence of Zen literature or whether they are indeed expressions of direct, personal spiritual experience.

### The Zen Tradition of Vietnam: An Imagined Community

From my analysis of the *Thiền Uyển*, I believe that the Zen tradition of Vietnam is an imagined community, to borrow an expression from Benedict Anderson.<sup>150</sup> In his analysis of the origin and spread of nationalism, Anderson concludes that a nation is an imagined political community.<sup>151</sup> It is so in the sense that a "nation" arises as certain cultural groupings, in response to political and social circumstances, equip themselves with institutions that a nation implies, and define themselves as a nation.

Some of the ways Anderson characterizes the nation as an imagined community are relevant for our understanding of the religious school:

1. The nation is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them.
2. The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest nation has finite boundaries.
3. The nation is imagined as a *community* because regardless of the actual inequality in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.<sup>152</sup>

We can add that some of the artifacts that members of a certain nation use to imagine their nation are shared memories—a collective consciousness of the past—and a sense of identity that overrides the manifest differences among those grouped as belonging to the same nation.

In Anderson's sense, we can say that a religious school is also an imagined community. A religious school is defined in terms of sites, institutions, and temporal transmission of legitimacy, in a way that is akin to the way a nation is defined in terms of geographical boundaries, guiding institutions, and the heroic champions who have established and defended its independent identity in history.

As with the members of a nation, a member of a Buddhist school may never be personally acquainted with any significant portion of the other members, but still holds in his mind the image of an incontestable solidarity binding them all together into a defined entity. The notion of the Zen school is rooted in certain shared assumptions that those who

consider themselves members commonly accept—for instance, the core reality of an ineffable enlightenment experience that has been handed down personally by Śākyamuni Buddha via lineages of enlightened masters.

Within this frame of reference, then, to say that the Zen school, like the nation, is an imagined community does not mean to deny its existence as imaginary and false. Even from a strictly Zen point of view, calling the “Zen school” an imagined community raises no objection, since all social identities and all groupings of people, including people with varying degrees of involvement in the Zen teachings, are imaginary identities, at best rightly guided provisional expedients, with no substantive or essential being.

I believe that to view the Zen school as an imagined community is a useful way to evaluate its internal structure, historical formation, and ontological status or degree of reality.

The last quality is particularly important. As we will see in our analysis of the Zen tradition of Vietnam in the following pages, the notion of the imagined community helps us to avoid the methodological error of assigning the same ontological status to every variety of religious school or tradition, simply because members claim membership in or allegiance to some “master school.”

In the previous chapter I cited T. Griffith Foulk's view of the “Zen school,” which I think sheds light on the Vietnamese Zen tradition. Foulk calls our attention to the fictitious nature of the Zen lineages set forth in the “lamp history” literature. Even the hagiographies and the recorded sayings of the generations of Tang Zen masters following Hui-neng survive only in late collections and cannot be found in contemporary Tang materials.<sup>153</sup> Foulk also makes the very interesting point that “the literary qualities of the text in question—especially the use of metaphor, symbolism, dramatic devices, realistic settings, and the verbatim quotation of private conversations and unspoken thoughts—are typical of fiction.”<sup>154</sup> Thus, according to Foulk, the Zen concept of a spiritually lineage (*zong*) should be considered a religious, not a historical, category.<sup>155</sup>

Foulk's distinction between the Zen lineage and the Zen school is also relevant. The Zen lineage consists of the “enlightened teachers” whose words and deeds were preserved in the lamp histories and recorded sayings. These teachers are revered as patriarchs. The Zen school, on the other hand, consists of everyone who believes in the Zen lineage, gains inspiration from its teachings, reveres its patriarchs, and follows the Zen masters who are its living representatives.<sup>156</sup> The expression “tradition” that I am using could imply both “lineage” and “school” in the



above sense. Most modern Vietnamese Buddhists can be said to imagine themselves belonging to the Zen “school.”

According to Foulk, the Zen school in medieval (Song) China, in the final analysis, was not defined by a set of distinctive practices or even a new and revolutionary form of monastic discipline, as is the view normally held among modern scholars. Rather, it consisted of three elements: A lineage, the reenacted rituals, and a corresponding institutional entity. First of all Zen consisted of a mythical lineage of the enlightened patriarchs who carried on the mind of enlightenment. These mythical stories were not only transmitted verbally and in written form but also reenacted in concrete rituals. These rituals were recognized by the government and the Buddhist community at large. This resulted in a Zen institution. Foulk points out that this “institution” contained an elite group of monks, and occasionally a few nuns and laypeople, who were regarded as the living members of the Zen lineage in the sense that they had inherited the mind of enlightenment from other recognized members of the lineage in a ritual of dharma transmission.<sup>157</sup>

Foulk’s observations apply quite well to the Zen tradition of Vietnam. First there were efforts to construct lineages of patriarchs modeled after the lamp history texts of Chinese Zen. Then there were reenacted rituals supported by the imperial court during the Trần and occasionally in the following dynasties. The Vietnamese Zen “institutions” also were an elite group of monks and aristocrats. However, upon closer analysis, we observe that these imagined lineages and institutions were short-lived and much more obscure and elusive than their predecessors in Chinese Zen.

I have pointed out that the Zen lineages recorded in the *Thiền Uyển* were unknown to the Buddhist elites of the immediately following centuries. The Trúc Lâm “Zen school” founded by Trần Nhân Tông around the end of the thirteenth century was noted by Phúc Điền, a nineteenth-century Buddhist leader and author, as the continuation of the Chinese Linji Zen school. In their extant works, the Trúc Lâm patriarchs never made mention of the two “Zen schools” of Vinītaruci and Vô Ngôn Thông or their writings, despite their being relatively close in time, although the *Thiền Uyển* states that these works enjoyed wide circulation during those centuries. Both Như Sơn (a Lê dynasty author) and Phúc Điền were obviously confused about the Zen lineages in the *Thiền Uyển*.

There are occasional records of Chinese Zen monks who came to Vietnam to teach during the Lê and Nguyễn dynasties. But not much has been recorded about their activities or teachings, and so it is well-nigh impossible to identify the kind of Buddhism they taught.

There are few recognizable traces of any specifically “Zen Buddhism” in Vietnam. In the still extant bibliographies of Buddhist books in Vietnam, we find more writings on *sūtras*, rituals, *vinaya*, but almost nothing on Zen in the form of either independent works or commentaries on Chinese Zen classics.<sup>158</sup> There are no Zen monasteries, no sizable Zen communities (we can even say *no* Zen community),<sup>159</sup> no recognizable Zen monasticism or practices as in the case of Japan or Korea.<sup>160</sup> The only literary traces of Zen we have is Zen poetry, that is, poetry that employs Zen anecdotes, jargon, metaphors, and symbols.

This is quite revealing. In fact, it is not even wrong to conclude that “Zen Buddhism” in Vietnam is as much a literary fascination as a religious development. In explaining what “Zen” was in the Vietnamese context, I would underscore the romantic, heroic quality of many famous Zen stories, such as those of the Sixth Patriarch, the illiterate woodcutter who attained perfect enlightenment, and of many other Zen masters who threw conventional decorum to the winds.

In Vietnam it is the romantic and heroic atmosphere in Zen literature that appears to be the most attractive element. As I have mentioned above, most learned Vietnamese monks at some point would emulate the Chinese Zen patriarchs and compose Zen poetry or sayings to express their romantic aspirations.

A case in point is Viên Chiếu. His biography mentions four works composed by him: (1) *Dược Sư Thập Nhị Nguyện Văn* [The Twelve Vows of the Medicine King Buddha], (2) *Tân Viên Giác Kinh* [Eulogy on the Complete Enlightenment *Sūtra*], (3) *Thập Nhị Bồ Tát Hạnh Tu Chứng Đạo Tràng* [Enlightenment Realized by the Twelve Bodhisattva Practices], and (4) *Tham Đồ Hiển Quyết* [Revelation of the Decisive Secret for Students]. The first three works are lost, but judging from their titles they are treatises on a *sūtra* and Buddhist rituals. The last work is a record of encounter dialogues between Viên Chiếu and his disciples. As Foulk has pointed out, the detailed, verbatim record of such dialogues betrays their fictitious nature.<sup>161</sup> In the case of Viên Chiếu, it confirms my observation that Zen literature was more a means for the medieval eminent monks of Vietnam to express an aspiration to emulate the heroic ways of the Chinese patriarchs than a description of what is actually practiced.

Vietnamese Buddhist history is fraught with discontinuity.<sup>162</sup> (The same can be said of Vietnamese Confucianism and Daoism.) What we know is that from the first centuries of the common era up to the Nguyễn dynasty there were monks coming mostly from China to Vietnam to spread Buddhism, who had certain affinities with certain schools of Chinese Buddhism. These teachers were independent of each other and

were based at different temples. The Vietnamese they attracted and influenced were mostly from the vicinity of the temples where the teachers were active.

Around the time of the Lý dynasty, under the influence of Zen literature coming from China, and in the general context of defining and validating a new order, we witness the first efforts to define schools of Buddhism in Vietnam. At this time Zen was at the height of its prestige throughout the sinocentric world. Different groups developed in a more or less diffuse fashion under the direct or indirect influence of different teachers were artificially lumped together as Zen lineages in lamp history texts that were modeled after the Chinese *Chuangdeng lu*. The imagined Zen-identity started to take shape.

Subsequent generations of Vietnamese Buddhist leaders up to the present time have always laid claim to this Zen-identity whenever there were political or other reasons to invoke an identity. At stake in this effort to tie Vietnamese Buddhism to Zen has been a felt need to establish an orthodox identity. Zen is the preferred affiliation to claim because Zen has always retained the prestige it won in the Tang and Song eras. In the Vietnamese Buddhists' hearts and minds, Zen is felt to be the essence of Buddhism, and its highest form.

In fact, Zen in Vietnam has never been a "school" in the sense of a recognizable social institution with an identifiable set of scriptures, doctrines, and practices. For the ordinary Vietnamese Buddhists, Zen was (and probably still is) merely "a rumor from the monasteries." They never actually embraced it as they did the devotional, ritualistic Buddhism that bears more resemblance to Pure Land Buddhism.

Drawing on Anderson's concept, and taking into account Foulk's analysis of the Zen school in Song China, we can conclude that the Zen school at large is an "imagined community." Even so we can observe that Zen has never been a tradition or school in Vietnam the same way it has been in China, Japan, or Korea. However, even if we do not accept the image of a "school" in the Foulk's sense, it would be wrong to deny the presence of different Zen groups in medieval and premodern Vietnam.

We can say that in Vietnam, Zen Buddhism manifests itself, ever so vaguely but perennially, in philosophical attitudes, styles of ethical behavior, and artistic sentiments. Zen in Vietnam is scattered across religious and cultural life—but not as a cohesive system of thought embraced by a recognizable lasting physical community.<sup>163</sup>



PART II

The *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*:  
A Translation

## PART III

# Appendixes



## Appendix I

# Additional Supporting Data for Chapter One

### History of the Transmission of the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*

The text that is the topic of our study here has generally been referred to in Vietnamese literature by two names: *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* [A Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Community] and *Đại Nam Thiền Uyển Truyền Đăng Tập Lục* [A Record of Transmission of the Lamp in the Zen Community of Đại Nam], after the 1715 edition under the [Later] Lê (1533–1788) and the 1858 edition under the Nguyễn (1802–1945).<sup>1</sup> Actually this text has been referred to by still other names,<sup>2</sup> yet *Thiền Uyển* seems to be the original title of the text in its first complete, edited version.

Although some information has been provided by the studies of Trần Văn Giáp and Émile Gaspardone,<sup>3</sup> we still do not know much about the situation of the text before and after the edition of 1715. Among extant literary documents, the earliest mention of the *Thiền Uyển* is found in Lê Quý Đôn's *Nghệ Văn Chí* [Description of Arts and Literature],<sup>4</sup> in which he remarked that the *Thiền Uyển* was a one-fascicle work composed by an author who lived during the Trần dynasty (1225–1400), recording information about Zen sects and biographies of eminent monks of Vietnam from the time of the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties up to the period including the Trần through the Đinh (968–980), [Former] Lê (980–1009), and Lý (1010–1225) dynasties. Phan Huy Chú's *Văn Tịch Chí* [Descriptive Bibliography]<sup>5</sup> was content merely to repeat Lê Quý Đôn's comment, adding that the *Thiền Uyển* consists of six fascicles. The two editions that are currently available to us, however, consist respectively of two fascicles and one fascicle.<sup>6</sup>

Phan Huy Chú's remark seems to indicate the existence of an edition earlier than the Lê edition. First, let us consider the question of the actual existence of this edition, which we will tentatively refer to as the Trần edition, taking into consideration the date of the composition of the text.



### THE TRẦN EDITION

Although neither of the two extant editions of the *Thiền Uyển* gives us the exact date of its composition, there are plausible reasons for us to believe that the *Thiền Uyển* is a work composed during the Trần dynasty. Nowadays, though, the earliest edition of the text that we have at our disposal is the Lê edition of 1715. Thus, whatever information we now have about the text derives from this 1715 edition and Lê Quí Đôn's remarks in his *Nghệ Văn Chí*.

A section on "Immortals and Buddhist Monks" in the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* [Source Book on An Nam], an early fifteenth-century work, records sketchy biographies of twenty Zen Masters. Thirteen of these are mentioned in the *Thiền Uyển*.<sup>7</sup> Except for Thảo Đường, whose biography is not recorded in the *Thiền Uyển*, the *An Nam Chí Nguyên*'s records of the other Zen Masters are almost identical to certain passages in their biographies in the *Thiền Uyển*. In light of this fact, Lê Mạnh Thát has suggested that the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* must have derived its information directly from the *Thiền Uyển*, or at least from a source that quoted the *Thiền Uyển*.<sup>8</sup> However, it seems that the author of the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* did not know of the existence of the *Thiền Uyển* since he claimed to have gathered the information about those Buddhist monks from either oral sources or other old records.<sup>9</sup> Since the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* is believed to have been composed around 1419, Lê Mạnh Thát concludes that the "old records" its author refers to must have quoted from the most ancient edition of the *Thiền Uyển*, or the Trần edition.

In conclusion, we have reasonable evidence to believe that there existed a Trần edition of the *Thiền Uyển*. Nguyễn Văn Chất<sup>10</sup>—an author living in the fifteenth century—who composed an appendix to Lý Tế Xuyên's *Việt Điện*,<sup>11</sup> did mention the *Thiền Uyển* in this work.<sup>12</sup> This is clear evidence that there existed an edition of the *Thiền Uyển* (probably the Trần edition) prior to the Lê edition of 1715. However, the *Thiền Uyển* does not seem to have been in wide circulation, since it was not known to some authors of the Trần dynasty. For example, Lê Trắc, in the section on Buddhist monks in his *An Nam Chí Lược* [Brief Records of An Nam], does not appear to have had the *Thiền Uyển* at his disposal for reference.

### THE LÊ EDITION

This was published in 1715 and is the oldest edition that we have nowadays. The text consists of two fascicles, respectively called *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh Ngũ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Community], upper fascicle and *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*, lower fascicle. The upper fascicle records the Vô Ngôn Thông lineage and the lower

fascicle gives the Vinītaruci lineage with a list of names of the monks belonging to the Thảo Đường school.

We have almost no information about the editor of this edition. From the preface written in the fourth month of the Vĩnh Thịnh era of the Lê dynasty (1715), we know only that he was a learned Confucian who admired Buddhism and edited the text at the request of his friend, a Zen Buddhist monk.<sup>13</sup>

### THE NGUYỄN EDITION

This was published by Phúc Điền<sup>14</sup> as *Dại Nam Thiền Uyển Truyền Đăng Tập Lục*, upper fascicle. Phúc Điền did not write a preface or record the date of publication of the text. He only gave a short note stating that the edition he used was the old woodblock kept at Tiêu Sơn Temple, of which the name of the compiler was lost. Phúc Điền neglected to explain why he renamed the text *Dại Nam Thiền Uyển Truyền Đăng Tập Lục*, upper fascicle. Fortunately, we find the answer in a preface written by Phúc Điền entitled “Truyền Đăng Ngũ Quyển Tân Tự” [“New Preface to the Transmission of the Lamp in Five Fascicles”] found at the beginning of Như Sơn’s *Thiền Diển Thống Yếu Kế Đăng Lục* [Continuation of the Record of the Transmission of the Lamp] (*Kế Đăng Lục*).<sup>15</sup> This preface states that the *Dại Nam* was published in 1858 [i.e., the twelfth year of the Tự Đức era of the Nguyễn dynasty] as the “upper fascicle” of a larger project intended as a complete history of the Zen transmission in Vietnam. Phúc Điền wrote:<sup>16</sup>

In the old days in our country there was the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* giving brief records of the virtuous, eminent monks of the three dynasties (of Đinh, [Former] Lê, and Lý). In general, the records are vague and incoherent. Therefore, I have edited and recopied it in order to preserve the ancient text, and have made it a separate upper fascicle. Up through the Trần dynasty there was the *Thánh Đăng Ngũ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of Transmission of the Sacred Lamp] in one fascicle, which recorded only [biographies of] the three patriarchs of the Trần. There were stories but no portraits.

During the Later Lê, the Patriarch Như Sơn, basing himself on the *Wudeng huiyuan* [the Chinese Zen collection, The Five Lamps Meeting at the Source] composed a three-fascicle *Kế Đăng Lục*, which included both stories and portraits. Như Sơn’s work began with Bhīṣmagarjitavarāja Buddha, then related the stories of the Seven Ancient Buddhas, and finally recorded the biographies of forty-seven Indian patriarchs, and twenty-three Chinese patriarchs, together with the Linji School of our country descended from the three patriarchs Chuyết Công, Minh Lương, and Chân Nguyên. As for the true school of Caodong, there

were the Venerable Thủy Nguyệt and Tông Diễn. As for the Linji School, [Nhu Sơn] did not record the transmission [of the generations] after Chân Nguyên's transmission to the Eminent Cửu Sinh. Therefore, I follow the order of [Nhu Sơn's] *Kế Đăng Lục*, supplemented with the [biographies of] the five patriarchs. . . .

I am concerned that the lamp of the patriarchs is about to be extinguished, so I muster all my energy to record briefly [biographies of] the three patriarchs of the Trần along with those of [the patriarchs of] the two schools of Linji and Caodong. I combine these into a single collection, together with the miscellaneous records from outside sources, and make this into a separate lower fascicle. [I do this] so that the Dharma will continue to be transmitted and the lamp will be perpetuated.<sup>16</sup>

According to this, Phúc Điền had at his disposal the *Thiền Uyển*, the one-fascicle *Thánh Đăng Lục*, which records the biographies of the three patriarchs (of the Trúc Lâm Zen school) of the Trần dynasty, and Nhu Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục*. Phúc Điền considered this last work to be more complete and coherent than the previous two texts, because it records the transmission of the lamp from the time of Bhīṣmagarjitasvarāja Buddha and the seven Ancient Buddhas, through all the generations of patriarchs in India and China, up to the founders of the Linji and Caodong schools in Vietnam.<sup>17</sup>

What appears to be somewhat unclear is the title of the "Preface." We are not certain what Phúc Điền meant by "the Transmission of the Lamp in Five Fascicles." Nguyễn Lang gives the interpretation that Phúc Điền's project was to use the *Thiền Uyển* as the upper fascicle, Nhu Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục* (in three fascicles) as the middle fascicle, and the *Thánh Đăng Lục* (in one fascicle) and further biographies (from outside sources) of eminent Vietnamese Linji and Caodong monks as the lower fascicle. Thus, the Nguyễn edition of the *Thiền Uyển* was to become the *Đại Nam* upper fascicle of this complete five-fascicle project. The projected work was named "Transmission of the Lamp in Five Fascicles," obviously because Nhu Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục* itself consists of three fascicles. Lê Mạnh Thát gives almost the same explanation, except for the fact that he seems to ignore the *Thánh Đăng Lục* and remarks that the last fascicle of the "Five Fascicle" project was Phúc Điền's own work on the three patriarchs of the Trần, the Linji and Caodong schools, and other miscellaneous notes.

Neither of these explanations seems to be completely satisfactory. Phúc Điền himself did compose a text that was explicitly purported to be the continuation (i.e., the lower fascicle) to the *Đại Nam* as the upper fascicle. In fact, he named his work *Thiền Uyển Truyền Đăng Lục, Quyển Hạ* [The Transmission of the Lamp in the Zen Community, Lower Fas-

cicle], or *Đại Nam Thiền Uyển Kế Đăng Lục Tục Tự Trần Chu Tổ Lâm Tế Tào Động Quyển Hạ* [A Brief Record of the Transmission of the Lamp from the Patriarchs of the Linji and Caodong Schools of the Trần Dynasty, Lower Fascicle] (*Kế Đăng Lục Tục*).<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Phúc Điền did not state in the preface that he would use the *Thánh Đăng Lục* and Như Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục* as the middle or lower fascicle. He seems to have mentioned them only as sources or models for his own work. Thus, "the Transmission of the Lamp in Five Fascicles" would mean the *Thiền Uyển* (one fascicle), the *Thánh Đăng Lục* (one fascicle), and Như Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục* (three fascicles). Phúc Điền's original intention was probably to edit these three works as a five-fascicle complete history of the Zen transmission in Vietnam. He might have been dissatisfied with Như Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục*, since this work, relying heavily on the Chinese *Wudeng huiyuan*, records only sketchy biographies of Indian and Chinese patriarchs and nothing on Vietnamese monks. That is why Phúc Điền wrote a new preface stating his aspiration to compose a lower fascicle (i.e., continuation) to the *Thiền Uyển* by combining the *Thánh Đăng Lục* with biographies and short sayings and teachings of the Vietnamese patriarchs of the Linji and Caodong schools which he (and obviously his disciples) had diligently collected from written historical records and other documents found in various temples.

Phúc Điền did not give the date of the composition of the *Kế Đăng Lục Tục*. It could have been started in 1858, the year he wrote the "Preface." From the contents of this book, one gets the impression that Phúc Điền started the work, but that it was finished by some of his disciples. This is because his name was mentioned several times, particularly in the later part of the book, and there is a section devoted to his own biography.<sup>19</sup>

The Lê and the Nguyễn editions are almost identical except for some minor different readings. The main discrepancy is that in the Nguyễn edition the content of the biography of Không Lộ is totally different from that in the Lê edition. In the Nguyễn edition, Không Lộ's biography is inadvertently combined with the biography of Nguyễn Minh Không.<sup>20</sup> Thus the biography of Nguyễn Minh Không, who belonged to the thirteenth generation of the Vinītaruci lineage, is completely missing from this edition. Another minor variation is that the section on Viên Chiếu's biography in the Phúc Điền edition is missing a page compared to the Lê edition.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the text edited by Phúc Điền, the *Đại Nam*, does not include the preface written by the editor of the 1715 edition. This is more evidence that the old text kept at Tiêu Sơn Temple was not identical with the Lê edition.<sup>22</sup>

On the Date and Author  
of the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*

DATE

The issue of the *Thiền Uyển*'s exact date of composition and author remains unsolved. On the basis of the information provided by Lê Quý Đôn, along with some other historical and internal evidence found in the text, there is a consensus among scholars who have studied the text that it is a work of the Trần dynasty.

Trần Văn Giáp, who discovered the *Thiền Uyển* and was also the first to study it,<sup>23</sup> summed up these facts and suggested an exact date for its composition. Giáp presents two reasons for believing that the *Thiền Uyển* was composed in the Trần dynasty:

1. The date of the deaths of the latest monks whose biographies were recorded: Y Sơn, the last master of the Vinītaruci school, died in 1213; Hiện Quang, the last master of the Vô Ngôn Thông school, died in 1221; Thông Thiền, although one generation earlier than Hiện Quang, did not die until 1228; the account of the Thảo Đường school ends with Lý Cao Tông, who died in 1205.<sup>24</sup>

2. Khuông Việt's biography contains the following record of the Chinese envoy Li Jue's mission to Vietnam, which turns out to be a crucial element for determining the date of the *Thiền Uyển*:

In the seventh year [of the Tianfu era (987)] the Song envoy Ruan Jue (Nguyễn Giác in Vietnamese pronunciation) came to [Vietnam] on a peace mission. At this time the Dharma Master [Đỗ Thuận] was also well known. Emperor Lê Đại Hành ordered Khuông Việt to put aside his monk's garb and to act as a court minister.<sup>25</sup>

The same event was also recorded in the *Cương Mục* [Outline of History]:

In the second year, *bính tuất*, of the Tianfu era (962) [*sic*] the Song court sent Li Ruoshuo and Li Jue on a diplomatic mission bringing along the decree investing the King of Annam as the Prefect of Giao Chỉ.<sup>26</sup>

The two texts apparently refer to the same historical event, with the only difference that in the *Thiền Uyển* the surname of the Chinese envoy Li Jue (Lý Giác in Vietnamese pronunciation) has been changed to Nguyễn (Ruan in Chinese). The *Toàn Thư* also informs us that in the sixth month of the first year of the Thiên Ứng Chính Bình era (1232) of the Trần dynasty, the court issued an order to have those with the family name Lý change it to Nguyễn. There were two reasons for this. First, since the

Trần had overthrown the Lý by force, this decree was intended to uproot any loyalty for the Lý remaining in the people's hearts. Second, this decree reflects the taboo on using the name of the sovereign, since the personal name of the father of Trần Thái Tông, the founder of the Trần dynasty, was Lý.

Giáp argues that the author of the *Thiền Uyển* must have followed this order and substituted Nguyễn Giác (Ruan Jue) for Lý Giác (Li Jue). From this he concludes that the *Thiền Uyển* must have been composed during the Trần dynasty, sometime after 1232 when the prohibition was issued. Referring to a statement at the end of Vô Ngôn Thông's biography that "[having lasted] up to now, the twenty-fourth year, *đinh Sửu*, of the Khai Hựu era (1337), the Zen tradition in our country started with him,"<sup>27</sup> Trần Văn Giáp suggests that the year 1337 can be considered as the exact date of the composition of the *Thiền Uyển*.

Émile Gaspardone has pointed out that Trần Văn Giáp's solution is not completely satisfactory, since Giáp seems to have ignored some difficulties in the passage on which he bases his conclusions. For instance, the Khai Hựu era (1329–1341) under Trần Minh Tông lasted only twelve years<sup>28</sup> and not twenty-four years. Besides, the year *đinh Sửu* was the ninth year of the Khai Hựu era and not the twenty-fourth. Gaspardone also points out some inconsistencies in Giáp's interpretation of the same passage in his essay.<sup>29</sup> Gaspardone concludes that we cannot establish the exact date for the *Thiền Uyển* based on such an obscure passage. We cannot resolve the inconsistency of the passage, and in any case we cannot conclude that the year *đinh Sửu* of the Khai Hựu era (1337) was the year the *Thiền Uyển* was composed. I am inclined, however, to take the date 1337 (*đinh Sửu*, Khai Hựu ninth year) seriously, at least as the earliest plausible date for the *Thiền Uyển*. That the text gives "twenty-fourth" instead of "ninth" could very well have been due to a scribal error. In any case, the author did give us a clue, and taken together with other evidence, it appears to be a significant one.

In sum, we can say only that the *Thiền Uyển* is a work composed during the Trần dynasty, probably sometime after 1232 and before the end of the fifteenth century. Three facts lead to this conclusion: (1) The decree to change the Lý family name to Nguyễn was issued in 1232. (2) Nguyễn Văn Chất, who lived in the fifteenth century, drew on the *Thiền Uyển* to compose the legend of Sóc Thiên Vương in his appendix to the *Việt Điện*. (3) Although the *Thiền Uyển* claims to record life stories of eminent monks of the Đinh, [Former] Lê, Lý, and Trần dynasties, none of the monks whose biographies were recorded lived beyond the middle of the thirteenth century. This shows that the author did not live beyond the Trần dynasty.

## AUTHORSHIP

At present we know virtually nothing about the author's identity. Lê Quý Đôn and Phan Huy Chú give us nothing. Both Trần Văn Giáp and Émile Gaspardone are almost silent on this issue. We can conjecture that the author of the *Thiền Uyển* might have been a monk belonging to the Vô Ngôn Thông school, because the biographies of the monks of this school are put before those of the Vinītaruci school, and the author remarks at the end of Thông's biography that the Zen tradition in Vietnam began with him. This is somewhat odd, since we know that according to tradition, Vinītaruci arrived in Vietnam and established a Zen lineage almost three centuries before Vô Ngôn Thông.

Lê Mạnh Thát, the only modern scholar who attempts to solve the problem of the authorship of the *Thiền Uyển*, has suggested that a monk named Kim Sơn was the author of the *Thiền Uyển*.<sup>30</sup> Thát makes the following argument.

During the fourteenth century, the only Zen tradition that remained in Vietnam was the Trúc Lâm (Bamboo Grove) school, of which Emperor Trần Nhân Tông (r. 1279–1293) was the first patriarch.<sup>31</sup> We learn from the [*Huệ Trung*] *Thuật Giảng Sư Ngữ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of the Eminent Huệ Trung]<sup>32</sup> that this school originated with Thông Thiền,<sup>33</sup> a Zen master of the Vô Ngôn Thông lineage. Trần Minh Tông (r. 1314–1329), Trần Nhân Tông's grandson, reputed to be a literary man, was very interested in history. During his reign he was known for requesting eminent monks to compose books on topics related to Buddhism.<sup>34</sup> There are records still extant about the relationship between Minh Tông and Kim Sơn.<sup>35</sup> Lê Mạnh Thát therefore suggests that Kim Sơn must have composed the *Thiền Uyển* at the request of Trần Minh Tông. Since there are no historical records directly (or indirectly) referring to Kim Sơn as the author of the *Thiền Uyển*, I mention Lê Mạnh Thát's suggestion merely as a hypothesis, pending the discovery of more materials concerning this issue.

### Source Materials for the Composition of the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*

The *Thiền Uyển*, as evidenced by the title and contents of the text, was consciously intended as a work in the Zen tradition. This is reflected clearly in his copious borrowing from the model Zen biographical collection, the *Jingde chuandeng lu* [Transmission of the Lamp Composed during the Jingde Era] (*Chuandeng lu*).<sup>36</sup> It is the author's manifest intent that gives the *Thiền Uyển* its unique historical and cultural value.

Let us examine the sources that the author of the *Thiền Uyển* used and his method of drawing on them. Inspired by Chinese Zen literature, the

author of the *Thiền Uyển* was moved to produce a systematic history of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam. With some oral transmissions and previous compilations as his source materials, and the *Chuandeng lu* as a model, the author composed a work that became the first comprehensive historical treatment of the Buddhist tradition in Vietnam.

The following texts are directly referred to throughout the *Thiền Uyển* as its main source materials:

1. The *Chiếu Đối Lục* [Collated Biographies] of Thông Biện and Biện Tài
2. The *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ* [Diagram of the Succession of the Dharma of the Southern School] by Thường Chiếu
3. The *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngữ* [Essential Sayings of the Patriarchs] of Huệ Nhật

(These texts are discussed in detail in Appendix II.)

As secondary sources, *Thiền Uyển* drew on:

1. The *Sử Ký* [Record of History]
2. The *Quốc Sử* [National History]<sup>37</sup>

The *Quốc Sử* is mentioned three times. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, the *Quốc Sử* is probably the *Đại Việt Sử Ký* [A Recorded History of Đại Việt] composed by Lê Văn Hưu. This history was a result of the revision of a work by Trần Chu Phổ by Lê Văn Hưu by royal decree under Trần Thái Tông (r. 1225–1258); it was finished in 1272.<sup>38</sup>

The second historical source cited in the *Thiền Uyển* is the *Sử Ký* [Recorded History]. It is mentioned only once, in the biography of Khánh Hỷ, where it reads: “According to the *Sử Ký*, he passed away in the third year of the Thiên Chương Bảo Tự era.”<sup>39</sup> Hoàng Xuân Hãn suggests that the note was added by the editor of the 1715 edition, and thus identifies the *Sử Ký* with Ngô Sĩ Liên’s *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* [A Complete History of Đại Việt]. Lê Mạnh Thát disagrees: his opinion is that the *Sử Ký* cited here is the *Sử Ký* composed by Đỗ Thiện, a work quoted four times in the *Việt Điện*.<sup>40</sup> We know that the *Việt Điện* was composed by Lý Tế Xuyên in 1329, so Đỗ Thiện’s *Sử Ký* must have preceded it.

Analyzing the source materials for the *Thiền Uyển* provides us with a basis for evaluating the methodology and content of the text. Given the explicit content and the implicit intention of the *Thiền Uyển*, I find it hard to agree with Lê Mạnh Thát’s remark that the author of the book “wished to achieve a method of writing history in an objective and scientific way.”<sup>41</sup>

Rather, in compiling the text, the author of the *Thiền Uyển* had a more complicated intention and objective, one that has exercised a significant and lasting influence on the Vietnamese Buddhist tradition: to provide a legitimating framework for Vietnamese Buddhism as an independent tradition with a definite, deep-rooted history of its own.



## Appendix II

### Additional Supporting Data for Chapter Two

#### “Transmission of the Lamp” Texts in Vietnam before the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*

From the records in the *Thiền Uyển* we learn of a few texts of the “transmission of the lamp” genre that existed in Vietnam prior to the compilation of the *Thiền Uyển*. This indicates that the efforts to establish Vietnamese Buddhism as a legitimate continuity of Chinese Zen had been going on even prior to the time of the *Thiền Uyển*. It is interesting to note that prior to the period from 1272 to 1400, which E. S. Ungar has characterized as the period of political/historical maturity in Vietnamese intellectual history,<sup>1</sup> the *Chuandeng lu* had provided the Vietnamese Buddhist elite with a conceptual model for an awareness of the transmission of Buddhism as an independent history.

The compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* relied considerably on earlier texts to compile his book. These were the *Chiếu Đối Lục* [Collated Biographies], *Huệ Nhật Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngữ* [Essential Sayings of the Patriarchs Composed by Huệ Nhật], *Nam Tông Tụ Pháp Đồ* [Diagram of the Succession of the Dharma of the Southern School], and *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* [Summarized Diagram of the Zen Schools]. Unfortunately, none of these works is extant, except for a short preface to the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ*.<sup>2</sup> Some scanty information about them can be gleaned from the records in the *Thiền Uyển* and from other descriptive bibliographical notes.

#### CHIẾU ĐỐI LỤC OR CHIẾU ĐỐI BẢN

This text was composed by Thông Biện (died 1134) and later revised by Biện Tài.<sup>3</sup> We read in the biography of Thần Nghi (died 1216)<sup>4</sup> that when he asked Thường Chiếu (died 1203) for instruction on the successive generations of Zen transmission in Vietnam, Thường Chiếu showed him Thông Biện's *Chiếu Đối Bản*. This tells us that by this time the idea of Zen transmission and lineage had been in circulation for some time

among the Vietnamese Buddhist elite. In Biện Tài's biography it is said that he obeyed a royal order to revise the *Chiếu Đối Lục*. We do not know whether the original text was entitled *Chiếu Đối Bản* and Biện Tài's revised version was called *Chiếu Đối Lục*, or there was a single text referred to by both names. In any case, both texts are lost so we do not have much information about their contents. They might have been the first works of the "transmission of the lamp" genre in Vietnam, and as such, the first texts to establish the Zen lineages in Vietnam.

#### NAM TÔNG TỰ PHÁP ĐỒ

This was composed by Thường Chiếu (died 1203).<sup>5</sup> This work is mentioned five times in the *Thiền Uyển*, in the biographies of Thường Chiếu, Thần Nghi, Ma Ha, and Định Huệ, and in the list of the Thảo Đường lineage.<sup>6</sup> We learn that the *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ*, despite its title, is more than just a diagram of the lineages, for it also contains biographies: The *Thiền Uyển* itself states that the "main biographies" (*benzbuan*) of Không Lộ and Giác Hải can be found in the *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ*.<sup>7</sup>

Thường Chiếu uses the expression "Nam Tông" [Southern School]. The Vinītaruci school is traditionally referred to as "the Southern school." We know that the *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ* records biographies of both the Vinītaruci and the Vô Ngôn Thông schools. By "Nam Tông," Thường Chiếu probably means the Southern school of Chinese Zen, the school that considered Huineng the Sixth Patriarch of Zen in China. Thường Chiếu thus seems to agree with Thông Biện in approving of both Zen schools in Vietnam as legitimate offshoots of the Southern school of Chinese Zen. The compiler of the *Thiền Uyển*, on the other hand, does not seem to agree with him.

To sum up, Thường Chiếu appears to have studied Thông Biện's works very carefully and considered them authoritative. He even defended Thông Biện for not recording the two lineages of Nguyễn Đại Diên and Nguyễn Bát Nhã.<sup>8</sup> Thường Chiếu, therefore, might have used the *Chiếu Đối Lục* as a model he followed in composing his own *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ*. These two works proved to be the main sources for the author of the *Thiền Uyển* in compiling biographies of Vietnamese "Zen masters" from the sixth to the end of twelfth century.

#### LIỆT TỔ YẾU NGŨ

This text was composed by Huệ Nhật. This work is mentioned twice in the *Thiền Uyển*, in the biographies of Tịnh Không (1091–1170) and Nguyễn Học (?–1181), without giving any information about its author.<sup>9</sup> Since the *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngũ* is no longer extant, and no other source in

Vietnamese literature besides the *Thiền Uyển* refers to it, we know absolutely nothing about its author, Huệ Nhật.<sup>10</sup>

From the way the *Thiền Uyển* refers to these works, it seems that the *Chiếu Đối Lục* and *Nam Tông Tụ Pháp Đồ* provided the compiler of *Thiền Uyển* with biographical notes on eminent monks, and that he had to resort to the *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngữ* for encounter dialogues and instructional verses.

The biographies of Tịnh Không and Nguyễn Học are two explicit examples.<sup>11</sup> Even the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* calls our attention to the fact that encounter dialogues and instructional verses in these two biographies are identical with those in the biographies of the two Chinese Zen masters Jiashan and Huisu as recorded in the *Chuangdeng lu*.<sup>12</sup> Let us look at a few examples:

1. In Tịnh Không's biography, one of his encounter dialogues with another monk reads as follows:

One day, when Tịnh Không had gone up to the teaching hall, a monk with a staff came and asked, "What is the Truth Body (*Dharmakāya*)?" Tịnh Không said, "The Truth Body is originally without form." The monk continued, "What is the Dharma-eye?" Tịnh Không said, "The Dharma-eye is originally without obstruction." He again said, "There is no Dharma in front of the eye. There is only consciousness in front of the eye. The Dharma is not within range of ear and eye." The monk laughed loudly. Tịnh Không said, "What are you laughing about?" The monk said, "You're the type who have left the world to become a monk but have not grasped the message [of Zen]. You should go study with Master Đạo Huệ." Tịnh Không said, "Can I still go see this master?" The monk said, "Above there's not a single roof tile, below there's not enough ground to stick an awl into." Tịnh Không then changed his clothes and headed for Mount Tiên Du.<sup>13</sup>

Compare this with the encounter dialogue between Jiashan and Daowu in the biography of Jiashan in the *Chuangdeng lu*:

One day Zen Master Jiashan Shanhui was coming up to the teaching hall when Daowu came with his staff. A monk asked, "What is the Truth Body?" Jiashan said, "The Truth Body is without form." The monk continued, "What is the Dharma-eye?" Jiashan said, "The Dharma-eye is stainless." He again said, "There is no Dharma in front of the eye. The Dharma is not within range of ear and eye." Daowu laughed. Jiashan became confused and asked him, "What are you laughing about?" Daowu said, "Venerable sir, you're the type who left the world to become a monk yet haven't met a teacher. You should go to Zhezong, Huating Village to study with the Venerable Chuanzi." Jiashan

said, “Can I still go see him?” Daowu said, “With that teacher, above there’s not a single roof tile to cover his head, below there’s not enough ground for him to stick an awl into.”<sup>14</sup>

2. It is recorded in Nguyễn Học’s biography that when he was about to pass away he spoke two verses instructing his students. One of them reads as follows:

The Dharma has no image or form,  
It is right before your eyes, not far away.  
You have to turn back and find it in yourself,  
Do not seek it from others.  
Even if you find it from them,  
It wouldn’t be the true Dharma.  
But suppose you find the true Dharma,  
What kind of a thing is it?<sup>15</sup>

This is almost identical with a verse spoken by Huisi recorded in the *Chuandeng lu*:

The Dharma is essentially not far away,  
The ocean of the True Nature is not immense.  
Try to find it within yourself,  
Do not seek it from others.  
Even if you find it from them,  
It wouldn’t be the true Dharma.<sup>16</sup>

The second verse by Nguyễn Học is also identical to another verse spoken by Huisi. The author of the *Thiền Uyển* also informs us that the encounter dialogues and instructional verses in the above two biographies were taken from the *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngữ*. This seems to show that the *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngữ* was an earlier Vietnamese “transmission of the lamp” text that drew heavily on the *Chuandeng lu*. (Note that cases of interpolation of dialogues and verses borrowed from the *Chuandeng lu* are not restricted to the biographies of Tịnh Không and Nguyễn Học.)

#### *LƯỢC DẪN THIỀN PHÁI ĐỒ*

This work was composed by an unknown author of the Trần dynasty: As its title suggests, this is a brief, annotated diagram of the origin and development of the Trúc Lâm [Bamboo Grove] Zen school, the only genuine Vietnamese Zen school with a Vietnamese founder and a lineage of successors.

The *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* is too brief and does not appear to have been an independent work; it is not mentioned by the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* either. However, it is relevant in this connection, since it was an attempt to trace the transmission of Zen in Vietnam and thus

falls within the “transmission of the lamp” genre, and it is the only extant document of its kind. This “annotated diagram” is included in the preface to the [*Huệ Trung*] *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of the Eminent Huệ Trung], a Trần dynasty Zen teacher.<sup>17</sup> We have evidence to believe that the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* was written circa 1310–1313.<sup>18</sup> The main purpose of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* as reflected in its preface was to set forth the genealogy of the Trúc Lâm school within the broader context of the Zen tradition:

After our Great Sage Śākyamuni Buddha transmitted the treasure of the eye of the true Dharma, which is the wondrous mind of Nirvana, to the Venerable Mahākāśyapa, it was transmitted for twenty-eight generations until it reached the Great Master Bodhidharma. He came to China and transmitted [the true Dharma] to the Great Master Shengguang.<sup>19</sup> From Shengguang the transmission continued for six generations until it reached the Great Master Shenhui. It was at that time that the true Dharma came to our country.

It is not known who was the first one to receive it [in our country]. The records begin with Zen Master Chanyue (Thiền Nguyệt) who transmitted [the true Dharma] to Lý Thái Tông, then to the Elder Định Hương, then to the Great Master Viên Chiếu, then to Zen Master Đạo Huệ—from one generation to the next, sometimes their names were known sometimes unknown. It is difficult to trace the lineage.

{The Zen tradition in our country} can be divided into three lineages:

1. Our lineage has already been set forth in the diagram, so it is not necessary to recount it again.

2. Zen Master Vương Chí Nhân transmitted it to Venerable Nhiệm Tạng. Nhiệm Tạng transmitted it to Layman Nhiệm Tú. This lineage is now lost, and its transmission is not known.

3. Venerable Nhật Thiển received [the true Dharma] from a certain [unknown] teacher. He transmitted it to Prince Chân Đạo. At the present time, this lineage is also fading. Also, there was Layman Tianfeng (Thiên Phong) who came from Zhangquan and was a contemporary of Yingshun (Ứng Thuận). Tianfeng claimed he belonged to the Linji school. He transmitted [the true Dharma] to National Preceptor Dadeng (Đại Đăng) and Venerable Nansi (Nan Tư).

Dadeng transmitted it to our Emperor [Trần] Thánh Tông, to National Preceptor Liễu Minh, to Huyền Sách and others. Huyền Sách transmitted it to Phả Trắc and others. Now this lineage is also deteriorating and is not in a very glorious state. Alas! The flourishing and decline of the Zen School is beyond words.

Now I am briefly enumerating the lineages of the Zen School [in our country] to leave [an account] to posterity, so that the generations of scholars to come will know that Zen has a source that can be traced. This is not just my own fabrication.

In this text, the author describes the origin and the situation of Buddhism in Vietnam during his time as follows:

1. The “True Dharma” (Buddhism) first came to Vietnam at the time of Shenhui (684–758). However, the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* was quick to note that it was not known “who was the first to receive [the Dharma] in our country,” and that the record only starts with Chanyue (Thiền Nguyệt),<sup>20</sup> who transmitted the Dharma to Lý Thái Tông (r. 1029–1054), then to Định Hương (?–1051), to Viên Chiếu (999–1090), to Đạo Huệ (?–1073), and others.<sup>21</sup>

2. By the early fourteenth century when the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* was written, there were four Zen lineages in Vietnam: The first lineage started with Thông Thiền (?–1228),<sup>22</sup> who transmitted the Dharma to Túc Lự, to Ứng Thuận, to Xiaoyao (Tiêu Diêu), and to Hui-zhong (Huệ Trung). Huệ Trung then transmitted the Dharma to Trúc Lâm, i.e., Emperor Trần Nhân Tông (r. 1279–1293), who founded the Trúc Lâm Zen sect. The second lineage was transmitted by Zen Master Vương Chí Nhân; the third by Zen Master Nhật Thiển; and the fourth by Layman Tianfeng, a contemporary of Ứng Thuận, who claimed to belong to the Linji school. According to the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ*, these three lineages were already fading at his time and not much was known about them.

As we review this account of Buddhist history, a few things deserve consideration.

First, the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* remarks that “the True Dharma” (*zhengfa*) came to Vietnam at the time of Shenhui.” Whether by “True Dharma” he meant either Zen Buddhism or simply Buddhism, this statement does not seem to be correct, since we have archeological and historical evidence of the presence of Buddhism in Vietnam prior to the time of Shenhui and very little evidence of the introduction of Zen to Vietnam at the time of Shenhui.<sup>23</sup> Still, the connection the author makes between Shenhui and the origin of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam might be more than a chance conjecture: There might have been Chinese monks of Shenhui’s lineage who came to Vietnam to spread Zen Buddhism and whose Vietnamese disciples strove to establish some sort of a Zen school in Vietnam.

Second, note that the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* was probably written less than thirty years before the *Thiền Uyển*, yet the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* seems to know nothing of either Vinītaruci or Vô Ngôn Thông. In fact, he did not know of any teachers before Thiền Lão.<sup>24</sup> Some modern scholars like Lê Mạnh Thát have argued that this is because these authors did not have access to the materials used by the author of *Thiền Uyển*. But then again, the author of the *Thiền Uyển* did not seem to know of some of the “lineages” mentioned by the author of

the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ*, for instance. This suggests that there were various alternative versions of the history and contemporary situation of Buddhism in Vietnam current at that time.

While the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* might tell us something about the genealogy of the Trúc Lâm school, its author seems surprisingly nebulous about the transmission of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam in general. Nevertheless, the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* seems to have recorded only what he actually knew, unlike other authors who tried to portray an unbroken line of succession connecting Vietnamese Zen to the Southern School of Chinese Zen (an aspiration that lasts even to the present time). In fact, although the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* is not extremely informative about the transmission of Zen in Vietnam, it does give us a realistic impression of the historical situation. During the period of more than ten centuries before its author's time, there were records of émigré foreign monks of Cham, Indian, and Chinese provenance coming to Vietnam to teach Buddhism. Among them, there must have been some Chinese Zen masters who transmitted their teachings to Vietnamese disciples. Some of these Vietnamese Zen adepts in turn might have made efforts to establish Vietnamese lineages. But there is no documentary record to indicate whether these "lineages" were consistent and lasting enough to become legitimate "sects" or "schools."

By the middle of the eleventh century, under the Lý dynasty, efforts were underway to construct a "history" of the transmission of Vietnamese Buddhism. The Vietnamese Buddhist elite in the Lý dynasty capital must have come under the spell of Zen literature, which enjoyed high prestige among cultured circles in China at the time, and been familiar with the "transmission of the lamp" genre, and especially the *Chuandeng lu*. Although we know that Buddhism came to Vietnam before the Zen school arose in China (and before the formation of the concept of "schools" in the Zen sense), for the Lý dynasty Buddhist elite, it was natural to portray Vietnamese Buddhist history as part of the history of the transmission of Zen, which was the form of Buddhism both intellectually paramount and socially most prestigious in their cultural horizon. Since the Chinese Buddhist intellectuals composed "lamp history" texts to rewrite the history of Buddhism according to the Zen school, the Vietnamese Buddhist leaders likewise composed "lamp history" texts to assert Vietnamese Buddhism as the legitimate outgrowth of Chinese Zen.

Unfortunately, except for the *Thiền Uyển*, none of the other Vietnamese "lamp history" texts is extant except in fragments or in brief references in other literary works.

The fact that the authors of the various "lamp history" texts did not offer compatible accounts of Vietnamese Zen, and apparently did not

even know of each other, demonstrates that in reality Vietnamese Buddhism at that time was not at all what these authors made it out to be: a coherent, unified transmission derived from some Chinese Zen lineages. Rather, Vietnamese Buddhism consisted of different groups, stationed at different temples, under the influence of émigré monks belonging to different traditions of Chinese, Indian, or Central Asian Buddhism. When the Vietnamese authors recorded what they observed (or heard), they structured their accounts to conform to the Zen lineage model that they believed to be orthodox.

A critical reading of the *Thiền Uyển* shows us that its model of Vietnamese Buddhist history is based on interpretations derived from the *Chiếu Đối Lục*, a text of the “lamp history” genre composed by Thông Biện, now lost. Although at present the viewpoint of the *Thiền Uyển* is accepted by the Vietnamese Buddhist community as the “official view,” the writings of Phúc Điền show that up to the middle of the nineteenth century the *Thiền Uyển*’s account of Vietnamese Buddhist history was not accepted unquestioningly as it is nowadays.

### Thông Biện’s Model of Vietnamese Buddhist History

Thông Biện was the first Vietnamese Buddhist author to establish a history of Buddhism in Vietnam based on the paradigms of Chinese Zen: the Zen school versus the scriptural school, the direct transmissions from one patriarch to another in successive lineages. In other words, Thông Biện was the first Vietnamese who endeavored to interpret the development of Vietnamese Buddhism in the form of transmission of the mind of enlightenment based on the model of Chinese Zen’s “lamp history.”

Thông Biện’s biography relates an incident that took place at a vegetarian feast held at the National Temple in 1096, where he gave this explanation on the origin of Buddhism in India and its transmission to Vietnam:

Out of compassion, the Buddha appeared to be born in India. This is because India is the center of the world. At nineteen he left home. At thirty he achieved enlightenment. He stayed in the world preaching the Dharma for forty-nine years, setting forth all sorts of provisional teachings to enable sentient beings to awaken to the Path. This is what is called creating teachings for a certain period.

When he was about to enter final nirvana, he was afraid that people attached to delusion would get stuck on his words, so he told Mañjuśrī, “In forty-nine years I have not spoken a single word. Will they think something was said?” So he held up a flower [in front of the assembly on Vulture Peak]. No one in the assembly knew what to say, except



the Venerable Mahākāśyapa, who cracked a slight smile. Buddha knew he had meshed [with truth], so he entrusted the treasury of the eye of the true Dharma to him, and he became the first patriarch [of Zen]. This is what is called the separate transmission of the mind-source outside the scriptural teachings.

Later Moteng (Kāśyapa Mataṅga) brought this teaching to Han China [ca. first century C.E.] and Bodhidharma travelled to [the Chinese kingdoms] of Liang and Wei [ca. sixth century C.E.] with this message. The transmission of the teaching flourished with Tiantai: it is called the school of the scriptural teachings. The gist of the teaching became clear with [the Sixth Patriarch of Zen] Caoqi: this is called the Zen school. Both these schools reached our country [Vietnam] many years ago. The scriptural teachings began with Mou Bo and Kang Senghui. The first stream of the Zen school began with Vinītaruci (Tỳ Ni Đa Lưu Chi); the second with Vô Ngôn Thông. Vinītaruci and Vô Ngôn Thông are the ancestral teachers of these two streams [of Zen].

. . . The present representatives of the Vinītaruci stream are Lâm Huệ Sinh and Vương Chân Không. For the Vô Ngôn Thông stream, they are Mai Viên Chiếu and Nhan Quảng Trí. [The successor of Kang Senghui] is Lôi Hà Trạch. The other side branches [of these two streams] are too numerous to mention them all.<sup>25</sup>

Thông Biện's remarks simply reiterated the typical traditional Zen model of Buddhist history. His concept of Buddhist history can be summarized as follows: (1) Both the "scriptural school" and "mind school" or Zen derived directly from the Buddha. (2) The scriptural school culminated in China with the Tiantai school, whereas the Zen school was transmitted by Bodhidharma from India to successive generations of Chinese patriarchs until it reached its zenith with Huineng. (3) Both of these schools, however, had come to Vietnam quite early: the scriptural school began with Mou Bo and Kang Senghui, the Zen school with Vinītaruci and Vô Ngôn Thông.

Note that although Thông Biện obviously based himself on some of the ideas circulating in Zen circles in Song China, he did not seem to rate the Zen school as superior to the scriptural school as most of his Chinese Zen predecessors and contemporaries did. In fact, according to his biography Thông Biện attained enlightenment by meditating on the *Lotus Sūtra* and became known as "Ngộ Pháp Hoa" or "Awakened to the Lotus."

Thông Biện's model of Vietnamese Buddhist history—although not known to or approved by some authors of the Trần dynasty—was subsequently adopted by the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* and thus exercised lasting influence on the traditional understanding of Vietnamese Buddhist history.

We have evidence that the author of the *Thiền Uyển* derived his overall outline of Vietnamese Buddhist history from the *Chiếu Đối Lục*, a work composed by Thông Biện himself. We learn from Thần Nghi's biography that when he enquired about the Zen transmission and lineages in Vietnam, his teacher, Thường Chiếu, showed him Thông Biện's *Chiếu Đối Lục* in which was recorded the transmission of both the scriptural school and particularly the Zen school in Vietnam with the lineages of Vinītaruci and Vô Ngôn Thông and other minor branches.

### Phúc Điền's Model of Vietnamese Buddhist History

I have pointed out that from the middle of the Lý dynasty there were sporadic efforts by self-conscious Vietnamese Buddhist leaders to compose texts recording or interpreting the transmission of Buddhism in Vietnam. The *Thiền Uyển* itself is one important milestone in this ongoing enterprise of constructing history.

Như Sơn, an eminent monk of the [Later] Lê dynasty, composed the *Kế Đăng Lục*, intending to trace Vietnamese Buddhism back to the time of the ancient, mythical Bhīṣmagarjitasvarāraja Buddha, the paradigmatic symbol of the mind of enlightenment. But Như Sơn's work turns out to be nothing but a summary of the *Wudeng huiyuan* chronicle of Chinese Zen and is almost useless for the study of Vietnamese Buddhist history.

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century, during the Nguyễn dynasty, that there appeared, in the writings of Phúc Điền, another sustained effort at understanding the transmission of Zen in Vietnam. Phúc Điền's writings inform us of the transmission of Linji and Caodong Zen in medieval Vietnam and shed some light on a few historical issues in the *Thiền Uyển*.

Through Phúc Điền's biography in the *Kế Đăng Lục*, we learn that one of his main concerns is to collect materials for a complete history of the origin and transmission of Vietnamese Buddhism (which he understood to mean Zen Buddhism).<sup>26</sup> This is the reason why Phúc Điền reprinted and edited writings and materials that he thought related to this issue. Phúc Điền stated in his "New Preface to the Five-Fascicle Transmission of the Lamp" that he composed the *Kế Đăng Lục* as a supplement to the *Thiền Uyển*, yet we notice that he did not seem to believe completely in the model of Vietnamese Buddhist history set forth by the *Thiền Uyển*. Phúc Điền wrote:

The successions from generation to generation among monks of various schools in the Zen community of Vietnam from the Đinh, [Former] Lê, Lý and Trần to the [Later] Lê, could not be recorded. [Concerning the transmission] from the Trần up to the present time (Nguyễn), I have many times searched among the adepts, records,

and legends, without much success, and I have not been able to do a thorough study of the lineages of dharma-heirs. Therefore, I do not dare to compose anything but only record briefly [information] on the Trần dynasty about the adepts, Buddhist sites, eminent monks, together with famous mountains, monasteries, renowned monks, transmissions from teachers to students, and the patronage by the aristocrats.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, instead of continuing the *Thiền Uyển*, Phúc Điền's *Kế Đăng Lục* becomes an effort to investigate the complete history of "the transmission of the lamp" in Vietnam.

Another point worth noticing is that Phúc Điền did not discuss extensively Vô Ngôn Thông. In his "New Preface to the Five-Fascicle Transmission of the Lamp" he only mentioned the name of Vô Ngôn Thông as the founder of Zen in Vietnam (actually, he seems to reiterate the viewpoint of the *Thiền Uyển*). In his *Kế Đăng Lục*, Phúc Điền presents a picture of Vietnamese Zen in which Vô Ngôn Thông does not appear to play any role. It is the same with Vinītaruci. Phúc Điền only refers to Vinītaruci in passing in the story of Khâu Đà La,<sup>28</sup> merely as a monk who dwelt at Cổ Châu Temple.

Phúc Điền stated that his intention was to compose a supplement to the *Thiền Uyển*. As a result we have the *Kế Đăng Lục*. Phúc Điền himself seems to have been of the opinion that the value of Như Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục* consists in connecting the patriarchs of the two schools of Linji and Caodong—in both China and Vietnam—with the beginning of Zen since Bhīṣmagarjitasavarāja Buddha; therefore, in his *Kế Đăng Lục*, he followed the example of Như Sơn and strove to retrace the inception of Zen in Vietnam in ancient records.<sup>29</sup> Phúc Điền wrote as follows about the beginning of Zen in Vietnam:

The inception of Zen in Đại Nam: During the reign of Hùng Vương there was [a young man named] Đồng Tử who went up to the grass hermitage on Mount Quỳnh Vi. In the hermitage dwelt a monk from India named Phật Quang (\*Buddhaprabha). When Đồng Tử passed the age of forty, Phật Quang transmitted the Dharma to him, giving him a hat and a staff saying that they contained all his miraculous power. Đồng Tử transmitted the Dharma to Tiên Dung (his wife) and together they cultivated the Dharma.

On their way home, they had to stay overnight at some place, taking shelter under the hat supported by the staff. At the third watch, there appeared citadels, palaces, boy and girl servants, armies, and a whole court. Next morning, the nearby people were amazed and referred to it as the celestial court. [Đồng Tử and Tiên Dung] arranged them into ranks, and they became a separate country. When Hùng Vương heard about this, he thought that his daughter (Tiên

Dung) was rebelling, so he sent his troops to fight them but they did not succeed. One night, strong wind arose scattering the sand and shaking the trees. Tiên Dung, Đồng Tử, their subject, citadels, and palaces all rose to the sky. The empty lot was transformed into a swamp. The next day there was nothing to be seen. People then built a shrine to worship. The swamp was subsequently named Dạ Trạch, the province Tự Nhiên, the town Hà Mậu.<sup>30</sup>

This strongly mythical story does not seem to have anything to do with the transmission of Zen. Perhaps Phúc Điền's intention was to say that Zen was as old as the country of Vietnam. Traditional history gives the date of Hùng Vương—the mythical ancestor of the Vietnamese people—as 2879 B.C.E.<sup>31</sup> For Phúc Điền, Zen had been transmitted by Bhīṣmagarjitasavarāja Buddha since the beginning of time. Obviously, from the viewpoint of critical history we cannot accept this position, because Zen did not really take shape in China until the middle of the seventh century. To interpret the unfolding of Buddhism in human history symbolically as the transmission of the enlightenment experience in the Zen fashion is one thing, but to regard this as actual history is another.

To sum up Phúc Điền's view, Zen had been present in Vietnam since the time of Hùng Vương. Although this ancient transmission was not recorded clearly and there were not sufficient materials to restore a coherent history, the continuous transmission of Zen in Vietnam as a cohesive school was a reality beyond any doubt. In essence, then, Phúc Điền, like Thông Biện, implicitly adopted the interpretive concepts of the Chinese Zen tradition to construct his view of Vietnamese Buddhist history.

### THE LINJI SCHOOL

Phúc Điền referred to a number of texts that purported to record Vietnamese Buddhist history from its inception through various dynasties, but he seemed most confident when writing about Buddhism in the Trần dynasty. According to Phúc Điền, in the Trần dynasty there were already eminent Song monks coming to Vietnam to transmit "the true school of Linji." He wrote:

Since the Trần dynasty, [eminent monks] from the Great Song such as National Master Dadeng, the Venerable Yingshun (Ứng Thuận), the Venerable Tianfeng, the Eminent Yuanzheng, Patriarch Xiaoyao, and the Eminent Huizhong (Huệ Trung), came to our country and went into Mount Yên Tử, transmitting the [doctrine of the] true school of Linji to our Founder Patriarch Điều Ngự. Subsequently, Điều Ngự transmitted it to Pháp Loa, and Huyền Quang, and the

patriarchate was handed down from generation to generation. During the Bảo Thái era of the [Later] Lê dynasty, the Venerable Yuangong, [an eminent monk] from the Great Ming again transmitted the Linji School in Vietnam. . . . [Subsequently], Venerable Yuangong went into Mount Tiên Du to repair the Phật Tích Temple.<sup>32</sup>

According to Phúc Điền, the true school of Linji was transmitted into Vietnam twice: the first time in the Trần dynasty beginning with Dadeng, the second time in the Lê dynasty with Yuangong. The founding patriarch of Linji Zen of Vietnam was Điều Ngự (i.e., Trần Nhân Tông, the third emperor of the Trần dynasty, also considered the founder of the Vietnamese Zen sect Trúc Lâm), the Dharma-heir of the Linji lineage starting with Dadeng, Yuanzheng, and Tianfeng of the Song. The second Linji lineage was transmitted to Vietnam in the Lê dynasty with Yuangong (also called Zhuogong). This lineage lasted nine generations. According to Phúc Điền, all the Trần kings were adepts in Zen. Trần Thái Tông studied with Yuanzheng, Tianfeng, and Dadeng; Trần Thánh Tông studied with Dadeng; Trần Nhân Tông studied with Huizhong; Trần Anh Tông and Trần Minh Tông both studied with Puhui.

However, in his record of the Linji lineage at Mount Yên Tử, Phúc Điền reported that this lineage lasted twenty-three generations. Its first patriarch was Hiện Quang, the second generation was Yuanzheng, the third was Dadeng, the fourth was Xiaoyao, the fifth was Huihui (probably a scribal error for Huizhong), the sixth was Điều Ngự, the seventh was Pháp Loa, and the eighth was Huyền Quang. This seems to accord with other sections of his *Kế Đăng Lục* and provides us with useful information.

There is one obscure point. In the above record of the Linji lineage in the Trần dynasty, Hiện Quang's name does not figure in the list of eminent monks from Song China. But here Phúc Điền records that Hiện Quang was the first patriarch of the Linji lineage in Vietnam with its headquarters on Mount Yên Tử, without giving us any additional information about Hiện Quang. According to the *Thiền Uyển*, Hiện Quang (?–1221) of Mount Yên Tử was a Vietnamese monk belonging to the fourteenth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school.<sup>33</sup>

If Hiện Quang in Phúc Điền's text was identical to Hiện Quang of the *Thiền Uyển*, the difficulty would be: why would those eminent monks of the Linji School from China have had to come to Vietnam to study Linji Zen with a Vietnamese monk? According to the *Thiền Uyển*, at first Hiện Quang studied with Thường Chiếu, but afterward he received the mind-seal from Trí Thông and was ordained by Pháp Giới. Later in his life he went to Mount Từ Sơn and devoted himself to meditation and

asceticism. When he passed away, his disciple Đạo Viên took care of the funeral ceremony. If the records in the *Thiền Uyển* were reliable, Hiện Quang was keen on practicing austerities and had the personality of a thaumaturge, with nothing about his Buddhism resembling Linji Zen.

According to tradition, Linji himself came from the same lineage as Vô Ngôn Thông. If Hiện Quang himself was a patriarch of the Vô Ngôn Thông School, why did he suddenly become the first patriarch of the Linji lineage in Vietnam? The only plausible answer, albeit still a surmise, is that Hiện Quang himself repaired the temple on Mount Yên Tử; afterward when Yuanzheng came to Vietnam and went into Mount Yên Tử to transmit the Dharma, he might have honored Hiện Quang with the title of first patriarch of the (Linji) Zen lineage on Mount Yên Tử. This explanation seems plausible because one of Phúc Điền's methods was to record the transmission based on information gathered at the monasteries.

#### THE CAODONG SCHOOL

According to Phúc Điền's records, Caodong Zen came to Vietnam after Linji Zen, was not as popular, and was not transmitted for as long. In his *Kế Đăng Lục*, perhaps from sectarian loyalties, Phúc Điền does not seem to pay as much attention to Caodong Zen as he does to Linji Zen.

Phúc Điền reports as follows about the Caodong lineage in Vietnam:

The right branch of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng was the transmission to Venerable Qingyuan Xingsi. The eighteenth generation of the branch was Venerable Dongshan Liangjie who founded the Caodong School which was transmitted to Zen Master Yiju Zhijiao. . . . The Caodong School was transmitted to our country with Venerable Shuiyue, also known as Daonan, as the first patriarch. The second generation was Venerable Zhenrong Zongyan, who founded Hồng Phúc Temple at Hòe Village, Hà Nội Province, and was granted the title of Đại Thừa Bồ-Tát (Mahāyāna Bodhisattva).<sup>34</sup>

According to Phúc Điền, this Caodong lineage with Shuiyue as the first patriarch lasted nine generations with three different centers: Hồng Phúc Temple in Hà Nội (from the first to the fifth generation), Đại Quang Thiền Tự Temple in Bắc Ninh (from the sixth to the seventh generation), and Bích Động Sơn Temple (from the eighth to the ninth generation). Subsequently, three subschools developed: The first had its headquarters at Đại Quang Thiền Temple (Bắc Ninh) under the guidance of Đạo Nguyên Khoan Dục and lasted four generations. The second, at Hàm Long (Hà Nội), started with Zen Master Chiêm Giác and lasted three generations. The third subschool was at Phổ Giác (Hà Nội); it started with Zen Master Khoan Hòa and lasted four generations.<sup>35</sup>

Although Phúc Điền's records do not verify the traditional image of a "school" as a unified, unbroken lineage transmitting fixed doctrinal systems, they are evidence of the presence of Zen, Linji Zen, and Caodong Zen in Vietnam. In the centuries from the Trần through the [Later] Lê to the Nguyễn dynasty, there had been a number of émigré Chinese monks with certain connections to Linji and Caodong Zen coming to different temples in Vietnam to spread their religion. Therefore, even though we do not accept the traditional understanding of the term "school," it would be wrong to deny the presence of these Zen "schools" (or rather, "lineages") in Vietnam.

### Appendix III

## Biographies of Eminent Monks from Other Sources

#### Không Lộ's Biography in the *Đại Nam Thiên Uyển Truyền Đăng Tập Lục*

[20a6] Zen Master Không Lộ, whose personal name was Chí Thanh, was a native of Lại Trì, Chân Định Prefecture, Nam Định Province. His lay family name was Nguyễn. He was a spiritual companion of Giác Hải and Từ Đạo Hạnh. When he was twenty-nine, the three of them went to India together to study with a certain *śramaṇa* and attained the six supernatural powers.<sup>1</sup>

When Không Lộ returned to his native province, he built Diên Phúc Temple and devoted himself to the chanting of the *Great Compassion Mantra*.<sup>2</sup> At that time he wished to build the four great vessels of Đại Nam,<sup>3</sup> notwithstanding the fact that his family was poor and his strength was limited. One day, he had the thought that there must be plenty of good copper in the great land of Song that could be used to build them. He immediately traveled northward.

[20b] At first he stayed as a guest at the house of an elder. He asked the latter for a six-foot square of land to build a temple. The elder laughed and said: "Formerly, when the Crown Prince of Liang built a temple, he needed a thousand-square-mile piece of land and covered it with gold. What can you do with a six-foot square of land which is only enough for a hen-coop?" That night Không Lộ spread his monk's robe, and it covered ten miles of land. Witnessing his supernatural power, the elder and his family bowed down to thank him. Henceforth, the whole family took refuge in the Three Jewels (*triratna*).

\*

The next day, wearing his monk's robe and carrying his monk's staff, Không Lộ came to pay a visit to the Song court and stood in reverent posture in front of the imperial palace. When the Song emperor came to



court to discuss political issues with his civil and military officers, seeing the old monk, he called him and asked: "Old man, of what country are you a native? What is your name? What is your reason to come here?" Không Lộ said: "I am a poor monk from a small country. I left home to become a monk years ago. My present wish is to build the four vessels of Việt Nam, but my physical strength is not enough to carry out this intention; therefore I took the risk of traveling a thousand miles to come here. I humbly ask Your Sagely Majesty to show your compassion and provide me with a little good copper to facilitate the work of casting [the four vessels]. The Song emperor asked: "How many disciples did you bring with you?" Không Lộ said: "I came here alone. I am only asking for this bagful of copper, and that will be enough for me to carry home." The Song emperor said: "It's a long way to the south, [21a] you are welcome to take as much as you can. It's a trifle not worth talking about."

Không Lộ took all the copper in the Song store, yet his bag was still not full. Some people gaped in amazement, some shook their heads. When they reported this to the emperor, he was stunned and regretted he had given his permission. But because he already promised Không Lộ, he could not do anything about it. When the emperor wanted his officers to escort him back to his country, Không Lộ declined, saying: "I can carry this one bag of copper myself, do not bother to escort me." Then he went outside, and slipping his staff through the bag [to carry it on his shoulder] he gently walked away. He used his bamboo hat to cross the rivers on his way back, and reached the shore of the Yellow River in the twinkling of an eye.

\*

Không Lộ then went to Quỳnh Lâm Temple, Đông Triều District, Hải Dương Province, and cast a huge statue of Amitābha Buddha. He also built the Báo Thiên Stupa in the capital, a big bell in Phổ Lại, and a caldron at Minh Đĩnh. He used the rest of the copper to build a big bell at the temple of his native village, which weighed 3,300 pounds. He also cast a big bell at Diên Phúc Temple, Giao Thủy Prefecture, which weighed 3,000 pounds. After finishing his task, he wrote a eulogy:

Crossing the great ocean on my straw hat,  
A thousand-mile journey in one breath.  
Filling my bag with all Song's copper,  
My arms can heft ten tons.

\*

In the meantime, Emperor Lý Nhân Tông was building the Hưng Long Palace. It took him over a year to finish it. [21b] The palace was extremely

grandiose and ornate. Suddenly two lizards appeared on the beams and raised a great cry: the sound was as a giant thunderstorm. The emperor was very unhappy about the event. The commander then reported: "Only Giác Hải and Không Lộ<sup>4</sup> can do away with this strange apparition." [The emperor ordered the commander to go look for Không Lộ,] and he immediately carried out the order. On the fifteenth day of the first month of that year, he arrived at Không Lộ's retreat. Không Lộ said: "Why have you come so late, Commander?" The commander said: "How do you already know my rank?" Không Lộ said: "I often ride with the moon and clouds. Sometimes I inadvertently enter the emperor's palace. I already know everything."

On the same day Không Lộ came to the capital. The emperor had a big nail driven into one of the pillars in the palace and said: "Only the one who can pull this out is the Dharma King." Không Lộ easily pulled the nail out with his hand. He then quietly recited the mantras. The two lizards were choked and could not cry any more: in a minute they fell to the ground. The emperor then rewarded Không Lộ with one thousand pounds of gold and five hundred acres of land as temple property, and also bestowed on him the title *Quốc Sư* (National Preceptor).

\*

When Lý Thần Tông (r. 1128–1138) was twenty-one years old (1136), he suddenly [contracted a strange malady and] changed into a tiger, crouching there and biting people, wild, fierce, and horrible. The emperor [Lý Nhân Tông] had to build a golden cage to keep him in. In the meantime the children at Chân Định started to sing a ditty:

The country has Lý Thần Tông,  
All court affairs are solved.  
If we want to cure the country's<sup>5</sup> illness,  
We need Nguyễn Minh Không.

Lý Nhân Tông ordered [22a] the commander to take the dragon boat to welcome Không Lộ [to the capital]. When the commander arrived at his retreat, Không Lộ smiled and said: "You want me to cure the tiger, don't you?" The commander said: "How did you know?" Không Lộ said: "I knew about this thirty years ago." When he came to the royal palace, Không Lộ seated himself peacefully and in a stern voice said: "Let the court officials bring a caldron of oil here immediately. Place one hundred needles in it, and boil it over a great fire, and move the prince's cage next to it." He then picked up the one hundred needles with his bare hand and stuck them into Lý Thần Tông's body, saying the spell: "It's a precious thing to be the Son of Heaven." Immediately, all the tiger's

hair, tail, claws, and teeth fell away and he changed back to his princely body. Lý Nhân Tông rewarded Không Lộ with a thousand pounds of gold, one thousand acres of fields, tax exempt, for the temple's permanent property.

\*

Không Lộ left the world to become a monk on the fourteenth day of the eighth month of the year *bính thìn*. On the third day of the sixth month of the year *giáp tuất* (1151),<sup>6</sup> he returned to the Western Paradise. Nowadays in front of the shrine of Lý Quốc Sư at Thọ Xương District, Hà Nội Province, there still exists a statue of Không Lộ and a stone tablet. The people of Tiên [Du] Village have burned incense and worshipped him there for generations.

### Biographies of Dương Không Lộ and Nguyễn Giác Hải in the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái*

[From the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái Liệt Truyện*]

Biography of Zen Master Không Lộ: Zen Master Không Lộ of Nghiêm Quang Temple, Hải Thanh Village,<sup>7</sup> whose family name was Dương. He hailed from Hải Thanh. For generations his family lived as fishermen. Later he abandoned the family occupation to become a monk. At the temple he practiced chanting the *Dhāraṇī-Sūtra*. During the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh era (1059–1065), he befriended Giác Hải and they became spiritual companions. Gradually, they made their way to Tồn Trạch Temple<sup>8</sup> and made their abode there. He ate herbs and wore tree bark, totally oblivious of his body, outwardly cutting off seeking and inwardly practicing meditation. His mind, ears, and eyes grew more and more penetrating. He could fly in the air, walk on water, tame tigers, and subdue dragons. His supernatural powers were multifarious and unfathomable. Finally, he returned to his native village, set up a temple, and settled there.

One day his attendant asked him: "Since my coming here, I haven't received your instruction about the essence of the mind. May I present you with this verse:

Only by cultivating are body and mind purified,  
Growing luxuriantly the straight branch faces  
the empty awareness.  
Someone comes enquiring about Emptiness-Emptiness,<sup>9</sup>  
The body is next to the screen: its shadow forms an image.

Không Lộ said understandingly: "You bring along your origin, you bring along the scriptures, I accept them for your sake, and for your sake

I am concerned. What does not agree with your wish?" And he burst into laughter.

\*

He spoke this verse:

I have found a site with dragons and snakes to settle  
down in,  
The rustic feeling leaves me exceedingly happy all day long.  
At times I go up to the solitary mountaintop,  
And utter a long whistle that chills the whole of heaven.

He passed away on the third day, the sixth month in the tenth year, *kỷ hợi*, of the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era (1119). His disciples had his remains buried in front of the temple. By royal edict, the temple was enlarged and duties were levied on two thousand households for the expenses of its upkeep.

\*      \*      \*

Biography of Zen Master Giác Hải: Zen Master Giác Hải was also a native of Hải Thanh Village. He dwelt in Diên Phúc Temple in his native prefecture. His family name was Nguyễn. He took up fishing and lived on his boat, sailing here and there. At twenty-five, he gave up fishing and shaved his head to become a monk. Together with Không Lộ he first lived at Tồn Trạch Temple but later moved back to Hải Thanh Village. Under Lý Nhân Tông's reign, along with Daoist adept Thông Huyền he was often summoned into the Liên Ngõa Palace for audiences and given a seat on cool stone. Once there were two lizards whose cries were grating on everyone's ears. The emperor told Thông Huyền to use magic to silence them. Thông Huyền chanted an incantation and one of them fell to the ground. The emperor smiled and told Giác Hải: "Venerable One, the other is left for you." Giác Hải immediately uttered his incantation and the other lizard immediately fell down. The emperor in amazement composed a eulogy:

Giác Hải's mind is as vast as the ocean,  
Thông Huyền's way is profound too.  
One has magic talent, the other the power  
of transformation,  
One is a Buddha and the other an immortal.

Giác Hải became famous throughout the land because of this and attracted disciples from all over the country. The emperor himself treated

him with the deference accorded a teacher. Whenever he took up residence in the Hải Thanh provincial palace, he would visit Giác Hải's temple first. One day the emperor asked Giác Hải: "May I be instructed on the mind's concentration power in accordance with reality?" Giác Hải then composed the "Eight Change Mantra" and rose into the air some yards above the ground for a while and then descended. The emperor and his officials applauded in admiration. He then offered Giác Hải a Kiền Du chariot and the liberty of the palaces.

Under his reign, Lý Thần Tông repeatedly sent emissaries to summon Giác Hải to the capital, but he often declined to come on the grounds of old age and illness.

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Someone asked him: "Between Buddha and sentient beings, who is the guest and who is the host?" Giác Hải answered with a verse:

I notice your hair is white,  
So I tell you to be the old guest.  
If you enquire about the Buddha's realm,  
You [failed and] were marked on your forehead  
at the dragon gate.

When he was about to pass away, Giác Hải spoke a verse:

Spring comes, flowers and butterflies know  
the season well,  
Flowers and butterflies must respond to the season.  
But flowers and butterflies are originally illusions,  
Do not occupy your mind with flowers  
and butterflies.

That night a meteor fell into the southeast corner of the Thái Không lodge. At dawn, Giác Hải sat in an upright position and passed away. The emperor issued a royal decree to collect duties from three thousand households for candles and incense to commemorate Giác Hải and, as a reward, appointed his two sons to positions at court.

[From the *Lĩnh Nam Chí* *Quái Ngoại Truyện*]:

Biography of Zen Master Dương Không Lộ: Zen Master Không Lộ of Nghiêm Quang Temple, Hải Thanh Village, whose family name was Dương, was a native of Hải Thanh. For generations his family lived as fishermen. Subsequently, he abandoned the family occupation to become a monk. At the temple he often chanted the *Dhāraṇī-Sūtra*. During the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh era under the reign of Lý Thánh Tông (1059–

1065), he befriended Giác Hải and they came to dwell at Hà Trạch Temple.<sup>10</sup> He ate herbs and wore tree bark, totally oblivious of his body, outwardly cutting off agitation and fear, inwardly practicing meditation and concentration. His mind, ears, and eyes grew penetrating. He could fly in the air, float on earth, tame tigers, and subdue dragons. His supernatural powers were multifarious and unfathomable. Eventually, he attained the [*samādhi*] of the True Seal of Great Mirror. Sometimes he was called an immortal; at other times he was named a fairy. Realizing that he still had to pay karmic debts from previous lifetimes, he eventually built a temple in his native district, settled down there, and took on the sobriquet Không Lộ.

One day his attendant asked him: "Since my coming here, I haven't received your instruction about the essence of the mind. May I present you with this verse:

Only by cultivating are body and mind purified,  
 Growing luxuriantly the straight branch faces the  
 empty yard.  
 Someone comes enquiring about the King of Emptiness,  
 The body sits next to the screen: its shadow forms  
 an image.

Không Lộ said understandingly: "You bring the mountain, I accept it for you. You bring the water, I take it for you. Where have I failed to give you the essence of mind?" And he burst into laughter.

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He spoke this verse:

I have found a site with dragons and snakes to settle  
 down in,  
 The rustic feeling leaves me exceedingly happy  
 all day long.  
 At times I go up to the solitary mountaintop,  
 And utter a long whistle with the universe.

He passed away on the third day, the sixth month in the tenth year, *kỷ hợi*, of the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era (1119). His disciples gathered his relics and buried them in front of the temple. By royal edict, the temple was refurbished and duties were levied on two thousand households for the expenses of its upkeep. Legends have it that beyond the ocean at Hoành Giang there is a mountain wall that has the shape of a pillar; they are all old traces of the Zen Master.

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Biography of Zen Master Nguyễn Giác Hải: Zen Master Giác Hải hailed from Hải Thanh Village. His family name was Nguyễn. He dwelt at Diên Phúc Temple. When young he took up fishing and made his boat his home, sailing in rivers and oceans. At twenty-five, he gave up his trade and shaved his head to become a monk. In the Chương Đức Gia Khánh era under the reign of Lý Thánh Tông, he befriended Zen Master Không Lộ, and together they came to dwell at Hà Trạch Temple. Subsequently he became Không Lộ's Dharma heir. Later he returned to Diên Phúc Temple at his native village. He wandered about enjoying himself and did not trouble anybody. People could help themselves to whatever there was in the temple, since they were donations.

Once the emperor [Lý Nhân Tông] summoned him and the Daoist adept Thông Huyền to the Liên Ngõa Palace for an audience. Suddenly there were two lizards calling one another whose cries grated on everyone's ears. The emperor told Thông Huyền to chant an incantation and one of them fell to the ground. The emperor smiled and told Giác Hải, "Venerable One, the other is left for your incantation." Before long, the other lizard also fell to the ground. The emperor was pleased and composed a eulogy:

Giác Hải's mind is as vast as the ocean,  
 Thông Huyền's way is profound too.  
 One has magic talent, the other the power of transformation,  
 One is a Buddha and the other an immortal.

Since then Giác Hải became famous throughout the land. Disciples came to him in droves. The emperor himself treated him with the deference accorded a teacher. Whenever he took up residence in the Hải Thanh provincial palace, he would visit Giác Hải's temple first.

One day the emperor asked Giác Hải: "May I be instructed in the mind's concentration power in accordance with reality?" Giác Hải then composed a verse called "Eight Change Mantra" and rose into the air some five yards above the ground for a while and then descended. The emperor and his officials applauded in admiration. He then offered Giác Hải a Kiên Dư chariot and the liberty of the palaces.

Under his reign, Lý Thần Tông repeatedly invited Giác Hải to the capital, but he often declined to come on the grounds of old age and illness.

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A monk asked him: "Between Buddha and sentient beings, who is the guest and who is the host?" Giác Hải answered with a verse:

I notice your hair is white,  
 So I tell you for your information.  
 If you enquire about the monk's realm,  
 You [failed and] were marked on your forehead [at the  
 dragon gate].

When he was about to pass away, Giác Hải spoke a verse to his assembly:

Spring comes, flowers and butterflies know  
 the season well,  
 Flowers and butterflies must respond to the season.  
 But flowers and butterflies are originally illusions,  
 Do not occupy your mind with flowers and butterflies.

That night a meteor fell into the southeast corner of the Thái Thất lodge. At dawn, Giác Hải sat in an upright position and passed away. The emperor issued a royal decree to collect duties from three thousand households for candles and incense as a reward.

### Biographies of Khổng Lộ and Giác Hải in the *Thiên Nam Vân Lục*

[Khổng Lộ's Biography]: In the Gia Khánh era of the Lý dynasty, there was a monk whose family name was Dương, sobriquet Khổng Lộ, who was a native of Thanh Hải. For generations his family lived as fishermen. Khổng Lộ abandoned his family profession and left home to become a monk. A man from his native village named Giác Hải became his good companion. They visited Hà Trạch Temple and dwelt there. He wore grass clothes and tree-bark shoes, devoting himself to chanting the *sūtras*, and mastered the meditation techniques of a *bhikṣu*. His mind became clear and he roughly attained the True Seal of Great Mirror. Sometimes he was an immortal, other times he was a fairy. Realizing that he had the retribution of previous karma, he erected a temple in his native district and lived there. A Champa monk named Bạch Vân (White Cloud) came to dwell there [and became his attendant]. Once Bạch Vân asked him, "Since I came here, I haven't received your instruction on the essence of mind." Then he respectfully presented a verse:

Only by cultivating are body and mind purified,  
 Growing luxuriantly the straight branch faces  
 the empty yard.  
 Someone comes enquiring about the Emptiness  
 of Emptiness,  
 The body sits next to the screen: its shadow forms an image.

"What does that mean?" Khổng Lộ reminded him, "You come from the mountain, I accept you; you come from the river, I take you in.



Where did I fail to give you the essence of the mind?" Then he burst out laughing. He passed away on the fifth day of the third month of the tenth year, *kỷ hợi*, of the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era. His disciples collected the relics and buried them in front of the temple.

[Biography of Giác Hải]: Formerly Giác Hải loved fishing; he used to sail here and there. Not until he was twenty-five did he give up the [fishing] rod and enter the monastery. He came to dwell at Hà Trạch Temple and became a companion of Khổng Lộ. Subsequently, he became Khổng Lộ's Dharma heir. Later Giác Hải returned to Diên Phúc Temple, he wandered about enjoying himself, not relying on others. People were welcome to take whatever there was in the temple, since they were donations. Lý Nhân Tông, together with Thông Huyền and Giác Hải, once went to Mount Liên Cốt, sitting in meditation on a cool boulder, when suddenly there were two lizards calling to one another with horrific cries. The emperor ordered Thông Huyền to stop them. Thông Huyền quietly recited an incantation and one of them fell down. The emperor laughingly told Giác Hải, "He left one for you." Giác Hải stared at the lizard. In a little while, it also fell to the ground. The emperor was amazed and composed a poem praising them:

Giác Hải's mind is as vast as the ocean,  
 Thông Huyền's way is profound too,  
 Magic talent and power of transformation,  
 One is a Buddha the other is an immortal.

Since then Giác Hải became famous throughout the land. Both monks and lay people respected him. The emperor himself treated him with the deference accorded a teacher. Under his reign, Lý Thần Tông repeatedly invited Giác Hải to the capital, but he often declined to come.

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Someone asked him: "Between Buddha and sentient beings, who is the guest and who is the host?" Giác Hải answered with a verse:

I notice your hair is white,  
 Those who inform you will do you harm,  
 If you enquire about the monk's realm,  
 You [failed and] were marked on your forehead at the  
 dragon gate.

When he was about to pass away, Giác Hải spoke a verse to his assembly:

Spring comes, flowers and butterflies know  
 the season well,  
 Flowers and butterflies must respond to the season.

When flowers and butterflies come one knows  
 there'll be an end,  
 Do not occupy your mind with flowers and butterflies.

That night a meteor fell into the east corner of the Đại Bảo lodge. At dawn, Giác Hải sat in an upright position and passed away. Up to the present time people still hear about him.

Biography of Từ Đạo Hạnh  
 in the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập*

[From the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên*]:

True Record of the Story of the Great Sage Từ Đạo Hạnh: Formerly, Đạo Hạnh's family name was Từ, his personal name Lô. His father Vinh embraced Buddhism. He held the office of General Supervisor of Monk Officers under the Lý dynasty. He used to travel to An Lăng Village, so he married Loan, a daughter of the Tăng family, and made his home there at Lang Nam Hamlet, An Lăng Village. The site happened to be propitious. Đạo Hạnh was born there later. He had the air of an immortal.

When a youngster, Đạo Hạnh was a virtual delinquent, yet he harbored great aspirations. No one could fathom his behavior and countenance. He befriended a Confucian scholar named Phí Sinh, a Daoist Master named Lê Toàn Nghĩa and an actor named Phan Ất.<sup>11</sup> At night, Đạo Hạnh would study hard while during daytime enjoy himself playing ball, playing the flute, and gambling. His father would always rebuke him for his dissipation, till one night he sneaked a look into Đạo Hạnh's room and found the lamp almost out, the books scattered about, and Đạo Hạnh himself leaning on a desk sleeping, with a book still in his hand. After this his father no longer worried about him.

Later on Đạo Hạnh passed the White Lotus examination as a laureate but refused to serve at the court. He was occupied day and night with thoughts of avenging his father's death. Previously, it had happened that his father Từ Vinh through wizardry offended the Marquis of Diên Thành. The marquis asked a henchman of his, the sorcerer Đại Diên, to cast a demonic spell on Từ Vinh and kill him. Then they hurled Từ Vinh's corpse into the Tô Lịch River. The corpse drifted downstream to the Tây Dương Bridge where Diên Thành's mansion was located and remained there the whole day. Scared out of his wits, the Marquis of Diên Thành hurriedly sent for Đại Diên, who came and uttered the following incantation: "A monk wouldn't stay angry overnight. Life is but a comedy. With death you achieve enlightenment." At that the corpse drifted away to the old village of Nhân Mục on the Hàm Rồng River

where it stopped. Finding this miraculous, the villagers buried the corpse, erected a shrine, and carved a statue of Từ Vinh.

They worshipped it every year on the tenth day of the first month as the anniversary day. Đạo Hạnh's mother was buried at Ba Lăng Temple, Thượng An Village, now Hoa Lăng Temple, where both his parents were worshipped as the Holy Father and Holy Mother. Though intent on revenge, Đạo Hạnh still had no plan. One day, he chanced to see Đại Diện who had been called out for some magic performance. Đạo Hạnh was about to strike him with his stick when he heard a voice in the air shouting at him not to. Đạo Hạnh threw his stick away and went home, sad at heart and resentful. He wanted to go to India to improve his magic arts in order to subdue Đại Diện. So he set out together with his two friends Minh Không and Giác Hải.

When they reached the country of the Gold Teeth Barbarians, they found the road full of dangers and had a mind to turn back. They saw an old man rowing a little boat in a leisurely fashion in the river. They went to him and asked: "Sir, how long is the road from here to India?" The old man said: "The mountainous tracks are quite dangerous. You can't do it on foot. Here is my little boat. I can help you cross over. Here is a little stick. It will guide you straight to India. It won't be a long way. Let me help you." The old man then spoke a verse:

I certainly will accompany you on the path of truth,  
Praise be to him who goes afar for wisdom.  
The rivers are so many—why bother crossing them?  
Just cross the Yellow River and you see the Holy One.

As the verse finished, they looked up and found themselves at the Indian shore, where the miracles are countless. Đạo Hạnh remained behind to watch the boat. Giác Hải and Minh Không went ashore, learned magic arts and returned home instantly. Đạo Hạnh had been watching the boat for three days without seeing his friends back. He chanced to see an old woman by the river. He bowed to her and asked: "Old lady, did you see two seekers come?" The old woman said: "They have already received the magic arts I taught them and have gone back home." While bowing Đạo Hạnh told her the circumstances of their traveling together and expressed his indignation against their abandoning him. The old woman then told him: "Carry these two buckets of water to my home. I will teach you magic arts and also impart to you the power of shortening distances and the *Dhāraṇī Mantra*."

Đạo Hạnh still resented his friends' disloyalty. He recited the mantra. Minh Không and Giác Hải who were on their way home were caught spellbound and felt a throbbing pain in their abdomens. Using his power

of reducing distances, Đạo Hạnh came back home before them. He changed himself into a tiger, hid himself in a thicket at Ngải Cầu Village, Từ Liêm District, and roared, frightening everyone on the shore.

Minh Không and Giác Hải looked at each other in astonishment. Though outwardly afraid, braced up by their knowledge of magic arts, and clever enough to discriminate between the true and the false, they knew for sure that it was Từ Đạo Hạnh in disguise. They then looked back, saying: "If you want to know your next reincarnation, well, come on, we'll let you know." Đạo Hạnh said: "We were all taught by Lord Buddha. We have achieved our objective. I still have to be reborn in this world as King, but won't escape sickness. There is karmic affinity between us. We should help one another." Đạo Hạnh then dropped his old grudges. The three of them taught each other their magic powers. Among them were walking on water, flying in the air, summoning dragons, subduing tigers, soaring up, and reducing distances. They could work all kinds of miracles, appearing in any guise, performing incalculable wonders. After this, Đạo Hạnh ranked first, Minh Không was next, and Giác Hải was last. The site was now called Báo Kiền.

Minh Không and Giác Hải took leave of Đạo Hạnh and returned to Giao Thủy Temple. Đạo Hạnh went on practicing at the Thiên Phúc Temple on Mount Thạch Thất. In front of the temple, there were two old pine trees popularly called the dragon trees. Đạo Hạnh devoted himself to chanting the *Mind of Great Compassion Dhāraṇī* and after every hundred thousand repetitions a branch would fall from the trees. The day came when both trees were bare. Đạo Hạnh thought the strength of his incantation had reached the Celestial Court and now enjoyed Avalokiteśvara's support. One day an immortal appeared before him. He came toward him with his feet not touching the ground. Đạo Hạnh asked, "What immortal are you?" The immortal said: "I am the Celestial King who is Guardian of the Four Directions. Moved by your *sūtra* chanting achievement, I come and place myself at your disposal." Đạo Hạnh knew that his six magical powers were now sufficient for him to avenge his father's death. He then returned to his old village of An Lãng, went to the An Quyết Bridge over the Tô Lịch River and threw his stick into the stream. The stick instantly stood up straight perpendicular to the water, flew swiftly upstream and did not stop until it reached the Tây Dương Bridge. Beaming with satisfaction, Đạo Hạnh said: "My powers now do excel Đại Điền's."

Off he went to Đại Điền's house. On seeing him, Đại Điền said: "Don't you remember what happened before?" Đạo Hạnh looked up but there was nothing stirring. He then beat Đại Điền to death with his stick and hurled the corpse into the Tô Lịch River in revenge.

His vengeance now accomplished, Đạo Hạnh felt himself relieved of all worldly bonds and started visiting temples in search of enlightened monks for further initiations. Hearing that Cao Trí Huyền was spreading the Dharma at Thái Bình, Đạo Hạnh came to him and expressed his true mind in a verse:

Long mixed with the dusts of the ordinary world,  
 still unable to recognize pure gold,  
 I do not know where the true mind is.  
 Please point it out truly for me—  
 extend your skillful means,  
 So that I can realize enlightenment and cease  
 my painful search.

Trí Huyền replied with a verse:

The secret, the true transmission [of the path]  
 is exceedingly precious,  
 In it the mind of Zen appears filling your eyes.  
 Stop discussing the objects as numerous  
 as the grains of sand on the banks of the Ganges,  
 Or enlightenment will be far, far away.

Đạo Hạnh was confused and could not understand. He then went to the assembly of Sùng Phạm of Pháp Vân Temple and calmly asked: "What is true mind?" Đạo Hạnh was abruptly awakened. He then returned to Thiên Phúc Temple on Mount Thạch Thất and went on practicing as before. From then on his Dharma power increased and his karmic affinity for Zen matured, so that hosts of wild birds and beasts gathered peacefully around the temple. With mantras he cured the sick who came to him, and used his power for the benefit of all.

At that time, Emperor Lý Nhân Tông had no heir and all prayers were to no avail. His younger brother, the marquis of Sùng Hiền, sent for Đạo Hạnh to discuss the matter. Đạo Hạnh took a vow to reincarnate [in the royal family] in return for a favor the marquis had granted him before. The marchioness who was at that moment taking a bath in the inner building suddenly saw Đạo Hạnh's image appear in the water bucket. Afraid, she reported it to the marquis. Knowing Đạo Hạnh's intention, the marquis confided to his wife: "If the image of Đạo Hạnh did appear to you in your bath, he has already entered your womb. Don't be alarmed." The lady had the sensation of pregnancy. Đạo Hạnh took his leave saying: "Let me know when you are about to give birth." The day the baby was due, she felt unusually indisposed, wanting to give birth but unable to do so. The marquis said: "Đạo Hạnh must be sent for immediately." At the news, Từ Đạo Hạnh told his disciples: "My previous nexus of karmic

cause has not terminated. I have to be reborn in this world as an emperor. When that life span is over, I shall preside over the *Trāyastriṃśa* Heaven. When you see my body decay, it means I have entered nirvana where birth and death no longer matter." His words moved them to tears. Đạo Hạnh then spoke a verse:

Autumn ends without informing of the  
wild geese returning,  
And easily causes people to become sad.  
Leaving tracks among the people of the time  
without any fond longing,  
How many teachers of old are reincarnated  
as teachers of today!

Having finished speaking, he went up to his cave, knocked his head against the stone wall and stamped his feet on the stone floor. As he sat there in calm dignity, he cast off his body and passed away. Vestiges of this event still remain.

It was on the seventh day of the third month, spring, in the third year, *bính thân*, of the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era. Emerging again from nirvana into the world, Đạo Hạnh was born as son of the Marquis of Sùng Hiền. He grew up without needing to be cared for and grew intelligent without needing education. He was handsome and excelled everyone in argument and eloquence. Emperor Lý Nhân Tông by edict summoned him into the palace to be brought up, and made him a crown prince.

When Nhân Tông died, he ascended the throne as Emperor Thần Tông. In the year of *bính thân*, at the age of twenty-one, he one day found his body growing hair and his nails becoming claws. He changed into a tiger. Renowned physicians from all around failed to cure him. At the news of the emperor's condition, Minh Không and Giác Hải recognized that a former curse was taking effect. They then composed a folk song and taught it to the children to sing:

To cure the Son of Heaven's malady,  
Send for Nguyễn Minh Không.

Hearing children singing this, the court sent an envoy to Giao Thủy Temple to tell Master Minh Không, "The emperor has caught a queer disease. The court sent me here to bring you in to cure him." Minh Không and Giác Hải cooked rice in a little pot and told the envoy and his men, "We have cooked some rice for your meal. Please serve yourselves." They all ate their fill, yet the pot was not emptied.

Then the two masters and the envoy embarked for the capital. Minh Không told the soldiers, "Have a good rest. Let the flood tide come and we'll make for the capital." While they were sleeping soundly in the

boat, the two masters by sheer magic had it fly like an arrow without being rowed, and in no time they reached the Đông Tân dock. They woke the soldiers up and when they saw the Báo Thiên Stupa, everyone was struck with amazement. The two masters were escorted directly into the emperor's chamber.

At the sight of them, of their weird looks and rustic clothing, the other physicians in contempt did not bother to rise from their seats or to offer them a single word of greeting. The two masters reached in their pockets, drew out a nail of about five inches long, pointed at a column and with a slight push of the hand made it penetrate all the way into it. They then said: "He who can pull out the nail will be able to cure the emperor." They repeated this again and again but no one replied. With two fingers of his left hand, Minh Không pulled it so easily that it seemed to slip out effortlessly. All who were present were won over by his magic feat.

Minh Không had a big caldron brought in, together with twelve buckets of oil, one hundred iron nails, and a senna twig. He had the Emperor carried onto the hearth. He let Giác Hải ignite the fire and boil the oil. When the fire was blazing and the oil was boiling hard, Giác Hải put his hand into the caldron and fished out the one hundred nails. Then Giác Hải let Minh Không perform the magic touch. Minh Không soaked the senna twig in the oil and sprinkled it all over the emperor's body, while reciting a spell saying, "How noble to be the Son of Heaven. Why are you sick?" At these words, the hair, fangs, and claws fell from the Emperor's body and he recovered his old self.

After the emperor's death, the Thiên Phúc Temple was clothed in a peculiar supernatural atmosphere which struck people with awe. This fact was reported to the infant emperor, who commissioned an official to come there and perform rites, and bestowed on the temple the title of Most Sacred Temple. As for Đạo Hạnh's cast-off corpse left in the cave, the villagers assuming it must be miraculous, lodged it in a niche for worship. During the Yongle era of the Ming dynasty (1403–1424), an envoy from China came on a mission to our country. As he was passing by he caught a whiff of a rich fragrance. When he went looking [for where it was coming from], he found Đạo Hạnh's body intact in the niche, with his jewel-like countenance still lifelike. Assuming it might be an immortal's cast-off body, the envoy had it carried to Hương Sơn Temple for cremation, but after seven days and nights on the fire, it remained unburned.

He didn't know what more to do and was about to give up. That very night he saw a man in his dream who told him, "I have survived through two dynasties, the Lý and Trần, and my true body has never decayed.

Supernatural powers are not matters of mere chance. For your vow to be granted, use wood from the trees around my grave to burn my corpse." The Ming envoy did as he was told in his dream and sure enough, it worked. He had the remaining wood carved into a statue [of Đạo Hạnh] and placed it in a niche for worship in a shrine erected to the left of the Thiên Phúc Temple.

Under Emperor Lê Thánh Tông, Empress Dowager Quang Thục sent Grand Commandant Trinh Quốc to offer sacrifices and pray for divine favors in a petition which read:

"We learn that the Buddha is essentially compassionate and also abides in the consummate goodness. Thus he spread his teaching in India and saved people in China. He amply supports the Kingly Path, generously bestows the Sagely Teaching. His merits cover all sentient beings and his grace pervades all lands.

"By divine grace, we are in charge of a great patrimony, and we are fearful of being unable to bear the burden in the face of calamities should they come. We therefore tremble with fear for the security of the country and the welfare of the people. Deep in our heart we sincerely pray to Heaven to bless us with longevity. Hearing that the oracle at the Phật Tích Temple is divinely effective, we are sending the Palace Guard Commander together with his men to bow before the altar and pray for our longevity. If it is not given to us to live over one hundred years as did Tai Wu of Shang, may we at least live up as did Emperor Gaozong of Tang up to eighty-nine. We also pray that our Infant Emperor Từ Vy have a long life, that the people work in peace, that they have wise and filial offsprings, that the subjects be loyal, that outside there be no war, and that inside there be peace. In this, we depend on the infinite benediction of the Buddha."

### Biography of Nguyễn Minh Không in the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái*

[From the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái Ngoại Truyện*]

Minh Không was a native of Đại Hoàng Đàm Xá Village, Trường An. His family name was Nguyễn, his personal name Chí Thân. When he was a young man he traveled around to study the [Buddhist] Path. He happened to meet Đạo Hạnh, under whom he studied for over forty years. Đạo Hạnh admired his aspirations, so he transmitted the mind-seal to him and gave him the sobriquet Zen Master Minh Không.

In the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era under [Lý] Nhân Tông's reign, as he was passing away, Đạo Hạnh told Minh Không: "Formerly, our Lord Buddha on achieving perfect enlightenment still thought of paying tribute to the golden lion. As for me, my knowledge of the Dharma is



still wanting, how can I protect myself? I will be reborn again in this world as a king. In the future life I will become sick: it can't be avoided, being predestined. I have a karmic affinity with you, you should save me." After Đạo Hạnh's death, Minh Không returned to his native village, devoting himself to studying and practicing [Buddhism] for twenty years without looking for fame and fortune.

In the fourth year of the Đại Thuận era, the emperor was about to build a palace. In the fourth year of the Thiên Chương Bảo Tự, Lý Thần Tông suddenly contracted a strange disease and was seriously ill. His mind was disturbed, and all medicines were to no avail. He was growling and moaning fiercely like a tiger. Renowned physicians from all over the country, responded to the royal edict, offering thousands of prescriptions, but to no avail. Meanwhile, there was a group of children who sang:

To cure the Son of Heaven,  
Send for Nguyễn Minh Không.

The court sent emissaries to look for Minh Không. When he saw the emissary coming, Minh Không took a little pot of rice to feed the entire crew. The emissary was worried that it would not be enough for such a large crew. Minh Không said, "Just go ahead and eat." So the crew, hundreds of men in all, ate their fill, yet could not empty the pot. After the meal, Minh Không told the crew, "You men just have a good sleep. Wait till the tide grows and we'll set sail." They did as they were told and before long were sound asleep in the galley. In a little while, they already arrived at the capital. The crew was amazed.

When Minh Không arrived [at court], there was a huge number of renowned physicians all gathering in the palace, each performing his art. When they saw how crude and rustic he looked, they all had great contempt for him. Minh Không took a nail five or six inches long and planted it into a column of the royal chamber, shouting: "He who can pull the nail out will cure the disease, I will step aside for him." He repeated it again and again, but no one budged. He then used two of his left fingers and pulled on the nail and it came out easily. Everybody present was struck with admiration.

When he entered the royal chamber to examine the emperor, Minh Không cried out in a stern voice: "Worthy man, you are exalted as the Son of Heaven and the richest man of the country, why then do you act crazy and cause disaster?" The emperor trembled with fear. Minh Không had a big cauldron brought in, filled it with water and medicine, and boiled it again and again. Then he stirred the boiling liquid with his hand a few times, and washed the emperor's body with it. The emperor

recovered instantly. (*Recorded History*: When Đạo Hạnh was about to leave his body, he gave Minh Không his medicine and incantation, saying, "Twenty years from now, the emperor will contract a strange malady. Use this to cure him.") He then made Minh Không National Preceptor and the recipient of duties from some hundreds of households as reward.

In the second year of the Đại Định era under the reign of Anh Tông (1141), Minh Không passed away, at the age of seventy-six. He was miraculous and responsive [to prayers]. People would pray to him whenever there were floods, droughts, calamities or conflicts. Nowadays his statue has been cast and worshipped at the temples of Giao Thủy, Phố Lại, and so forth. Court official Đặng Thoát Hiên wrote a poem commemorating him, "Hiếu Hoàng was brought up in the palace of Triệu and Tống. In time of peace the Son of Heaven's destiny grew; in his midlife he unfortunately suffered a strange disease. Thanks to the good taste of Minh Không's medicine [he was cured]." This is to praise the miraculous power of Minh Không.

Note: The stories of the two Zen Masters Đạo Hạnh and Minh Không are briefly recorded in the *History*. According to history Thần Tông was born as a result of a prayer to the mountain god, here it was said that he was Đạo Hạnh reincarnated. *History* also records that soon after Đạo Hạnh left his body, the lady gave birth; so it might not have been due to a prayer to the mountain god. As for Minh Không's cure [of Thần Tông], *History* says that Đạo Hạnh gave [Minh Không] medicine when he was ill [instructed him to cure Thần Tông in the future]. This means that Đạo Hạnh knew he could not escape his karma of contracting a disease, so he instructed [Minh Không] to save him. Things were recorded differently. I just record what I heard in order to investigate it. Also studying these two stories and the following two stories, each becomes a separate biography. Now I am relying on the *Thiền Sư Từ Công Truyền* together with the *Từ Công Truyền Lục* to clarify the biography.

### The Section on "Immortals and Buddhist Monks" in the *An Nam Chí Nguyên*

It is not possible to investigate Buddhism in Giao Chỉ [Jiaozhi] from the Han to the Tang dynasties. Since the times of the Lý and Trần dynasties, there have been many eminent monks. They were famous for their miraculous powers. Kings extended homage to them and enquired about the mystic teachings. Some of the kings even left home to become monks. The court officials and the ordinary people were frequently converted to Buddhism. As for the saintly immortals of Taoism, they were few and far between. Once in a while, one or two appeared. Now I have found old records together with official reports from various localities and oral

transmissions among the elders. I have gathered all of them together and selected the traces that can be verified. I record them here.

An Kỳ Sinh [An Qi Sheng], of Chinese provenance, realized the path of Taoism on Mount Yên Tử [Anzi], east of Triều Châu [Chaozhou]. Subsequently, he ascended to Heaven from there.

Thôi Vĩ [Cui Wei], of Chinese provenance, once traveled in his native province and accidentally fell into an old well. He saw a big snake eating stalagmite. As Vĩ was extremely hungry, he ate it too. Subsequently, he became an immortal.

Đồng Phụng [Dong Feng], literary name Quân Dị [Junyi], attended the Governor Sĩ Nhiếp [Shi Xie] of Giao Châu [Jiaozhou]. Once Sĩ Nhiếp became sick and was dead for three days. Phụng put a medicine tablet in his mouth, and after awhile Nhiếp came to. Within half a day he could move again.

Cát Hồng [Ge Hong], nicknamed Trĩ Xuyên [Chichuan], was a native of Tấn [Jin]. He embraced emptiness and respected Taoism, wishing to make the elixir and attain the art of longevity. He wished to become the Magistrate of Gou Lou. Subsequently, he really became an immortal.

Trần Đạo Căn [Chen Daogen] hailed from Tân An [Xin'an] District, Chí Linh [Zhiling] Prefecture. He abstained from eating grain and helped people set up an altar at which to worship. He would use paper to cover his face and submerge under water. He only emerged again when the incense burned out.

Zen Master Thảo Đường was very virtuous and well versed in Buddhist literature. The Lý king made him his teacher. Subsequently, Thảo Đường passed away sitting upright.

Zen Master Tịnh Giới was a monk of Đông Quan Prefecture. He practiced austerities and was miraculous in converting people. Once there was a drought in Giao Châu, and the Lý king sent an envoy to invite him [to the capital]. At midnight Tịnh Giới stood in the yard burning incense. Sweet rain poured down. The Lý rewarded him and conferred on him the title "Rain Master."

Zen Master Tam Mạch was a monk of Tam Đái Province. During the Lý dynasty he left home to become a monk at Giảng Ân Temple. Subsequently, he attained enlightenment and was able to fly up into the air in broad daylight.

Zen Master Đạo Hạnh was a monk of Thạch Thất Prefecture who traveled to monasteries all over to study with enlightened masters. Subsequently, his affinity for the Dharma became mature and his supernatural powers increased. He was able to tame mountain birds and wild beast, making them gather around him peacefully. He prayed for rain and cured sickness. Everything he did was effective. Nowadays, his body still remains intact.

Zen Master Viên Chiếu was a monk of Thanh Đàm District. He was brilliant, studious, and devoted himself to studying Zen. One night in a dream he saw the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī cut open his stomach with a knife and wash out his brain. Then Mañjuśrī gave him some medicine. After that, everything he had learned in his mind seemed to become clear as if he had always known it. Subsequently, his school flourished greatly.

Zen Master Nghĩa Tồn was a monk of Thanh Uy Prefecture. During the Trần dynasty he dwelt at the monastery on Mount Tiên Lữ to practice [Buddhism] and [subsequently] attained enlightenment. Nowadays, his body still remains intact.

Zen Master Trí Nhân was a monk of An Lăng Prefecture. He diligently practiced precepts. Once he saw a tiger chasing a deer. Trí Nhân preached saying, "All sentient beings cherish their lives. You should not harm each other." The tiger hung his head and walked away. A barbarian tribe at Tiên Sơn used to gather together to plunder. Trí Nhân converted many of them so they became good people.

Zen Master Giới Châu was strict in disciplines. He was successful every time he prayed for rain. The Great King of Trần put buckets in the yard and Giới Châu would make them fill up with rainwater without a drop falling outside. The King praised him and paid homage to him.

Zen Master Y Sơn was a monk of Gia Lâm Prefecture. When young he studied literature and was especially versed in Buddhist literature. Afterward, he went everywhere to spread Buddhism and convert people, setting his mind on benefiting people. When he passed away, flowers spontaneously fell from the trees. Birds cried grievously and incessantly.

Zen Master Giới Không was a monk of Gia Lâm District who practiced austerities to the point that he could command ghosts and demons and tame wild beasts. Subsequently, he passed away sitting upright.

Zen Master Thiền Nham, a monk of Siêu Loại District, was pure in his precepts. He ate [fruit from] trees and drank stream water. After he died his body was as fresh as when he was alive. Contemporaries called him "Living Buddha."

Zen Master Nguyễn Học was a monk of Vũ Ninh Province. He devoted himself to practicing meditation to the point that his body looked like a withered tree, and he forgot both self and things. Birds and wild beasts lingered around him and became tame like domestic animals. Sui Gaozu ordered an envoy to build a stupa dedicated to him.

The two Zen Masters Bảo Tĩnh and Minh Tâm were monks of Đông Ngạn District. They were eminent monks in the Buddhist communities. They often organized assemblies to teach the scriptures. Subsequently, they entered the *samādhi* of firelight together. Their remains were all transformed into the seven kinds of jewels.

Zen Master Không Lộ was a monk of Giao Thủy Prefecture. He could fly in the air and walk on water, tame tigers and subdue dragons. [His supernatural powers] were multifarious and unfathomable.

Zen Master Giác Hải was a monk of Giao Thủy Prefecture. His supernatural powers were great and miraculous. When he was about to pass away, a meteor fell near the main hall. Early in the morning he passed away.

Dharma Master Ma Ni was a monk of Lê Bình Prefecture. He dwelt at the Đại Tiên Thánh Cave and attained enlightenment after seven years. He tamed tigers and subdued dragons, prayed for rain and made it stop. Everything he did was successful. Nowadays, his statue still remains in the cave.

Zen Master Thuần Nhất was a monk of Nam Sách Province. He studied meditation and was able to make the boulders soft. Subsequently, he passed away sitting in a lotus position. Nowadays, his body still remains intact.

Zen Master Vô Châu was a monk of Phi Lộc Prefecture. When he was born, an auspicious light filled the room and a purple mist rose in the air. When he grew up his countenance was unusual and his hair was long. He built his hermitage on a mountaintop. He attained the cloud-flower *samādhi*. Whenever he explained the scriptures auspicious lights appeared repeatedly. Subsequently, he passed away sitting upright. He was eighty-three years old.

Great Master Từ Quán Huệ Thông was a nun of Chí Linh Prefecture. She left home to become a nun at the age of twelve. She was utterly pure in discipline. When she was about to pass away at the age of eighty-four, the birds and beasts cried grievously, six kinds of music resounded all around, white clouds covered her hermitage, and uncanny fragrances filled the room.

The Original Text of the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*



重鐫禪苑集笑序

禪苑集笑。何取笑乎。曰。取其笑秀之為笑也。何者。禪宗之徒。固多其人。玄理之妙。蓋乏其手。正是群鷄獨鳳。百草一蘭。奇非英特之資。穎悟之見。何以透玄微之旨。所能為隨學之領袖。後人之模楷者乎。信乎禪苑之中。笑奇者寡。因摘取各公碩德。以備禪學之祖述。則集笑之笑。於是乎兩起名焉。粵自毘施之始。時則有。

麻音佛。尚立。創為禪宗之鼻祖。但其時。俗尚淳厚。人多朴畧。經教在於虛空之中。不

暇說以度化之機也。何家以魔為佛。此來詠傳日生。奸淫日起。業懃益結。罪障殊深。殊資以極濟之慈航。不可也。故

釋迦大父。出現娑婆。為之說開經偈。教化眾生。九劫歷修。功成果滿。於是大行佛教。相續禪宗。風飄六道。以清涼。雪汰三途之醜。契成佛作祖之秘訣。自此而啟其端焉。

我大越。彼佛教之周浹。佛法雨之波瀾。尚家落髮。証印悟空。蓋亦有其人矣。述其神心。日燄。通鏡水。融有出為濟國寧民。有出為扶顛拯溺。有早悟心印。卓錫神達。麼



之機。有晚入玄關。咒蓮顯圖。證之秘。他如  
山禽馴其德。門裡看經。野獸擾其仁。厨中  
供饌。是其感格所孚之誠。神化所得之學。  
何莫徂四目相顧之妙者乎。寔足以爲禪  
死之英秀也已。噫。佛道至玄。而心爲玄中  
之玄。佛道至大。而心爲大中之大。心乎心  
乎。其爲修道之主宰乎。禪苑一錄。自無言  
通禪師。爲傳道之始。灯也相續。燄也光輝。  
然燁而約之。廣而縮之。率是無上正覺之  
爲心者矣。究其所以然者。得徂洗却六塵。  
離了四相。而能如是乎哉。余素習儒經。參

求釋典。玩其無有。雖曰二途。寔其歸宿。似  
同一理。因於龜堂講讀之餘。見一禪徒來。  
談梵語。對語移時。俛是龜毛兔角之機括  
也。伊因出諸袖中。有集英一錄。丐余正句。  
得便重刊。以免舛謬。余見錄中。多有高禪  
各祖。厥學甚力。厥証甚灵。不覺心中。敬而  
且服矣。彼談空說覺。固非余之分內事也。  
然易有童蒙求我之說。不得不從伊所請。  
考之。正其闕失。助其遺漏。旬日之間。而斯  
錄言訖。爰理復旨。寔然不啻月色增輝矣。  
伊因求一序文。用刻于篇端。以顯揚佛教。

余不吝其功。嘆僕就前抽取刻藤及管城。  
以倘指使。爰草一通之俚語。伊因拜而頌  
之。

謹序

旨

黎朝永盛十一年四月穀日重刊

禪宗托跡釋子如智門徒

沙彌 性琮 性串 性忠 性輝

性建 性本 善男子

性分 性成 性慈 性興 性明

性水 善女人 號妙贈 號妙道

性奉



禪苑集異語錄卷上

僊遊扶童鄉建初寺無言通禪師本廣州人也姓鄭氏少慕空學不治家產後州雙林寺受業處性沉厚寡言默識了達事際故時人號無通言傳證曰常一日禮佛次有禪者問座主禮甚麼師云禮佛禪者指佛像云祇這箇是甚麼師無對是夜具威儀就禪者禮拜問曰嚮之所問未審意旨如何禪者云座主出家以來經逾幾夏師云十夏禪者云還曾出家麼也未師轉茫然禪者云若也不會百夏何益乃引師同參馬祖及抵江西而祖已

示寂遂往謁百丈懷海禪師時有僧問如何是大乘頓悟法門丈云心地若空慧日自照師於言下有得乃還廣州和安寺住持有人問師是禪師否師云貧道不曾學禪良久便笑其人應諾師指撥擱擱其人無對仰山禪師作沙彌時師常喚云寂子為我將牀子來仰將牀子到師云送還本處仰從之又問寂子那邊有甚麼曰無物這邊響曰無物師問寂子仰應諾師云去唐元和十五年庚子秋九月師來至此寺卓錫鉞磬之外禪悅為樂凡坐面壁未嘗言談累年莫有識者獨寺僧感誠尤

加禮敬奉侍左右審扣玄機盡得其要一日  
無疾沐浴易服召感誠曰昔吾祖南嶽讓禪  
師歸寂時有云一切諸法皆從心生心無所  
生法無所住若達心地所作無碍非遇上根  
慎勿輕許言訖合掌而逝感茶毘收舍利塔  
于僊遊山時唐寶曆二年丙午正月十二日  
二十八年又至開祐丁丑二十四年我越禪  
學自師之始

建初通禪師法嗣

第一世一人

建初寺第二世感誠禪師僊遊人也姓氏初

尚家道號立德居本郡僊遊山持誦為業鄉  
豪阮氏高其德行欲捨宅為寺延致居之往  
以情扣師弗許夜夢神人告曰苟從阮志不  
數年間得大吉祥師乃應其請初時扶童建未幾  
通禪師適至師知其非常人旦夕服事未常  
輒怠通感其誠懇遂以名焉一日謂師曰昔  
世尊為一大事因緣出現於世世緣周畢示  
入涅槃如此妙心名正法眼藏實相無相三  
昧法門親付弟子摩訶迦葉尊者為初祖世  
立相傳至達磨大師自西而來陟險是為  
傳此法遞至太祖曹溪得授五祖所於達磨



初至人未知信故以傳衣以明得法今信已  
熹衣乃爭端止於汝身不復傳也於是以心  
傳心不受衣鉢時南嶽讓首得其傳讓授馬  
祖一一授百丈海吾於百丈得其心法久響  
北方慕大乘者衆是以南來求善知識今與  
汝遇蓋宿緣也聽吾偈云諸方浩乂妄自喧  
傳謂吾始祖親自西天傳法眼藏目謂之禪  
一花五葉種子綿七潛符密語千萬有緣咸  
謂心宗清淨本然西天此土此土晒朕姑今  
山川觸塗成滯佛祖成冤差之毫釐失之百  
千汝善觀察莫賺兒孫直饒問我我本無言

師於言下領悟常有僧問如何是佛師云徧  
一切處進云如何是佛心師云不曾覆載進  
云學人不曾師云嗟過了也後無疾而逝時  
唐咸通元年庚辰

### 第二世一人

超類鄉定禪寺善會禪師典冷人也登依本  
鄉東林寺僧漸源出家自號祖風徧遊方外  
求學禪要後遇建初感誠便棄事之一十餘  
年略無倦色嘗一日入室問曰教中道釋迦  
如來因地修行歷三大阿僧祇劫始得成佛  
今大德每謂即心即伏某甲未明願一開示

誠曰教中是什麼人說師云豈不是伏說耶  
誠曰若是佛說為什麼文殊經云吾往世四  
十九年未嘗說一字與人且古德道尋文取  
證者益滯苦行求佛者俱迷離心求佛外道  
執心是佛者為魔師云如是則此心是那箇  
不是佛者為麼師云如是則此心是那箇佛  
誠曰昔有人於馬祖問即心即佛那箇是佛  
祖云汝疑那箇不是佛指出看其人無對祖  
云達即徧境是悟永乖疎抵遮話頭汝還會  
麼師於言下應云某甲會也誠曰汝作麼生  
會師云徧一切處在非伏心便禮拜誠曰直

須與麼因以善會名焉後於本寺示寂即唐  
光化三年庚申也

### 第三世一人

昇龍京開國寺雲峯禪師<sup>○</sup>名求東肥慈惠人  
也阮氏母懷娠時齋素持經生而神光照室  
雙親感異許以出家及長師事超類善會禪  
師為入室弟子密扣玄機禪學日益會嘗謂  
師云生死事大直須打底師問云生死到來  
如何迴避會云管取無生死處迴避又問如  
何是無生死處會云於生死中會取始得師  
云作麼生會會云偈且夫日暮即來師便如



明果至會云待朝明日衆與汝證明師豁然  
省悟禮拜會云汝見什麼道理師云某甲須  
也會云汝作麼生師堅拳云不肯遮箇會便  
休以後周顯德三年丙辰示寂

#### 第四世二人

常樂吉利鄉佛陀寺匡越大師貞祐吉利人  
也姓吳氏吳順帝之裔狀貌魁偉志尚倜儻  
少業儒及長歸釋與同學住持投開國雲峯  
受具由是該覽竺墳探頓禪要年四十啓震  
于朝丁先皇帝召對稱旨拜為僧統太平二  
年賜號匡越大師黎大行皇帝尤加禮敬凡

朝廷軍國之事師皆與焉嘗遊平虜靈衛靈  
山悅其境致幽勝歇爰庵居之夜夢神人身  
披金甲左執金鎗右擎寶塔從者十餘輩狀  
貌可怖來謂之曰吾即毗沙門天王從者皆  
落叉也天帝有勅令往此國護其疆界使佛  
法興於彼有緣故來相託師驚寤聞山中有  
阿喝聲心甚異之及旦入山見一大木長十  
丈許枝幹繁茂又有瑞雲覆蔭其上因命工  
伐取如夢中所見刻像祠焉天福七年宋兵  
入寇帝素聞其事命師就徇攘禦虜軍驚駭  
遂保安寧江又見風濤震陽政龍騰躍虜乃

奔瀆七年宋人阮覺來聘時法師杜順亦有盛  
名帝命變服為江令迎於江曲覺見其善於文  
談以詩贈之補外有天外有天應返照之句帝  
以示師對曰北尊陛下與其主不異覺還師作  
詞曰玉卽歸還之其詞云祥光風好錦帆張神  
僊復帝鄉千重萬里涉滄浪九天歸路長人情  
慘切對離腸攀戀星星郎願將深意為南強分  
明報我皇尋以衰老乞辭歸還本郡遊戲山創  
寺住持學者輻湊一日入室弟子多寶問云如  
何是學道始終師云始終無物妙盡空會得真  
如歸自同寶云如何保任師云無汝下手處進

云和尚道了也師云汝作麼生會寶便喝李朝順  
天二年二月十五日將告寂不宣偈云木中元有  
火元火復還生若謂本無火鑽燧何由明得畢跌跏而逝  
壽五十有二步云壽七十

### 第五世二人

僊遊扶童鄉建初寺多寶禪師不知何許人亦莫  
曉其姓氏時匡越大師於開國寺闡化師預參  
學大師嘉其臨撓領悟處事謹恪獨許入室得  
法之後惟一瓶一鉢逍遙物外後得建初寺居  
焉李太祖潛龍時師見其英姿秀異謂曰此兒  
骨相不凡他日南面必此人也帝大驚曰方今



聖明在上。亦內靖證吾師何故出此赤族語耶。  
師云。天命素定。雖欲逃之。不可得已。倘效其  
言。幸勿相棄。及帝即位。屢召師赴闕。諮訪禪  
古恩禮。厚隆洽。至故朝廷政事咸預決焉。有  
詔重修其寺。後不知所化。

### 第六世三人

天德府邑山感應寺。禪香長老姓呂氏。朱明  
人也。世修淨行。弱歲建初。多寶禪師。論二十  
四年寶門徒百餘。惟師與國抱和為首。遠無  
師深得其奧。一日問寶。云如何得見真心。寶  
云。見汝自嚴師。豁然領旨。悟云。一切皆然。非

惟某甲寶云。汝了也。未師不弟了。時還同不  
了。寶云。須以此心。係任師掩耳背立。寶便喝去。  
師禮寶云。汝後還似一箇蟲。寶按入在都將城  
隍使阮郇。飲其名德。延就此寺。居焉。學徒雲集。  
教人演化。功為不少。李太宗崇興大寶三年  
庚寅三月三日。疾會衆訣別。說偈云。本來無  
處所。是真宗。真宗如是。幻幻有。即空空。偈畢  
奄然而化。

偶遊天福峰重明寺。禪老禪師。初發建初。多  
寶。領得心要。尋就慈覺。卓錫。禪風日熾。學者  
于數。蔚為叢林。衣盛通瑞。降中。李太宗常幸。

其寺問師云和尚住山來幾時對曰但知今日月誰識舊春秋帝云日過作麼生事對曰翠竹黃花非外境白雲明月露全真帝云有何意旨對曰詞多無後益帝豁然有得將遣使迎師赴闕顧問兩師先以歸寂帝深悼惜御製詩哀挽勅中使厚齎贈禮結壇閣維收靈骨塔于山門又廣修其寺置徒以香火焉

第七世七人

丹龍京吉祥寺圓照禪師姓梅氏諱直福堂龍潭人李靈感太后兄子也幼聰敏好學聞本郡密嚴寺長老善相試就決焉長老燕視

曰汝於佛法有緣若出家必為善菩薩中人不然則壽夭難保矣師感悟辭親投芭蕉山定香授業執持餘年研究禪學常持圓覺經明三觀法一夕定中見文殊菩薩持刀破腹餽以藥白是心中所習宛如夙契深得言語三昧講說如流尋於京畿之左創寺居焉卒者林卒有僧問佛之與聖其爰云何師云籬下重陽菊枝頭淑氣鶯進云謝學人不會請再指示師云書則金烏照夜來玉兔明僧又問已獲師真旨玄挽示如何師云不慎水盤擎滿丟一遭嗟咤悔何之進云謝師描云莫濯



江波觸親來却自沉又問少室摩竭 玄自古  
千今誰辨料爲主師云幽明乾象因烏兔角曲  
坤維爲嶽淮又問如何是大道根源一路行師  
云高岸疾風知勁草邦家飯湯識忠良又問一  
切衆生從何而來百年之後從何而去師云盲  
龜穿石壁跛鼈上高山又問青丘翠竹盡真如  
如何是真如用師云贈君千里遠笑把一甌茶  
進云恁麼即空來何益師云誰識東阿去途中  
戴白頭又問野野一深戶誰識等閑敲師云金  
谷蕭疎花草亂而今昏曉任牛羊進云爲什麼  
姪此師云富貴無驕秦關令敗市樓又問龍女

獻珠成佛果檀那捨施福如何師云萬古月中  
桂扶疎在一輪進云恁麼即勞而無功師云天  
上如懸鏡人間處處通 又問  
渡河須用筏到岸不須船不渡時如何師云涸  
池魚在陸獲活萬年春  
進云恁麼即隨流始獲妙理師云見說荆軻侶  
一行竟不迴又問金鑛混交元一氣請師方便  
鍊精形師曰不是膏君客那知海大魚  
進云市君若不納諫語亦奚爲師云若欲先  
提飲休爲巧尽蛇又問蛇死於塲請師救活  
師云汝是何方人僧曰本來山人師云速回

舊君隱莫見許真君又問源藏滔滔應不問曹  
溪滴上是如何師云風前松下淒涼韻兩後途  
中淺濁泥進云怎麼即不異今時也師云籬下  
重陽菊枝頭暖日鶯又問昭上心目之間明上  
色身之內而理不可分相不可覩爲什麼不覩  
師云苑中花爛熳岸上草離披進云  
歲寒群音落何以可宣揚師云喜君來自達不  
亦且歡娛進云幸聞今日決從此免忽無師  
云淺溺纔提出回頭萬丈潭又問涅槃城內尚  
猶危如何是不危之處師云營巢簾煖上髯  
髮常蒼莖進云君遭時迫近兩提是何爲師

云丈夫隨波蕩風月且逍遙又問一切衆生  
看言是佛此理未明請師再示師云勸君且  
路叢桑去莫學他人待勉勞進云幸蒙師顯決  
終不向他求師云可憐遭一噎飢飽却忘飧  
又問幾年又積囊中寶今日當場覲面看師  
云秋待中秋月却遭雲雨侵進云雖聞師語  
說此理未分明師云笑他徒抱性溺死向中流  
又問如何是一決師云才見春生無夏長又  
逢秋熟及冬藏進云怎麼即成佛多也師云  
祖龍驅自止徐福遠徒勞又問見性成佛其  
義云何師云枯木逢春花竟發風吹千里覆



神香進云學人不會願師再指師云萬年茄  
子樹蒼翠聳雲端又問摩尼與衆色不合不  
分離師云春花與蝴蝶幾戀幾相違進云恁  
麼即隨他混雜師云不是胡僧眼徒勞逞辯  
味又問如何是觸目菩提師云幾驚曲木鳥  
頻吹冷壺人進云學人不會更請別喻師云  
聾人聽琴響盲者望蟾蜍又問本自有形兼  
有影有時影也離形否師云衆水朝東乃萬  
派爭流羣星拱北方千古歸心又問如何是  
一句了然超百億師云遠挾泰山起北海仰  
拋拄杖入蟾宮又問惟此一事實餘二即非

真如何是真師云杖頭風易動筌上兩成泥  
又問不向如來是妙藏不求祖籟續燈枝  
忘旨如何師云秋天搏黍唳雪景牡丹開又  
問如何最妙之句師云一人向隅立滿座飲  
無惟又問古今大事應酬特地西來意若  
何師云巧言令色者鑽龜打瓦人又問心法  
雙忘性即真如何是真師兩滴巖花神女淚  
風敲庭竹伯牙琴又問如何是最妙之句師  
云候裏猶存梗常居不快然又問有修有証  
開四病出頭何可脫塵籠師云山高更大容  
坐貯海闊能容納細流又問惟佛與佛乃知

斯事如何是斯事師云來徑森<sub>下</sub>風吹曲自成又問不用平常不用天然不用作用而今作什麼師云逢草棲低鷄滄溟隱巨鱗又問四大帶來由曠劫請師方便出輪迴師云果世畜徒<sub>下</sub>是寶食於荆棘卧於泥又問種種取捨皆是輪迴不取不捨時如何師云<sub>下</sub>來紅見殊常色有葉參差不有花又問言<sub>下</sub>斷其意如何師云用響隨風穿竹到山若帶月過牆來又問諸佛說法皆是化物若惜本意是名出世如何是本心師云春織花如錦秋來葉似黃又問如何是直截一<sub>下</sub>路師

云東西車馬走塵土曉昏飛又問有法有心開妄識如何心法蕩<sub>下</sub>偃消師云可奪松梢長<sub>下</sub>爵七豈憂霜雪落紛<sub>下</sub>七又問祖意與教意如何師云興來携杖遊雲徑困即垂簾卧竹床又問祖祖相傳合傳何事師云飢來須尋食寒即向求衣又問世人皆賃屋漏人何所在師云金烏垂玉兔盈<sub>下</sub>晏謾勞分又問如何是曹溪一<sub>下</sub>路師云可憐刻舟客到處意<sub>下</sub>忽忽師嘗撰藥師十二願文李仁宗皇帝以其<sub>下</sub>景附使<sub>下</sub>筵于<sub>下</sub>哲宗既至<sub>下</sub>湘國寺高座法師覽之即合掌禮曰南方有肉身大士出<sub>下</sub>去善說經法



師云貧道豈能敢增損因再述一本附還使  
回以聞帝深嘉獎廣祐六年庚午九月日無  
疾示衆云我此身中骨節筋脈四大候合所  
有無常譬如屋宇壞時椽栳俱落其汝珍重  
聽吾偈云身如牆壁已頽時奉世忽亡慕不  
悲若達心空無色色空隱顯任推移偈竟端  
躬而逝壽九十二臘月五十六有讚圓覺經  
十二菩薩行修證道場及參徒顯夾一卷今  
行于世

安郎龍墜剎鈴寺<sup>〇</sup>禪師朱明扶譚人也  
姓譚氏少好李魯竺之書無不該貫一日附

卷數曰

孔墨執有落老溺無世俗  
之曲非解脫法惟有欠教不計有無可了生  
死然修持戒精進求善知識印證始得因捨  
俗詣色山感應寺定香長老其參請山問  
如何是究竟<sup>〇</sup>麥耶師云未山云我與汝究竟  
麥<sup>〇</sup>師擬<sup>〇</sup>山云<sup>〇</sup>嗟過了也師於言下究旨  
因以名焉尋入<sup>〇</sup>隱進山光明寺頭陀苦行六  
年足不下山演化之聲升聞于上李太宗皇  
帝累徵不就凡三幸其寺以慰問焉太師梁  
公文任亦加禮敬龍瑞太平年間宰相楊公  
道嘉以其寺請師住持固辭不狎從之下山

日語人曰吾不復到此矣山中禽獸悲鳴三  
旬不止居甫三年以彰聖嘉慶某年月日將  
示寂會門徒謂曰夫一切法門本從汝性一  
切法性本從汝心一如本無二法牽纏煩惱  
一切皆空罪福是非一切皆幻無所求果非  
因不於業中分別不於報中分別業若有分  
別不得自在雖見一切法而無所見雖知一  
切法而無所知知一切法因緣為本見一切  
法正真為宗雖染實際解了世間皆如變化  
明達衆生惟是一法無有二法不捨業境善  
巧方便於有為界示有為法而無分別無為

之相蓋歆絕我忘念計較故也乃說偈云覺  
了身心本寂寂神通變化現諸相有為無為  
從此出河沙世界不可量雖然徧滿虛空界  
一一觀來沒形狀千古萬古難此无界處  
處常明是日午結壇閣維收其靈骨起塔  
天德府邑山感應寺寶性明二禪師並朱明  
人性嚴氏心危氏早歲共出家為同志友  
物與圓照禪師俱事定香上人深得其髓後  
各佩心印隨方開化傑為叢林之首照常有  
歌詩遺寶美其高志頌在集錦二師居常持誦  
法華為業踰十五載未嘗少置每至藥王品



輒流涕相謂曰菩薩因地累劫薰修於大乘  
心猶能發大勇猛精進不惜身命况我等輩  
於末法中初發人若不如是至誠則於大善  
提真大衆心何可希觀以天成七年四月二  
師將焚身得請于朝遂建講經會同入火先  
三昧其餘骸遺骨俱成七寶有詔留長聖寺  
供養李太宗以其靈異改元通瑞寺塔空略  
山灌頂寺廣智禪師京師人姓顏氏彰奉皇  
妃之兄也道操水絜不事鮮腍彰聖嘉慶初  
辟俗性參禪遊禪老言下契旨由是月練日  
收篋志禪學不周年間風譽遠播後於茲山

卓錫常掛衲衣創松實與山僧明惠為方外  
契人諳寒內拾得復出工部尚書段公文飲  
所宗嘗贈詩云挂錫危峰撰六塵默居幻夢  
問浮雲殷勤無計參澄什索綯簪纓在鶯群  
廣祐某年月日師歸寂公哭之慟挽以詩云  
林蠻白首適京城拂袖高山遠更馨幾願淨  
巾趨丈席忽聞遺履掩禪高齋庭幽鳥空啼  
月臺塔誰人爲作銘道侶不須傷永別院前  
山水是真形時

李太宗皇帝嘗於奉福禪老參問禪旨針錐  
總示腦蟲通風樂益餘禪悅為樂因與詰方

耆宿講究異同帝先謂曰朕惟佛祖心源自  
古聖賢未免詆訾况後學哉今欲與諸德略  
敘已意各述一偈以觀其用心何如耳皆再  
拜奉命衆方屬思而帝已成偈云般若真無  
宗人空我亦空過現未來佛法性本來同衆  
皆服其敏給云

第八世六人。

慈廉普寧寺通辨國師丹鳳人也姓吳氏釋  
流子也性聰惠尤三學初參吉祥園師丹照  
得旨乃於昇京國寺掛塔自號智空會豐五  
年春二月十五日符聖感靈仁皇太后嘗於

其寺齋僧與諸耆宿究問佛之祖妄有何優  
劣佛佳何友祖居何城何時而來至吳國土  
傳授此道孰先孰後而念佛名達祖心者至  
相道未知何者是奇衆皆無諳師對曰夫常  
住世間不生不滅謂之佛明伏心宗行解相  
應謂之祖佛祖一也蓋濫學者流矣自稱優  
劣耳且佛者覺也此覺本來湛然常住一切  
有生皆同此理但為情塵所蔽隨業漂流轉  
成諸趣佛以慈悲心故示生竺土蓋謂天地  
之正中也十九出家三十成道住世說法四  
十九年開種七法權答其悟道八此所謂一



代時興教也將般涅槃恐者迷滯語文殊曰  
吾四十九年未曾說一字將謂有所說耶因  
拈起花枝衆皆罔指獨迦葉尊者破顏微笑  
知其有契遂以正法眼藏付之是爲一祖此  
所謂教外別傳之心宗也厥後摩騰以是法  
入劉漢達磨以是旨遊梁魏傳其教者至天  
台爲盛謂之教宗得其旨至曹溪爲明謂之  
禪宗二宗至于我越有年矣則以牟博康僧  
會爲始禪則以毗尼多流支爲前派無言通  
爲後派是謂二派之祖也后曰教宗且置禪  
之二派有何效驗師曰按曇遷法師傳隨高

祖謂之法也后云朕念調御慈悲之教報德  
無由位忝人王弘護三寶已遍收遺體舍利  
仍於國內立堅寶塔凡四十九所表世津梁  
餘一百五十寺塔外各交州諸處建立異資  
福潤以及大千然彼雖內屬猶繫羈縻宜選  
名德沙門往彼諸處化導令一切俱得善提  
法師曰交州一方道通天竺佛法初來江東  
未被而靡隳又重創興宝刹二十餘所度僧  
五百餘人譯經一十五卷以其先之故也于  
時則已有丘尼名摩羅耆城康僧會支暹良  
牟博之屬在焉今又有湛得賢上法士於毘

尼多流文<sup>註</sup>以三祖宗冰為菩薩中人於衆善  
 寺授化<sup>註</sup>冰化會下不減三百餘人與中國無  
 異陛下是昔天慈父歆平手施可獨遣使將  
 還彼有人焉不須往化又唐相國權德輿傳  
 法序云又曹溪沒後禪法盛行各有宗緒者  
 彰敬師禪師以馬祖心要化行於吳越無言  
 通大士傳百丈宗旨開悟于交川此其效驗  
 也后又問二宗傳授之火師曰流支冰者即  
 今林思生王真是也無言冰者即今梅國照  
 顏廣智即今雷荷澤是也其餘旁出浩不悉  
 舉后大喜乃拜師為僧籙賜紫衣袈裟號通

辨大師兼加厚賞以寵榮焉尋召入內拜為  
 國師訪問禪要深得其旨<sup>註</sup>有德實倚云色是  
 校<sup>註</sup>色空眼不單挽年遷住于其寺開大法筵兩  
 大法兩其教人修已常以法華經為用故時  
 人謂之悟法華龍彰軍闕二年甲寅二月十  
 日田告疾<sup>註</sup>究連教源寺滿覺大師安格  
 鄉隴厓人也姓阮諱長父懷素任至中書員  
 外郎李仁宗潛龍儲邸詔各家子弟入侍左  
 右師以博聞強記學通儒釋得預其選公退  
 常以禪那為念及帝即位因其素尚賜名懷  
 信英武詔勝中表請出家既得准頂廣智之



印乃薙錫雲遊徧求道契所至學者鑒集閱  
大藏經得無師智為一時法門領袖帝與感  
靈仁皇太后方留心禪李乃於景興宮側起  
其寺延請居之以便顧問與語不名常曰  
長老一日謂曰至人示現必務濟生無行不  
具無事不修非唯定惠之力亦有贊襄之功  
宜敬任之乃授教源禪院依信大師傳祖無  
修無謠心印奉詔入內道場賜紫大沙門同  
三司公事時燭戶五十人會豐五年十一月  
晦告疾示衆偈云春去百花落春到百花開  
事逐眼前過老從頭上來莫謂春殘花落尽

庭前昨夜一枝梅是夕結跏而逝壽四十有  
五僧臘十九帝贈密厚禮公卿名賚香信茶  
旣收舍利塔于安格崇岩寺勅謚滿覺  
應天府寧山隆恩寺悟印禪師金脾御思理  
人也少譚氏諱棄母瞿氏初未嫁時家在墓  
林之側見弋宿鳥者甚衆謂曰寧受死為善  
不受生為惡一日方織錦有大獼猴自林中  
出來抱其背竟日乃去瞿氏覺有娠及生而  
惡之棄于林間同鄉占城具師譚氏取而鞠  
之因名以棄年至十聽習儒業學問日進尤  
明唐林虎字十九歲出家具足戒定於因竟

華三經莫悉精究既得准頂廣智心印徑入  
此山結茅獨居自号悟印常有僧問如何是  
大道師云大略僧云亭人問大道对以大略  
未審何日達大道師云苗兒未解捉風僧云  
苗兒有伏性否師云無僧問一切含灵皆有  
伏性和尚如何獨先師云不我不是含靈僧  
云既非含靈即是伏否師云我不是伏不是  
含靈有人問如何是伏如何是法如何是禪  
師云先王法王在身為伏在口為法在心為  
禪虽是二般其歸則一喻如三江之水隨處  
立名名雖不同水性无異廣祐四年六月十

四日將示寂說偈云妙性虚空不可攀虚空心  
悟得何难王焚山上五常覆蓮葉爐中瀑未乾  
偈畢怡然而逝寿六十九門人心喪云作

第九世八人集錄

僊遊天福山光明寺道惠禪師如月真諷人  
也姓歐氏相貌端正童蒙年二十五修普寧  
吳法華披削客扣玄門深得其奧尋發此寺  
悲錫該諫律兼董脩定慧賜不至席者六年矣  
深得三觀三摩地門徒一千餘人日夜持經  
感得山中猿猴群而來由是名震闕下大  
宋二十年瑞明皇郊得疾遣使召師視之僧



符懷柔悲觀者知哀戀以至宮終立寢門之外  
姬疾遂愈李英宗太悅節于報天寺旬月  
之間公卿遁侶欽風而至者不可勝數師乃  
開堂演化不復入山嗣法兒孫一門為盛政  
隆寶應十年乙亥八月一日示疾歎曰亂離  
莫矣爰自其來說偈云地水火風識元來一  
切空如雲還聚散佛日照無窮又云色身與  
妙髻不合不分離若人要甄別爐中花一枝  
是夜三更寂然而逝門人高僧統備禮物歸  
本肥茶毗心喪畢塔于仙游山寶龜寺邊舍  
利安置龍京萬歲寺辨才禪師廣州人孝聖

宗時來子我編纂國師嘗奉  
美浪君章保福寺室鑑禪師中瑞鄉人也姓  
矯氏諱淨為人中信恪實恬澹簡素幼習儒  
業詩書禮易無所不究工於字畫仕李英宗  
朝至恭候舍人年三十六去官投多雲保福寺  
主落髮其寺藏經皆手親寫迨寺主去世緒  
踵住持其自奉泊如也身常麻裙不掛寸絲  
如此喻年無弛退念嘗語徒曰進佛宗乘者  
勤處佛正覺者智也猶如射者步之外其至  
力也其中非力也政隆寶應十一年五月七  
日將圓寂詭偈云得成正覺罕憑修祇為牢

籠智慧優認得摩尼妙理祇如天上顯金烏  
 又云智者猶如月照天光含塵刹照無偏若  
 人要識須分別嶺上扶疎鎖暮煙又曰如來  
 心意俱不可得但應以無量智故知如來心  
 譬如虛空為一切所依如來智慧亦復如是  
 言訖而逝其徒收舍利建塔  
 海清嚴光寺空晦禪師海清嚴人也姓楊氏  
 世為漁者後捨漁業歸心空寂居常加持陀  
 羅尼門彰聖嘉慶中與覺海道友偕姓方外  
 替至荷澤寺樓上草衣木食殆忘其身外絕  
 馳求內修禪定心神耳目日覺爽然便得飛

空履水伏虎降龍萬恠千奇人莫之測尋於  
 本聰剎寺焉一日有侍者啓云某自到來未  
 蒙指示心要敢呈一偈云鍛鍊身心始得清  
 森上直幹對虛庭有人來問空王法身坐屏  
 邊影集形師覽之曰汝將經來吾為汝接汝  
 行水來吾為汝受何處不與汝心要乃呵呵  
 大笑嘗說偈云堪得龍蛇地可居野情終日  
 樂無餘有時直上孤峯頂長嘯一聲寒太虛  
 會祥大慶十年己亥六月初三日示寂門人  
 收舍利葬于寺門有詔廣修其寺持燭戶二  
 手火以奉香火此師無年譜可考今依  
 南宗圖傳法世次後敘于此



傑持至靈山中陽庵本淨禪師求康扶演人  
 姓喬氏師少好學洞佛家生死之玄造儒者  
 隻之頭得肯於教源滿竟大定二年徑入茲  
 山駐錫右弼魏公國寶欽其風德以師禮事  
 之尋受城楊公之請從乾安寺住持常教六  
 願云世上生不生昧佛肯自竟也他無間彼  
 此方便提携入於一揆貞符元年正月日師  
 無疾一日示衆曰一揆一揆石槁槁尾擲身  
 挺凜還化為鬼若要分明金生麗水又偈云  
 幻身本自空寂生猶如鏡中影形像竟了  
 一切空幻身須臾證實相偈畢而逝壽七十七

禪苑集英

第十世十二人錄

典公福聖寺明智禪師鞞略扶琴鄉人也姓  
 蘇氏夙稟聰惠博覽羣弱冠遇道惠上士捨  
 素從縉扣得玄捷明於覺圓仁王法華傳燈  
 之旨講授不倦賜號明智一日刻草次有僧  
 欽手左邊立師飛剡子向僧面前剡一根草  
 僧云古人云和尚祇剡得那箇師提起剡子  
 僧接得乃作剡勢師云還記得此後句否汝  
 祇剡得箇不剡得這箇僧休去師與一僧詰  
 傍有僧云語底是文殊底是維摩師云不

語不默。莫是汝香僧然之師云。何不現神通。  
僧云。不辭現神通。祇怕和尚收入教。師云。汝  
未是教外底眼。乃說偈曰。教外可別傳。希夷  
祖佛淵。若人欲辨的。陽燄覓求煙。天資嘉瑞  
十一年丙辰某月日。將示寂。有偈云。松風水  
月明。無影亦無形色身。這箇是空空。尋響聲  
偈已奄然而逝。

空。踞山灌頂寺。信學禪師。天德府朱明人也。  
姓蘇氏。世業雕經。少事清介。不雜交遊。三十  
有二。從史禪師投仙逢通惠。披剃執役三年。  
深契宗旨。因孤錫遊方。至此寺。憩焉。常於伏

前。燃指發大弘願。曰。累劫塵勞。斷不復作。專  
務圓覺。三觀。日惟一食。形容枯槁。如此有年。  
絕無厭色。深得三觀。正受公卿士庶嘉高。雅  
爭先事之。師曰。有利必有染。有染必有利。有  
染有利。菩薩不行。無利無染。菩薩乃行。天資  
嘉瑞五年庚申正月九日。師告疾。示衆偈云。  
山林虎豹橫。文班駁。若欲甄別子。啐毋咏偈。  
畢。

天德府開國寺淨空禪師。本福  
川人也。姓吳氏。首於本州崇福院出家。具受  
某年三十。行脚南方。到此卓錫。五六年間。修  
頭陀行。一麻一麥。長坐不眠。每入定中。累日



方起四方檀施者山積或來伺盜師必告以  
其物所在時南康公主意欲捨塵私以戒請  
師聽披削朝廷聞之詔收捕及師至闕神色  
自若帝深加敬拜為碩德名僧固辭不就一日  
上堂次有僧策杖至問如何是法身師云法  
身本無形如何是法眼本無翳師又云目前  
無法意在目前洪非耳目所可聞呵呵大笑師  
云笑箇什麼僧云和尚一等出世未有宗旨  
須往參道惠始得師云彼師還訪得麼僧云  
上無蓋尾下無卓錫遂易服直詣仙遊山道  
惠云此問宗旨即不無閣梨如何保任師謔

搖籃當面蹉過了也師領旨因執中履者三  
年後還本寺受徒一日會衆說偈云上無片  
尾遮下無卓錫地或易服直詣或策杖而至  
動轉觸處問似龍曜吞餌僧問從上直指  
為什麼說師云日日去穫禾時上空倉廩僧  
云某甲不會師云日月長明浮雲蓋蔭有說  
偈曰智人無悟道悟道即愚人伸脚高卧客  
奚識偽兼真問如何是佛師云日月麗天含  
億刹誰知雲霧落山河進云如何會得師云  
牧童秣慣卧牛背鉅英雄勝得伊問祖意與  
教意是同是別師云萬里梯航皆關問和

山有奇特事如何不向學人說師云汝吹火  
我著米汝乞食我取鉢誰辜及汝僧開悟政  
德實應八年某月日將示寂與衆訣云汝等  
害自守護如吾在日勿染世間輒生哀戀夜  
子時昧坐長住壽八十餘

此傳悅錄高誦與傳燈  
夾山和尚傳頌教惠  
口刻祖要語實已  
具載不敢改正

武寧山報德寺大捨禪師東作坊人也姓許  
氏少出家投僊遊道惠習禪學粗得其槩常  
以華嚴妙門普賢神咒為日用事時或散髮  
休糧棲止無定所王公爭先事之建寧王天  
堽公主尤所尊敬常於宣明虎岩剎寺演化

學有傾響有宋僧若翁聞風感慕遂燃一指  
供養人疑其有妖術天感至寶中太尉杜公  
英武令收入禁內深加嚴責師略無怖色天  
堽奏解得免一日李英宗召師問曰朕多煩  
惑何術治之師云十二因緣法是生死循環  
之根本欲以治之此其藥也又問其旨師云  
無明因緣行乃至憂悲苦惱欲求辟支佛應  
說十二因緣須治此身中即無煩惱業帝云  
然則朕當靜心修習師云禁得業識安靜時  
即是澄清煩惱無有別法可修習也晉梁武  
帝嘗以此問寶誌禪師誌亦如是對今竊為



陛下舉似貞符五年二月五日囑弟子已說  
偈云四蛇同篋本元空五蘊山高亦不宗真  
性靈明無罣碍涅槃生死任遊籠又云石馬  
齒狂獐食苗日月鳴塗中人共過馬上人不  
行迨五更服藥而逝壽六十有一  
武寧井岡越王池庵淨刀禪師武平葛陵人  
也姓吳氏諱湛少聰辨長於文藝字體尤妙  
游學時遇仙遊道惠針芥相投棲心佛地章  
衣木食福惠雙修父歷星霜秉心彌固惠常  
謂曰諸佛心印汝自有之匪從人得師云既  
蒙指示當住何方慧云不必遠行武寧可矣

師到山結茅居焉十二時中禮佛懺悔深得  
念佛三昧其声清越如梵天音常講圓覺經  
義理有所不安親為改正時謂口中確黃天  
感二年某月日示疾告門徒曰汝等一切學  
道人勤心供養佛不外求但令除諸惡業心  
口念誦信解聞知虛閑寂靜近善知識受言  
和悅說必以時內無怯怖了達於義遠離愚  
迷安住不動觀一切法無常無我無作無為  
處所離分別是為學道人也吾今化緣畢矣  
乃說云先雖言吉後言凶自是人先諱不役  
為遇見龍為佛子忽遭鼠出寂無窮端然而

遊壽六十四

常樂吉利鄉遊戲山青雀寺智寶禪師末  
康鳥鳶人姓阮氏原有李朝英宗皇帝太尉  
蘇公憲誠之舅氏也捨俗出家於此山寺常  
弊衣糲食有十年不易一衣三日不炊一饔  
于足胼胝顏色枯槁見一穷人則斂手避道  
遇一沙門則屈膝禮拜精修禪定六年成道  
乃携錫下山或修橋道或建寺塔隨緣普勸  
不為利養嘗有僧問生從何來死從何去師  
擬議僧云擬議之間白雲萬里師無對僧便  
叱云好寺無佛乃出去師自歎曰我虽有出

家之心未得出家之旨譬如掘井雖至九尺  
而不及泉猶為棄井况修身不悟道也奚為  
自此遍遊四方參尋知識聞仙遊道惠演化  
遂往見焉問生從何來死從何去惠云生無  
所從來死無所從去師云莫是脫落空處麼  
惠云真性妙圓體自空寂運用自在不同生  
死是故生無所從來死無所去師於言下領  
悟云不因風捲浮雲尽爭見青天萬里秋慧  
云汝見箇什麼師云相識滿天下知音能幾  
人乃辭還山自是橫說豎說如擊石火一日  
片堂緇素如堵有問如何是知足師云夫出



家在家止於知是若能知足外不侵人內無  
損我草葉微細彼所不與我不當取況他物  
屬他起他物想終不於此而生盜心乃至他  
妻妾起他妻妾想亦不於此而生淫心諸人  
聽吾偈言菩薩資財知止足於他慈恕不侵  
欲草葉不與我不取不想他物德如王菩薩  
白妻方知足如何他妻起貪欲於他妻妾他  
所護父忍自心起心曲李朝英宗皇帝天資  
嘉瑞五年四月十四日示疾而逝弟子茶毗  
收靈骨山門起塔  
平虜市衛靈山朝天王寺長原禪師仙逝長

原人也姓潘氏貝種也初出家得先明道惠  
印可乃徑入慈山晦迹衣草叢食稞粟日與  
泉石猿獒為鄰友二六時中打疊身心渾然  
一片貌以持經踰五六年人未常窺其影嚮  
李英宗聞風慕遁欲見不可乃命師故交審  
臣黎晦誘致闕下及至館香刹寺師自悔逃  
歸詔門人曰夫身橋心灰求世間浮偽可物  
也蓋由吾志行未純樂樊籠所困耳聽吾偈  
云猿猴抱子歸青嶂自古聖賢沒可量春來  
鸞轉百花深秋至菊開沒模樣又常語人曰  
奇哉奇哉此諸衆生云何具有如來智慧惠

安樂寺遺像碑記  
相尋著於目前得見如來廣大智慧利益  
安樂寺遺像碑記  
云在先在靈骨離就心肝澄澈與物無礙  
於自來應物無礙宗莊曰靈骨入倫享壽  
萬物與物為春作舞鐵女打鼓木人得里而  
化壽盡十六

入安府秘靈內國清寺淨戒師職  
海顯在州鄉人也俗姓朱氏諱海顯字自微  
寒性信建寧學遊茅華腹膺儒教旨亦在處  
嬰疾蒙素衣建寧覺稱頓愈決志出家據

本鄉耆宿進具專習毗尼聞浪山勝僻可居  
一錫東邁參學七年遇園明寶覺言下必契  
政隆寶應癸巳十月寶公將示滅講曰生老  
病死世之常然豈吾独免師問今日尊德如  
何寶覺然而笑示偈云萬法歸空無所依歸  
寂真如目前機達悟心圓無所指水水心月  
泯心義偈已乃付法具由是隨方行化尋得  
此寺憩焉禁足六年修頭陀行降龍伏虎感  
化如神州收范公慈嚮其名德尤加禮尚請  
鑄洪鍾置鎮山門貞符二年夏遇早詔天下  
各僧祈雨弗驗李高宗素聞僧名遣使召至



下師報天幸夜半師庭立焚香乃失路再覺

深嘉寵常呼為雨師師召入便殿扣其法要

賞賜甚厚右係傳云師年丁壯時家父使官役其鄉未及

又有新車題乃灌歸鄉家時本縣後聞中漕使至夜焚香立倚儀而雨降止於園中內奉為異聞奏于朝帝大

喜遣使迎至京師報天子信宿之間貞符四年萬

寶山真教寺成命諸耆德赴會慶讚師應詔

詣闕寓臨霄閣時方霖雨道塗淋潦妨於藏

事師禱立齋會期滿七日雨復如初後歸本

鄉重修廣聖寺化緣鑄鍾鼓鞀之間雲陰翳

雨師立庭中振錫睇目有頃天日開霽爾後

倭遭兵火而所鑄之鍾至今存焉尋還本寺

授徒演化僧問佛理師云爾我又嘗謂曰心

之性故是如來藏心即性故是自性心清淨

也治平龍應二年七月七日將示寂偈云此

時訖道罕知音只為如斯道喪心奚似子期

多爽嶠聽來一達伯牙琴又云秋來涼氣爽

骨襟入斗才高對月吟堪笑禪家凝鈍客為

何將語以傳心乃結跏而逝此傳畧與國史及碑文不同今復考正

海清延福寺贊海禪師海清人也姓阮氏幼

慕漁釣常以小艇為家浮遊江海年二十五

捨所業落髮為僧初與空昭俱事荷澤尋為

昭法嗣李仁宗時常與通玄真人被召入連

覺凉石侍坐忽有蛭蚶對鳴聒耳可惡帝命  
玄奘之玄默咒先噫其一笑謂師曰尚留一  
箇與沙門師注目少頃一亦道墮帝異之作  
詩讚云覺海心如海通玄道人玄神通兼變  
化一佛一神僊由是名馳天下僧俗傾尚帝  
每以師禮待之每駕幸海清行宮必先詣其  
寺一日帝謂師曰應真神足可得同乎師乃  
作八變涌身虛空去地數丈俄而復下帝及  
羣臣皆合爪稱歎於是賜肩舁出入闕庭迨  
神宗朝累召師筵以相席不就僧問師其衆  
生誰實誰非師示偈云角女頭白報爾作

者識若問佛境界龍門遭黥額將告示疾衆  
偈云春來花蝶善知時花蝶應須共應知期  
花蝶本來皆是幻莫須花蝶向心持是夜有  
大星隕於丈室東南偶語旦帝然而述詔蜀  
戶三十以奉香火官其子二人以褒賞  
姪月真護鄉廣報寺願學禪師扶琴人也姓  
阮氏少從密嚴園智受法既得旨首於衛靈  
山棲隱專修梵行經十二年每入禪觀三日  
方起常持香海大悲陀羅尼治病禱雨無不  
立驗李英宗感其神驗詔賜號不官禁以備  
城冷尋告老還長李仁博明使不下百餘人



天歲壬寅公年六月十一日將順寂示衆曰  
道無影像觸目非遙自反推求莫求他得縱  
饒求得得即不真設使得真真是何物所以  
三世諸佛歷代祖師印受心傳亦如是說咱  
吾偈云了悟身心開惠眼變化靈通現實相  
行住坐卧彼卓然應現化身不可量雖然克  
寒遍塵空觀來不見如有相世間無物可比  
況長現靈光明朗七嘗時演說不認無得一  
言以為當言訖咄咄而逝

世傳與傳灯惠思傳塔  
同今依惠目列想要銘所載

第十一世九人

張耕中瑞淨果寺廣嚴禪師丹鳳人也姓阮

氏蚤失怙恃從舅氏室嶽受業為叢心始嶽  
去世乃行脚四方遍擇禪窟聞智禪闡化於  
典谿福聖寺因往投之一日咱禪公講雪竇  
語錄至道吾漸源二尊宿至死家問生死話  
若有所得問云這一話頭古人道於生死中  
還有理也無禪云偈體得此理麼師云如何  
是無生死理禪云祇於生死中了取好師云  
你無生了禪云即自了師於言下水釋問如  
何保任禪云既了還同未了師作體由是禪  
林馳譽首於超類聖恩寺慈錫兵部尚書憑  
公降祥聞風起慕乃延就其寺大揚宗旨禪

俗陳華者猶虛維十日入室弟子常照舉金剛經問云如來所得法此法無實在處是甚麼法師云彼莫謗如來好照云和尚莫謗經言好師云此經是什麼人說照云和尚莫專弄某甲豈非佛說耶師云若是佛說何故經中又云若言如來有所說法則為謗佛照無語僧問如何是法身師云法身本無相如何是般若師云般若無形問如何淨果境界師云松嶽岩窠如何是境中人師云獨坐絨毳口進兵忽遇知音誰麼生接師云隨緣揭兩眉進云恁麼則建笏兒孫歐公崇子也師云

楚國愚人僧無語天資嘉瑞五年庚戌二月十五日將示疾說偈云離家方言寂滅去生無生後說任生男兒自有衝天志休向如來行處行偈已合掌端然而逝壽六十九憑公闍維起塔

第十二世七人歟錄

天德府驛傍鄉大祖寺常照禪師扶寧鄉人也姓范氏仕高宗朝為廣慈官令都曹後棄官求出世法淨果廣嚴乃其親得旨也奉侍教年尋居翁莫坊古寺宣揚教旨後遷止其寺遇徒甚盛僧問物我攀緣賺汝何師云物



我兩忘悉性無常易生易滅剎那不停誰是  
攀緣生為物生滅為物滅彼法所得常無生  
滅進云學人未了願師再指誨師云了心脩  
道則省力而易成不了心脩道乃費功而無  
益問如何是法身遍一切處師云如一毛孔  
遍法界一切毛孔悉如是當知無有少許心  
空無佛身何以故法身應化成正覺無處  
不至故應如是知如來以心自在力無起無  
轉而轉法輪知一切法常無起故以三種法  
說新應無新而轉法輪知一切法離邊見故  
離欲際非除而轉法輪入一切法虛空際故

無有言說而轉法輪知一切法不可說故究  
竟寂滅而轉法輪知一切法涅槃性故所謂  
無相性無盡性無生無滅無性我性無非我  
性無衆生性無非衆生性無菩薩性無法界  
性無虛空性亦復無有成等正覺性乃說偈  
云在世為人身心為如來藏照耀且無方罟  
之更絕曠天嘉寶祐二年九月二十四日師  
示心痛集眾說偈云道本無顏色新鮮日日  
誇大千沙界外何處不為家乃結跏而逝弟  
子神僊等闍維收舍利起塔師嘗作南宗嗣  
法圖一卷行于世

第廿卷世五人集

安羅屋鄉通師居士屋鄉人也姓鄧氏幼與  
勝光寺郭神儀俱事大祖常照嘗一日入室  
請益云如何覺了佛法照師云佛法不可覺  
了此寧益法託佛如是修一切法不可得師  
於言下須臾尋歸本鄉聞法學者麀至凡有  
所問必以心印印之或問如何是世間人師  
云不見古人道但觀五蘊皆空四大無我真  
心無相無去無來生時性不來死時性不去  
湛然圓寂心境一如但能如是直下頓了不  
為三世所拘繫便是世間人也切不可有分

毫趣向問如何是無生妄師云分別此諸蘊  
其性本空寂空故不可滅此是無生妄問如  
何是無生理師云韞蘊之事方顯性空性空  
不可滅是在生理僧云如何是佛師云本心  
是伏所以唐三藏玄奘云但了心地故號抱  
持悟法無生各為妙覺後以

皇朝建中四年戊子七月示寂

金帛侍中卿勝光寺神儀傳師外寨人也姓  
郭氏世修梵行從髮之始師事大祖常照及  
照將示寂問云諸人到此時節為甚却隨俗  
死紫照云遂記得幾箇不隨俗師云外戚一



人以此照得吾師不吝教訓。齊麟經獨而歸。照  
玉體。取是講。永師云。建僊。植處耳。照云。賺利。  
曰。神侵師。非謂求云。臣傳。予奈莊帝教。師  
何。照吐云。一犬吠虛。師云。和尚亦隨俗。否。照  
入。隨俗。師云。為甚。爾如此。照云。是與他同。條  
師。怒。怒。怪。悟。便禮拜。云。某甲錯會了也。照便  
喝。師復進曰。某甲事和尚有年矣。不知。首。得  
此。道。者。誰。欲。願。家。捐。保。律。法。世。次。庶。令。孝。有  
其。源。流。聚。嘉。其。懇。切。速。抽。出。通。辨。照。對。本  
又。起。其。宗。亦。條。為。分。宗。嗣。法。圖。終。示。師。覽。之  
既。乃。云。師。大。顛。阮。般。若。二。水。乃。亦。兄。教。何。耶。

照云。司辨之意。抑有以也。建嘉六年丙子二  
月十八日。師以照所授圖本。囑弟子隱空曰。  
方今世也。汝善佩此。慎勿為兵火所壞。則我  
祖風不墮矣。言訖。長往。照法從僧密利。讀。并。四。岸。  
隱空第十四世五人錄。  
天德府朱明卿通至寺。息慮禪師。朱明。  
巴。昭。威。敏。給。該。覈。俗。典。一。日。棄。所。學。歸。寺。是  
禪居士。且扣玄要。常於解夏日。設機大得。  
買。範。子。以。進。禪。驚。曰。汝。既。為。僧。何。乃。記。毀。甘  
茶。也。日。果。報。師。云。某。正。怠。麼。時。不。見。有。意。物  
小。不。有。某。甲。身。亦。不。知。有。殺。生。報。故。於。是。

作禪如疑法器乃許入室寄訊云從教用到  
覺地縱你作五逆七遮亦得成佛有僧在  
傍竊訥乃叫云苦哉縱有任麼事我不取也  
禪厲声云賊賊安用非人得其便師於言下  
頓悟後還北寺講究宗旨以淑徒云應順居  
士乃其嗣也

安于山現光禪師茶師人也姓黎氏諱純為  
人軟声音爽風貌發歲子立廬常艱苦年甫  
十六大祖常照兄所封之度為弟子學問聰  
邁日誦萬言不滿十年該洞三學禪門宗旨  
未及推究而昭靈歸寂矣師後與人辨論心

要必為所挫常竊輟曰吾今譬如大富家  
父母在時驕佚無度及父母死筆然遯昧不  
知家中珍寶所在終成窮乏於是遍遊叢林  
參尋作有得聖果智通一言頓明心地便委  
事焉尋以受華陽公主檀施時謗蜂起師聞  
謂曰夫與世俗仰有必不免於毀辱顧我反  
如是耶且菩薩路廣佛法無量中庸之士猶  
尚悲絲淫岐若不猛省以忍辱為甲冑以精  
進為干戈則何以攻魔軍破煩惱求取無上  
菩提徑往又安府淵澄山從法界禪師進具  
一日見侍者供米誤覆於地侍者驚遽和泥



擲之師自悔云予生無益於人徒勞供給以  
至如此乃衣葉休量經十年許將營別處為  
終老計遂深入慈山結茅居焉每林下經行  
必以拄杖擔一布袋所至坐卧野獸見之無  
不馴伏李惠宗欽其高躅爰備禮迎之師潛  
匿遣侍者復於使者曰貧道生王土食王祿  
山家奉佛多歷年所功德未就深負愧赧若  
使見王非惟無補治道亦取衆生之謗耳况  
今佛法隆行教中師匠固已畢集禁足羽儀  
毀閣顧茲陋寒一衲棲道山間何乃致此自  
是決不下山有僧問云和尚在山來作什麼

事師云那以許由德何知世幾春年為君曠  
野逍遙自在人建嘉十一年辛巳春將示寂  
端坐石上詭偈云幻法皆是幻幻脩皆是幻  
二幻皆不即即是除諸幻乃安然而化門人  
道圓具禮葬於山窟又自愚集云師  
在此去不知所之

第十五世七人一人

應王居士昇龍京邑市坊人也姓杜氏諱文  
性頗疎曠不汲汲於世務初仕我  
昭陵朝官至中品奉御公暇則篤志禪學手  
不釋卷搜窮祖意了達心宗於通聖息慮之  
門深造其將由是禪風不滯道眼彌高受

印得傳畢為叢林耳目第一宗國師逍遙戒  
明戒圓禪師之類是也

龍編古州鄉法雲寺北。尼多流支禪師南天竺國人婆羅門種也。少負邁俗之志。徧遊西竺。求伏心印。法緣未契。携錫而東南。陳朝大建六年壬午。初至長安。會周武帝褒獎伏法。欲往于鄴。時三祖僧粲以避讎。故挈其衣鉢。隱司空山。師與之遇見。其舉止非凡。心中起敬。乃向前叉手立者三反。祖皆瞑坐無語。師於佇思。吹籥然若有所得。展拜三下。祖三點頭而已。師退三步云。弟子向來也是不着便和尚。大慈悲故。願乞奉侍左右。祖曰。汝速南

行。交接不宜。久住於此。師辭去。卓錫廣州制旨寺。大抵六年。譯得象頭報業差別等經。迨周大律二年庚子三月。來于我土。此寺召焉。復譯出摠持經一卷。常一日召入室弟子法賢。誥曰。夫諸伏心印。必不相踰。圓同太虛。無欠無餘。無去無來。無得無失。非一異。非常非斷。本無生處。亦無滅處。亦非遠離。非不遠離。為對矣。緣假立名爾。所以三世諸伏。亦以如是。歷代祖師。亦以如是。得我亦以如是。得汝亦以如是。以至有情無情。皆以如是。得且吾祖。粲公印吾心。時謂吾速南行。交接不宜。



父住曠歷于茲今與汝遇果符縣記汝善持  
之吾去時至矣二訖合掌而逝法賢閣維收  
五也舍利起塔時隋開皇十四年甲寅也李  
太宗常有偈追贊云創自來南國聞吾父習  
禪應開諸伏信遠合一心源皎亡楞伽月分  
芬若般蓮何時高不見相與話重玄贈封云  
法雲比丘多流支嗣

第一世一人

第二世儒達天福山衆善寺法賢禪師朱爲  
人也姓杜氏身長七尺三寸首投法雲觀緣  
大師受具曰與其徒聽講禪要時思多流支

緣廣而來憇于此寺見師慕視謂曰汝何姓  
師云和尚甚姓支云汝無姓耶師云姓即不  
無和尚作麼生會支呵之曰用會作麼師忽  
然自省便禮拜遂得旨焉支滅已徑入慈山  
習定形如橋木物我俱忘飛鳥就野獸相  
狎時人嚮風來學者不可勝數因於寺授徒  
居僧常三百餘人南方禪宗於此爲盛隋刺  
史劉方以聞高祖又嚮此方欽崇伏教且復  
高師德譽遣使賁伏舍利五函附牒軟師建  
塔俱養師乃於麗陵法雲寺及峯驪長愛寺  
川各寺各起塔云禪師傳後以唐武德九

年兩歲示寂

第二世一人

第三世一人

第四世一人

天德府華林鄉建陽寺清辨律師古交人也  
姓樊氏年十二從曹光法燈學業燈將逝寂  
師問云和尚去後弟子當何依記燈云汝但  
崇業而聽師惘然不會燈滅後師乃專持金  
剛經為業忘口有禪客來見且問云此經是  
云世諸侯如何是侯君義句師云從來持  
誦未曉經意客云持來多少麻師云八載客

云此麻持經八箇載一箇經意也不會縱經  
百載功亦何為師遂作禮且叩其所進益客  
今就崇業惠嚴決焉師釋然謂曰吾今乃知  
法燈之語果符矣遂從之纔到寺嚴問云汝  
為什麼事來師云某甲心頭有所未穩嚴云  
汝未穩箇甚麼師舉前語似之嚴歛云汝自  
忘却了也不記經言云世諸侯及諸侯阿耨  
多羅三藐三菩提法皆從此經出豈是侯君  
義句耶師云是是某甲自昧也嚴又曰此經  
是什麼人說師云豈非如來所說耶嚴云經  
中言若言如來有所說法即為謗法是人不



綏靜我堅記義汝輩思惟舍言此經不是依  
 謫耶為謗經舍言是依說即為謗依依作麼  
 生速道速道師擬開口嚴以拂子暮口打師  
 漢然有悟便禮拜尋就此寺授徒化錄畢以  
 唐再批二年丙戌歸寂

第五世一人

第六世一人

第七世一人 並錄錄

第八世三人 三人錄錄

大德祐驛榜鄉神眾寺定空淨師古爽也姓  
 叱氏幸為在族其為人深明世教動有軌則

鄉人尊事咸以長老各焉脫歲於龍泉南陽  
 會下聞說領旨由是歸心釋教唐貞元中嘗  
 於本鄉創禪林寺基構之始掘地得香題一  
 枚磬子十口使人盪水洗之一口下水去至  
 土乃止師靜云十口成古字水去成法字土  
 者我所居之本土也因改其鄉名古法舊名  
 又作頌云地呈法器一品精銅置伏法之興  
 隆立鄉名之古法又云法禹出現十口銅鍾  
 李興王三品成功又云十口水土去古法名  
 鄉號鵝居鵝月後正是興之三寶師將歸寂語  
 弟子通善曰吾欲興廣鄉里然中間恐遭糾

雖必有異人來壞吾境土地後唐高祖吾沒  
後汝善持其法丁人即傳則吾之願畢矣言  
訖告別而終壽七十九時唐元和三年丙子  
通善於大祖寺西起淨屠且誌其囑語疾焉

第九世三人並發願

第十幸四人十八發願

天德初扶寧師雙林寺長老羅貴安真人姓  
丁氏蚤歲遊京徧參禪匠歷年經久不契法  
緣將有還志後聞禪衆通善會下一語心地  
開豁乃服事焉書將圖寂謂曰昔吾師定公  
嘗囑云汝持吾法丁人則傳汝其當之吾今

逝矣師既得法隨方演化擇地初寺寂出言  
語必為符識常於大祖寺鑄大祖金像後恐  
為盜所取埋于寺門且囑曰值明王則出遇  
暗主則藏將示寂謂弟子禪翁曰初高駢既  
於蘇歷築城知我古法之地有王者氣乃鑿  
斷泔江及扶軫池等十九處以馱之吾今已  
勸曲賢瓊復如故又於翽字種木綿一樹以  
鎮斯處知後世必有興王者出以扶植吾正  
法也吾沒後汝善為築土博浮圖以法厝藏  
其中勿令人見言訖而逝年八十五又云唐  
清泰三年丙申也師種木綿樹時常有偈云



大山龍頭起虬尾。隱朱明十八子。定成綿樹。  
現竜形。兔雞鼠月內定見。日出清監郡。縣鄉。  
數山寺。法順禪師不知何許人。姓杜氏。博學。  
工詩。負王佐之才。明當立之務。少出家。師竜。  
樹扶持。禪師既得法。出語必合符。識當黎朝。  
創業之始。運籌定策。預有力焉。及天下太平。  
不受封賞。黎大行皇帝愈重之。常不名呼為。  
杜法師。倚以文翰之任。天福七年。宋人阮覓。  
來聘。帝命師交服為津吏。覓覺舉動。會有兩。  
鵝浮於水中。覓戲吟云。鵝已兩鵝已。仰面向。  
天。家師於把掉。少足之。云。白毛鋪綠水。紅棹。

摆清波。覓於是嘆服。帝常問師以國祚短長。  
師云。國祚如藤絡。南天裏太平。無為居殿閣。  
處已息刀兵。興統二年。告終。壽七十六。常作。  
菩薩號。懺悔文一卷。行于世。  
古戔陶家鄉。觀愛寺摩訶禪師。舊名摩訶事其先。  
占城種人。冒姓楊氏。父貝陀明。於貝書仕黎。  
朝為貝陀明。陀明。  
長師為人。談鑒了達。字該。唐梵年二十四。襲。  
父業。緒居本寺。嘗於演貝經。次見護法善神。  
詆之曰。焉用此外學為。必不能通理。師由是。  
改喇。深自悔。各將投淵而死。因遇東林。遽別。



手書勸止正師於言下候

釋後復役數內寺杜蒨順受教專務懺悔及  
誦大經心咒三載未嘗少怠感得觀音大士  
以淨水楊枝灌頂灑面著證明心如清淨順  
天五年遷止長安大雲峯日勤修習得摠持  
三昧焚諸幻術人莫名側奉天行皇帝召  
至闕咨問奇合掌低頭而已至再三扣乃對  
云嘗夢狂僧帶大綵命詣大內萬威寺使人  
關門守之遲旦見師已在僧旁外門鑰始故  
帝甚異之聽從所適南遊交州抵沙蕩鎮其  
俗好事鬼神率以殺生為業師勸之齋素咸曰

吾之天神禍福不敢違也師云汝等曷能捨惡  
從善設有箇害老僧自當之鄉人曰此間有父  
病瀕死者醫巫束手汝能愈之吾必從勸師乃  
咒水噴之病者立愈彼雖感服而借樂已深未  
能遽化鄉豪吳氏因飲酣把酒肉前逼師曰和  
尚能從此樂則吾等當從教矣師曰所不敢  
辭但恐腹病爾吳戲曰痛則吳自代之師肯  
從俄而佯為腹脹腸中雷吼喘息大呼云吳  
君代我吳惶惶問措師自合掌稱念南無佛  
南無法南無僧救我有傾乃吐肉成獸走魚  
成魚躍酒成銅并眾大驚異師云汝身病者從

我主愈我腹膺汝不代我安今復從吾教否  
鄉人皆拜諾天成二年郡尉阮公光刺請居  
太平寺開天寺六年辭去驪丹後不知所終  
貞宗廟南陽  
云宗廟家也

第十一世四人又錄

天德府扶寧鄉雙林寺禪翁道有古法人也  
姓呂氏少而徇俗後從丁長老出家既得法  
以丁朝太平十年己卯示寂年七十八  
童編古州鄉法雲寺崇範禪師姓牟氏狀貌  
鬼偉耳垂至肩捨素之始首參香城無碍既  
得心印乃徧遊天竺求廣見聞九載而返無

明戒定後於其寺兩法學吉如歸蔡大行皇  
帝累召赴闕客究玄旨禮遇隆洽逮李朝廣  
祐三年丁卯歸寂壽八十四仁宗嘗有倡進  
贈云崇範居南國心空及弟歸耳長回瑞質  
法亡盡離微

第十二世七人又錄

天德府驛榜鄉六祖寺萬行禪師古法人姓  
阮氏家立奉伏師幼歲超異該貫三學研旁  
百論其視軒冕泊如也年二十一出家與定  
惠俱事六祖禪公彌巾履之暇學問忘倦翁城  
後乃專習摠持三摩地門以為已務時或發



語名爲天下符讖黎大行皇帝尤所尊敬天  
福元年宋僞仁寶來寇屯軍子桐甲浪山帝  
召師問以勝敗付曰三七日中賊必退後果  
然及帝欲伐占城典設未定師奏請速行無  
失機會後戰果勝嘗有姦人杜銀欲謀害師  
師預於木菟送以偈云去木相生銀畔金爲  
何謀我靈靈當當時五口秋心絕真至未來  
不恨心銀懼乃止其先知往鑒平多類此時  
目朝奇暴天人厭德李太祖時爲提衛未即  
受禪位其間妖祥雜出如法古州應太心寺  
咸遂院白犬慈背成天子宇雷震木綿樹文

迹显慶太主墓四方夜誦声双林寺榕木皮  
蟲蝕文成國字等事皆隨其聞見而辨折之  
每符驗李興之兆故太祖即位日師在大  
祖寺先知之謂伯叔二王曰天子已崩李親  
衛在家李低城内宿直千数日中親衛必得  
下乃榜於通衢曰疾彘沉北水李子樹南天  
四方戈干靜八表賀平安二王聞之甚惧使  
人馳問果如其言後以應天九年五月十五  
日無疾說偈云身如電影有还無萬木春榮  
欣又枯任運盛衰無怖畏盛衰如露頭鋪草  
又示徒曰必爭要路何處我不以所住而住不

彼無佳所使頻頻起帝及士肅收其間維  
餘官起塔以香火賜仁宗嘗有追贈偈云萬行  
融三際真符古識機卿開名古法柱錫鎮王畿

皇朝大正皇帝幸古師常於夜定同事因訪者有言其東三寶閣  
降名與桂華手捧幡幢動輒異相從東列朝宗動之曰大成對天建  
其南云正南本師師師神共世男多女多人大德信實滿屋成  
入方會文會出君面云西望遠望有天柱高世男女上得道天  
德會真典靈動若王時命九十九北云正北扶琴造自虎安樂  
男女帝生古代已不長長壽樂世世若王所大祖師多人記取  
并誌其壽果來觀乃說偈云東有武龍巷南有武龍陵西有傳  
林見尤有相海池良久又云蓋之月之內親將至柱柱聚衆  
叩闕字十口村王王玄覺至天初後改古法為大方蓋其驛也  
其後寺事耳聞國史不其錄

天德府安員卿光興寺定惠禪師峯州錦田  
人也姓曲氏幼與萬行俱事禪翁尋受心印  
迨示寂傳其法於弟子林惠生

按南宋嗣宗圖云嗣高  
行惡懷也今依本傳

夙跡山天福寺道行禪師姓徐氏諱略父榮  
仕至僧官都按常安字於安朗鄉娶曾氏女  
因家焉師曾也少事任俠偏倚有大志舉  
動云為人莫能測常與儒者費生道士黎全  
美俗人微乙相友善夜則攻苦讀書日則弄  
笛擊球博戲為樂父常責其荒怠一夕潛入  
卧內窈伺見燈火闌殘簡編堆積師方撻按  
而睡手未輟卷燈之餘殆欲盈盎由是不  
復為惠後應僧官御試中  
以邪術忤延成侯侯籍大顛法師以法毆殺



授于蘇近屍至于快橋候所聚衆多人立而  
拈竟日弗去侯懼馳告顛亡至曷云僧恨不  
隔宿屍應吉流去師思復父讐計無從出一  
日伺顛出欲要擊之俄聞空中盡叱云止亡  
師懼捨杖而走欲往印度求靈異術攷抗顛  
塗至金華嶺阻險而還乃於慈山岩內隱焉  
日常專持大悲心陀羅尼滿十萬八千遍一  
日見神人來前謂曰弟子即四鎮天王也感  
師持經功德故來相候以傳指使師知其道  
法已圖父讐可復親至千峽橋以拄杖拄敵  
救急流中杖通求覓行至西楊橋乃止師喜

云吾法勝矣直至顛所顛見謂曰汝不記前  
事耶師仰視空中寂無所覩因毆擊之顛發  
病死自是夙冤雪尽俗慮灰寒遍歷叢林訪  
求印證聞喬智玄於太平化導躬往參謁且  
呈問真心偈云久混凡塵未識金不知何處  
是真心願再指的開方便了見如亡斷苦尋  
玄答偈云玉裏秘声演妙音箇中滿目露禪  
心河沙境是菩提道擬向菩提隔萬尋師泐  
然不契遂乞法雲崇範會下問云如何是真  
心範云阿那箇不是真心師落筆自得云如  
何保任範云飢殮渴飲師禮拜辭而退自是

法力有如神藥愈瘵能使山陀野獸群來馴  
擾除指禱寐呪水治病無不立驗僧問行住  
坐卧尽是伏心如何是佛心師示偈云作有  
塵沙有為空一切空有空如水月勿著有空  
空又云日月坐宮頭人亡尽失珠富人有  
子步行不騎駒時仁宗皇帝無嗣會祥大慶  
三年二月清化府人上言曰頓海沙汀有灵  
異小兒年可三歲解言語自称陛下適子號  
為覺皇九陛下所為無不知覺帝使中使往  
視之果如其言迎還京居報天寺以其聰異  
頓愛之將立為皇太子群臣切諫以為不可

且曰彼誠灵異必宜托生官禁然後可也帝  
從之遂設大會七日夜行托胎法師問之  
謂曰彼兒妖異惑人甚矣吾豈忍坐視弗收  
以惶幻詐心靈亂正法耶因使其娣伴為觀  
會者密將師所結印教殊攝于簷上會至三  
日覺皇要疾語人曰徧滿國界鉄網羅罩雖  
欲托生恐無咭也帝疑師呪解投記果伏命  
繫于輿寢樓會臣僚謾崇賢侯適过師哀訴  
曰願再力一枚僧幸免異日必寓胎官以謝  
其惠侯領之及會謾奏曰陛下以無後故求  
彼託生而昭妄身呪解宜加大戮以謝天下



侯條奏言曰覺皇設有神力雖百路咒辭夫亦  
何害今反如是七路皆於覺皇遠矣臣愚竊  
謂興其救路窮賜之託生也帝原之師往詣  
侯第於夫人浴久通視之夫人怒以告侯素  
知其故竟不之謀夫人於是覺有娠師囑侯  
曰高誕之時必先相告及期師見報至乃易  
眼澡身謂其徒曰吾夙因未了猶且復留世  
間暫爲國王及壽終時又爲三十二天天子  
若見真身喚依則我方入涅槃不住生滅矣  
門徒聞之無不感泣師說偈云秋來不報鴈  
來囀吟笑人間暫發悲今報門人休惑著古

師幾度降今師言訖解然而化至今形貌存  
焉侯子遊入中宮教養侯家數年冬十二月帝崩太子時年方三歲帝崩太子時年方三歲帝崩太子時年方三歲

新寨大吼御石室山祖風寺持鉢禪師羸癯  
人也姓萬氏弄土之牢慕侯頗效冠投法雲  
崇範披剃受具範見其行已克勤高事謹慎  
遂深印許且以號焉範既歸寂師乃恣安禪  
肆歷叩諸宿昇復此寺調究相國太尉毗公  
常傑時爲校主所得信施悉以資給侯事且  
重構法雲禪告柵心廣安等寺以答法



思云會澤大慶八年二月十八日將示寂偈

云有死必有生有生必有死死乃世所悲生  
為古所喜悲喜兩無窮互然成彼此於諸生  
死不開懷。奄蘇嚕比悉哩。偈訖端然而逝。壽  
六十九。門弟子淨行法眼純真禪師收荼毗

上侵西結鄉華光寺純真禪師江

九翁人也。姓陶氏。少明經史。所至之處。逢掖  
輩爭先從之。後遇光淨法室。一言契旨。遂捨  
所學。以焉。不數年間。牽開打透。電光石火。墮  
扣發揚。引續。揅育。殆無餘力。童符元年乙酉  
二月也。由將承寂。弟子本寂入室。請益師說。

偈云。真性常無性。何曾有生滅。身是生滅法。  
法性未曾滅。乃逝。輔國太保高公最主荼維  
事建塔。

### 第十三古大人錄

昇菴京萬歲寺惠生僧統東扶列人也。姓林  
氏。諱樞。武安茶山林公富之後。曠娶京僧籙  
女。因徙扶列家之。子二。長曰桂。至仕尚書兵  
部員外郎。師即其次也。相貌瑤瑋。辨若懸河。  
尤善文詞。工字。每儒學之暇。旁究天書百論。  
諸經。靡不周覽。每言及天法要處。未嘗不慨  
歎流涕也。年去九。棄俗。與鶴林注通俱事光

與定惠玄學日進惠拊而器之自是縱步叢  
林飽參禪求旨於茶山善提筆卓錫一入定  
中動經五日時人謂之肉身大士李太宗聞  
之遣使徵起師謂使曰子不見穢性乎依從  
繒綉飼以葷豕及牽入太廟願為孤永猶不  
可得况其他乎固辭不就至再乃赴闕面對  
大悅拜內供奉僧勅於其寺住持一日於大  
內齋僧次帝謂曰朕惟矢祖心源學若互相  
詆訾要其諸方碩德各述所見以觀其用心  
何如耳師應言成偈云法本無法求有亦求  
空若人知此法衆生虜伏同寂亡撈卽月空

交光五十一

空渡海舟知空亡覺有三昧任通週帝深嘉  
賞尋拜都僧錄當時王公如奉軋天王威武  
喜慈善惠昭慶显明太子上府王公扞太師  
梁公任文太保陶公處忠參政喬公逢等皆  
往來問道執師資禮追雅宗朝遷至左街都  
僧統候秩不名嘉慶五年甲辰將示寂集衆  
說偈云水火日相參由來未可談報君無處  
所三三又三三又云自古來參學人亡指為  
南若人問新事以月初三乃沐浴焚香夜子  
寂然而逝嘗奉詔撰仙遊天福天聖開國武  
寧妙冊報德淨寺碑文又有法事齋儀諸道



場慶讚改若干卷行世古

龍編嶺卅鄉賓果寺禪名禪師古卅人也姓  
姜氏諱通世為僧官神姿爽拔梵唄清朗常  
習摠持陀羅尼門背而讀誦一字不遺舍豐  
中應法華般若御試省中甲科尋得成道法  
賢一言印証因出家焉始居仙寔山天福寺  
戒行精辨道心弘大本食澹飲殆閱六霜後  
还本鄉重修其寺住持大順間早詔師詣闕  
祈雨立驗拜名僧賜以上服九國家祈禱師  
皆主之疎落室應元年仲春白日焚香訣眾  
併然生滅壽七十一至今其形貌存焉時人

謂之生佛再後寺遭兵火而獨在差焉

長安國清

寺明空國師大黃譚舍鄉人也姓阮氏諱至  
誠常定學遇天福寺徐道行禪師行服應給  
侍歷十七年稔行獎其有志深為印可且賜  
名焉及將謝世謂師曰昔吾主尊道果既圓  
猶有金俗之報况於末法公微豈能自保我  
今猶現世間在臥玉位來生病債決定難逃  
於彼有緣為憑相救好化已師还故里耕焉  
二十餘年不求聞達時李神宗方愛奇疾憤  
亂心緒煩痛七蓋欄欄可畏天下良醫應詔

而至者皆縮手莫措聞有小童謠曰欲要天子疾須得阮明空及遣使物也民間竟得師焉既至詣方碩宿已在殿上行法見師扑陋蔑不加礼師就親把大釘長五寸許釘于殿柱抗声曰有能拔此則尤當推許如是再三莫敢應者師再以左手兩指拈之釘便隨出衆皆駭服及見帝師厲声曰大丈夫貴有四海胡乃費如此狂乱為哉帝大驚栗師令取巨鑊貯水楮之既百沸以手攪者數四浴帝其中病輒醒愈尋拜為國師蠲戶數百以褒賞焉大定二年辛丑去世久某月某日壽七

## 十六

平樂姜住鄉祝曜寺本寂禪師龔西結人也姓阮氏黎朝內供奉都尉阮公輒之裔蚤有茂常遇異僧奇之曰此兒骨相不凡如其出家真成法種及長先授華光純真受業契旨尋復進具真見其定圓戒繁學一知十摩頂謂曰南方正法待汝闡揚師於是不滯有無兼明頓漸所至之處則普施法雨遞振玄風龔納麻從簪紳皈慕以紹明三年己未夏六月十四日集門弟子謂曰無事任事言訖而化



禪苑集英

第十四世四人三人敘錄

永康慈惠卿慶喜僧統菴編古交人姓阮氏  
淨行種也幼絕葷茹長從祝暉本寂受業一  
日隨寂赴松家供粥次問云何是祖禪的也  
意適聞民家巫鼓寂云莫是這言巫覡降神  
麼師云和尚莫專弄寂云吾不曾賣也弄師  
不會乃辭去至萬歲辭才上問汝從甚處來  
師云寂公來才云彼亦一方善知識曾作什  
麼語句師云某甲事彼有年矣一問不許是  
以去之才云問箇什麼師云似前話才云噫

寂公為汝忒殺道了莫謗本師好師佇思才  
云不見道達時過境是不悟永乖疎師親然  
頓悟便還寂見問云汝從何處速來師禮拜  
云某甲得謗和尚課故來乞懺耳寂云罪相  
性空汝作麼生懺師云當如是懺寂便休又  
常典淨眼淨如二禪者侍立次寂謂曰諸仁  
者於吾門學問日已經久盍各呈見解以觀  
其進道何如眼如擬開口師喝云一翳在目  
空花亂墜寂云憂喜闍梨爭奈船何打破耳  
斗師云用船作麼寂云這今利湊且莫打關  
汝抵解脫到這邊事若那邊事也未夢見在

師云雖聚教是他寂云離却百尺竿頭放步  
行一汝作麼生道師揭兩手云不險不險寂  
云放你一頓師由是各播叢林天彭室中嗣  
召闕帝嘉其敷對稱旨拜為僧錄尋進僧統  
一曰弟子法融問云了達色空色是凡是瞿  
師應言成偈云勞生休問色無空學道在過  
訪祖宗天外覓心難定靜人間植桂豈成叢  
乾坤凡是毛頭上日月包含芥子中大用現  
前拳在手誰知凡瞿集西東偈畢大定三年  
壬戌正月十七日赤疾而終壽七十六有  
悟道歌詩集行于世史記云天彭室嗣三年示寂本  
在馬

### 第十五世三人入彙錄

滿斗郡塔鉢卿寺戒空禪師本郡人姓阮氏  
諱珣良家子也少棄仗始從真磨山元和廣  
福出家受具服事教檢既得旨於歷山結一  
庵五年間專務宴寂尋振錫下山隨方化導  
塗抵南枹入瞿主岩栖焉禁足六年修頭陀  
行至使鬼神奔命惡獸來馴李神宗徵之累  
辭乃就大順八年大疫師適至闕勅旨於嘉  
林寺以咒水治之病者立愈日以千數帝深  
嘉獎強戶十人以充給養歲晚以還故御重  
重修廢寺九十五所一日無疾詭偈示眾云



我有一事奇煉汞青黃赤白黑天下在家出  
家親生惡死為賊不知生死異路生死祇是  
失得若言生死異塗賺却衲迦弥勒若知生  
死死生方會无憎處匿汝等後學門人莫認  
盤皇軌則偈畢大笑一声合掌而逝門人弟  
子州牧黎公叙防邊使溪公丁茶毗收舍利  
起塔塑像以香火焉清化府摩尼山香旂寺  
法融禪師貝哩人姓黎氏唐愛州牧黎公良  
之後歷十五世為州显家父玄凝道號僧判  
師形神秀異詞氣清 於金文王偶靡所不  
讀少依呪僧統慶喜出家喜目而奇之授以

法印自是放恣山水不得所之化導時至乃  
卓錫於鸞峯山開覺寺授徒學者滿室尋還  
本山創寺以終老焉天感至寶元年甲午二  
月五日無疾而化門人道林等闍維于本山  
建塔

### 第十六世三人

安朗高野山符門庵智禪師<sup>一名</sup>峯州人姓黎  
氏諱錄黎朝禦座王之苗裔也祖順宗仕李  
朝官至中書大僚班尚金城公姓錄官至明  
字元叙遙授三源都巡檢並補州牧師蚤事  
場屋奉進士中第充萊侯書家年二十七日

從兄引至戒空法席聞誦金剛經至一切有  
為法如夢幻泡影如露亦如電應作如是觀  
忽然感悟嘆曰如來五語蓋不虛設世間諸  
法虛幻不實惟道為實我復何求即儒家可  
說君臣父子之道矢法可言菩薩吉聞之功  
二教雖殊其歸則一然尚生死吾斷有無計  
非絆則不昧也遂請披剃契言之後徑入慈  
山樹下晝經夜定精修苦行誓滿大年一日  
坐次見一虎逐鹿來師論之曰一切眾生皆  
惜性命汝勿相害虎低頭伏地作皈依而去  
尋庵於山下授徒四方供堆積近山蠻獠

相共哺聚為盜師每出常有巨虎踞卧庵門  
盜莫敢犯其衆師導誘而歸善者不可勝數  
吳高兩朝累徵不起輔國太尉蘇公憲誠太  
保吳公和姜皆求執弟子禮十年未嘗試面  
忽一日其諸公相見大喜纔問訊已師說偈  
曰既依出素養習中間說微言意允從貪欲  
黜除千里外希夷之理日包容又云淡然自  
守惟德是務或云謹奉七一句心無彼我既  
絕昏霾日夜陟降無形可住如影如響無迹  
可趣言訖合掌端然而逝諸公及弟子慟哭  
盡振山門



扶蘭曾賴山祝暉寺真空禪師偶逢扶藿人  
姓王氏諱海礪右族出也母懷娠時父夢明  
僧授以錫杖因得師焉少孤攻苦讀書不親  
細務年十五博通史籍及冠徧踏裨林尋所  
印契因至東究山靜慮寺草一會下聞誦法  
華經豁然有省由是機緣脗合邕水相投入  
室大年究問日益尋受心印就干慈山栖止  
以律自防不下山門再二十載聲譽遠播李  
仁宗聞之詔延入大內誦法華經聽者風靡  
時太尉況公常傑諒卅刺史相國申公尤加  
礼敬常捨信財供給師悉以所得修寺建塔

及鑄洪鍾以留鎮焉常有僧問如何是妙道  
師云覺後方知進云從上教古字人未夾今  
時言教如何會得師云若到仙家深洞內九  
丹換骨得依歸問如何是九丹師云歷劫愚  
蒙任洞曉今晨一悟得開明問如何是開明  
師云開明照徹娑婆界一切衆生共一家又  
問雖參無辨的處已得逢渠那箇是渠師云  
劫火洞然毫末盡青內依舊白雲飛又問色  
身敗壞時如何師云春來春去旋春尽花落  
花開秖是春僧擬設師唱云平源經火後植  
物各殊芳僧礼拜師曉年歸本郡重構作寶

感寺訖會豐九年十一月初一日將逝寂說  
偈云妙本虛無明謬和風吹起通靈婆人人  
盡哉無為樂若得無為始是家是日子夜又  
云吾道已成吾教已得吾隨化還乃跏趺而  
逝壽五十有五臘日三十六皇太后及天城  
公主弟子茂因尼師皆齎贈禮越二日大明  
寺姜海大師賜紫衣沙門法成率眾備禮塋  
之塔于齋堂之外字士阮公文舉奉詔撰塔  
銘工部尚書段公文欽南詩追悼云行高朝  
野振清風錫駐如雲臺集龜仁字忽鳶崩惠  
棟道林長嘆偃貞松墳茁碧草添新塔水蘸

青山認藉客寂亡禪開誰更叩徑過愁咱暮  
天鍾

龍福超類鄉龜雲寺道刺禪師朱爲九阜人  
也姓曾氏蚤慕空宗志行純潔紛依香嚴法  
誦受業不喻數年密受心印乃親侍祖饒隨  
處續明觸物應機利人不少以天嘉寶祐二  
年癸亥五月跏趺而逝

第十七世四人入嗣錄

僊庭扶董鄉香海院妙因尼師諱王嬌奉輓  
王長女天資淑靚言行有則孝聖京朝於中  
宮及笄適真登州牧蔡氏蔡卒自誓孀居姜



不再嫁。日嘆曰。我觀世間一切諸法。猶如  
夢幻。况浮榮之輩。其可恃乎。於是傾囊捨施。  
落髮出家。就扶董真空受菩薩戒。究問心要。  
空為賜號。咱於尼院住持。其修律行。禪。摩  
地。傑為尼中宗匠。有來求學師。必教習大乘。  
且云。但自性還源。則頓漸可隨入矣。常寂疾  
忘。吉色言語。有學者問云。一切衆生病。是故  
我病。何為每忘吉色。師奉教云。若以色見我。  
以音声求我。是人行邪道。不能見如來。進云。  
何為冥坐。師云。本來無去。進云。何為不言。師  
云。道本無言。會祥大慶四年六月初一日疾。

年說偈云。生老病死。自古常然。欲求出離。離  
縛。奈癡迷之求。伏惑之求。禪已伏。不求。枉口  
無言。乃淨髮。澡身。跏坐。壽七十有二。  
細江古杏鄉大安國寺圓學禪師。如月人也。  
姓黃氏。超習外書。冠稽凶典。因聞真空一語。  
心地豁然。自是禪學。寂高。律侵。無闕。掛身一  
納。誓度寒暄。視錫相從。隨方開。以至修橋築  
道。莫不身先後。於扶琴鄉。重修國清寺。鑄鍾。  
常有緣化。偈云。大哉常昏。終夜苦無明。披群  
久迷慵。晝夜聞鍾。開覺悟。頗神淨。剎得神通。  
天彰寶嗣。四年丙辰夏六月十四日示寂。詩。

六十四門弟子吳通禪劉王仁呂法華周妙  
用等收遺骸起浮圖

龜編古交鄉苑華寺淨禪師本鄉人也姓  
費氏諱完初與同學淨空偕事龜雲道林曰  
其切瑳衆造玄要林知其必為法器因賜號  
且印之曰淨是淨智妙圓禪是禪心常寂建  
林化去師乃遍遊禪國尋所益友道緣既竟  
乃還本郡重修其寺考禪律之餘每以利人  
為念天寶嘉瑞八年癸丑秋八月十二日示  
寂壽七十三門弟子法記撰寺碑文有云師  
生當季日恆值明時大度寧忘四弘勿捨香

杯浮處十方信主波隨錫杖振時四部学徒  
霧集神通巨測玄用難量自赤赴伏覺場安  
能榆楊勝業真所謂稱天寶月法苑碑村云  
第十八世二人一人歟

南定古賢鄉國恩寺圓通國師古賢人也姓  
阮氏諱元億後寓昇龜京太白坊因家焉古  
為僧官父惠昱仕李仁宗朝至左右街僧錄  
道號寶覺禪師資稟明通學造精妙蚤有出  
生之志常遇安國圓學因契旨焉會豐六年  
中三教試中甲科死代間龜符元化八年擢  
天下宏才補僧道階缺員師復首其選帝益



奇之將授以牧柄周辟事就乃進內供奉傳  
誦法師於是應牒演教引占覺人鮮惑矻思  
決無留歟受業於其明者皆显各當世大慶  
三年重興延壽寺成命師拱碑文帝高其才  
遷左街僧錄大順三年李神宗召入崇澗殿  
帝問天下治亂興亡之理師對云天下猶器  
也置諸安則安置諸危則危願在人主所行  
何如耳好生之德合于民心故民愛之如父  
母仰之如日月是置天下得之安者也又云  
治亂在庶官得人則治失人則亂臣歷觀前  
世帝王未嘗不以用君子而興以用小人

而亡者也原其致此未一朝一夕之故所由  
來者漸矣天地不能頓為寒暑必漸於春秋  
人君頓為興亡必漸於善惡古之聖王知其  
名此故則天不息其德以脩己法地不息其  
德以修安人修己者慎於中也栗然如履薄  
冰安人者敬其下也慄乎若馭朽索名是罔  
不興及是罔不亡其興亡之漸在於此也果  
稱旨乃進右街僧統知教門公事師從容嚴  
近獻納箴規未嘗少貲尋奉勅就西陽館所  
休暇殆有驗由是益加珍禮賜朝謁同太子  
秩天章嘉祐五年宮車晏駕師預受顧命及

奉遺詔王莫獻什托等事。紹明元年英宗既  
卽位太后稱制以師有擬日之功屢加厚賜  
尋卽本郡報寺終老。賜三村之費皆內帑賞  
給且賜宸翰以賁之。太定四年進左右街僧  
統內供奉知教門公事傳講三藏文章應制  
詔國師賜紫衣大沙門其佐重師臣望隆  
朝野者如此。太定辛未年閏四月二十一日  
會衆訣別無疾而終壽七十有二。師嘗奉詔  
修真誥佛跡錄事三十餘卷洪鍾文碑記僧  
家雜錄五十餘卷詩賦千餘首行于世  
第十九世二人一人錄每

龍福大通場大慈寺依山禪師又安錦鄉人  
也姓阮氏美風姿辨詞說童孺之年頗涉書  
史其擇交遊藝必尽所益而於空典尤加意  
焉年二十從鄉長老出家尋抵京參圓通國  
師言下契旨尔後隨方行化志在利人所得  
信財意供佛事嘗有勸文云鈞名嗜利皆如  
水上浮漚殖福種緣尽是骨中懷寶迨晚年  
遷于安朗鄉南無寺住持嘗示門徒云汝等  
應知如來成等正覺於一切妄無所觀察於  
法平等無有疑惑無二任相無行無止無量  
無際遠離二邊住於中道出過一切文字言



說傳得一切衆生量等身得一切刹量等身  
 得一切三界量等身得一切佛量等身得一  
 切言語量等身得真如量等身得法界量等  
 身得虛空界量等身得無碍界量等身得一  
 切願量等身得一切行量等身得一切寂滅  
 量等身又說偈曰如來成正覺一切量等身  
 回互不回互眼睛童子神又云真身成萬衆  
 萬衆即真身月殿榮丹桂比在一輪將示寂  
 謂其徒曰我不復來到此是時堂前花樹自  
 然而落燕雀哀鳴三旬不止以建嘉三年丙  
 子三月十八日去世

禪苑集英

昇竜京開國寺草堂禪師傳贊賢明覺宗派

草堂禪師

第一世三人

李暉宗皇帝

張耕驛王鄉慈光福驛寺般若禪師

龍彰保財鄉遇救居士已上三人並嗣草堂

第二世四人

吳參政益嗣聖康皇帝

求興安朗鄉弘明禪師嗣般若

海清嚴光寺空昭禪師

定覺禪師新羅在定初沙已上三人並嗣遇報其本傳已依南

第三世四人

杜太傅武嗣參政云嗣定覺

安羅青威御梵音禪師嗣紹明

李英宗皇帝

杜都禪似已上三人並嗣空路或云嗣定覺

第四世四人

張三藏禪師闍梵音一云嗣空路或云嗣定覺

真玄禪師

杜太傅常已上三人並嗣杜都禪或云太傅嗣建初宗

第五世四人

禪列七十

海淨禪師 李高宗皇帝

倡兒管甲阮已上三人並嗣張三藏

范奉御等嗣真玄又云嗣杜太傅

禪苑集英單卷下終

譚苑集英拔後

時間。佛本無形。真經無卷。尚無宗昇。無殊。  
法假有相。執則有開。必有連。擇有旨。上自  
無始。下至無終。然祖冲也。出八不已。寂照  
十方。未來過去。衆生處也。輪轉有為。重也。  
疑惑。醍醐毒藥。業也。網纏。白草異草。由於  
一有大事。因緣。圓証三空。廣開作用。尚現  
于世。欲令衆生。四知見故。一偈。餒靈。禪苑  
一百四十集。英之宗。西方四七二三。無他  
之路。達麼四目。相餒。釋迦五眼。常明。指公  
佛印心宗。演開經錄。灯也。相續。衆生迷惑。

隨順外道波旬。業心納身。稱茲緣覺。盡聞  
真如性海。三毒不除。雖非有求。無殺佛種  
子。妄言綺語。喻衆謂佛。滅度涅槃。他如盲  
人。謂無日月。因緣時節。果滿而成。佛智智  
明。白然之智。安南四器。天地五生。水德山  
怒。律遊佛出。護衛菩薩。門開神扶。童子海  
珠北王。導師乾龜。長攬盤針。坤跡東山。女  
媛宵年。月日金相。醍醐合乳。妙色圓身。常  
身回向。無去無來。顯達般若。公輪法轉。有  
顯示有。悟入不盡不窮。昔以無念為宗。常  
有常生。昔照有情無情。同圓種智。伏願



遷界。經主曹內核辦等章。淨出家財。荷擔如來祖錄。依如前偏出世。供養印施十方興隆。

三字所有姓名開陳于后

一經主中年社阮氏倚號妙法阮氏王端號妙澤阮公敬字性聚寄其字德尊顯考字忠甫

一經主阮公蓮字性專妻阮氏收號妙枝甥阮公觀字性異親母號妙閣號妙憶

會主紫泥社陳俊德字性持陳長彬號妙白男陳俊如字性道妻阮氏孫親母號妙現

會主陳俊旺字性睿妻阮氏榮號妙璽

會主段廷魁字性法妻阮氏明號妙光

會主陳文石字性金妻陳氏綿號妙垣甥陳文挺字性鏗陳文坦

會主吳氏信號妙壽女子陳氏副號妙翳婿黎德輝

會主陳文賦字性值妻陳長呀

會主陳登明字性常妻范氏希號妙來甥陳登鉅字性得太水號妙通

會主東內社號妙順號妙和號妙綠號妙燈號妙昭

會主阮氏計號妙淨阮皞字性寬號敏達妻阮氏明

阮氏理號妙珍阮仕延男子阮仕佳阮氏細號妙妹

會主德川社阮性精字性連妻吳氏系號妙陀



# Notes

## PART I: A STUDY OF THE THIỀN UYỂN TẬP ANH

### Introduction

1. See Jean-Francois Lyotard, *La Phénoménologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), pp. 91–119, esp. pp. 116–17.

2. “The past is vaster and stranger than we have been trained to believe, and it belongs to no one but those who lived it. It is a beautiful confusion, and it is beautiful precisely because it is confusion; when it stops confusing us, we can be sure that we have understood it into something dangerous.” See Keith W. Taylor and John K. Whitmore, eds., *Essays into Vietnamese Pasts* (Ithaca: Cornell University SEAP, 1995), p. 6.

3. For a study of these issues see, for instance, Umberto Eco et. al., *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

### Chapter One

1. For a survey of modern studies of Vietnamese Buddhist history that are based on the *Thiền Uyển*, see note 54 below.

2. See, for instance, Nguyễn Duy Hinh, “Three Legends and Early Buddhism in Vietnam,” *Vietnam Forum* 13 (1990): 10–23. In this interesting article the author discusses archaeological evidence indicating the presence of Buddhism in Vietnam in the second century.

3. For a complete study of the history of Vietnam from the beginnings until independence, see Keith Weller Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983).

4. For a survey of these texts, see E. S. Ungar, “From Myth to History: Imagined Politics in 14th Century Vietnam,” in David G. Marr and A. C. Milne, eds., *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 177–86.

5. This is evidenced by the fact that although the author of the *Thiền Uyển* earnestly strove to write a “complete” history of Buddhism in Vietnam, that is, from its inception up to his time, his records of Buddhism before the Đinh dynasty appear to be spurious. Như Sơn, an author of the *Lê*, and Phúc Điền, an author of the *Nguyễn*, also complained about the lack of source materials about Buddhism in Vietnam prior to the Lý-Trần era.

6. Shi Xie was hailed in Vietnamese history as Sĩ Vương (King Shi). See *Toàn Thư*, “Ngoại Kỷ,” 3:130. Ngô Sĩ Liên, the royal historian of the Lê and compiler of the *Toàn Thư*, remarks, “Our country understood the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*, practiced the *Rites* and *Music*, and became a civilized state under King Sĩ.” See *ibid.*, p. 133. In medieval Vietnam Shi Xie became a deity-protector of Vietnam and was worshipped as a national hero. See *Việt Điện U Linh Tập* (21–22); *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Toàn Biên* (169–72), in Chan Hing-ho, ed. *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết Tùng San* (*Collection Romans & Contes du VietNam écrits en Han*) [Collection of Vietnamese Stories Written in Chinese, henceforth referred to as *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*], série II, vol. 2 (Paris-Taipei: Publications de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient and Editions Universitaires de Taipei, 1992). See *Toàn Thư*, “Ngoại Kỷ,” 3:132; *An Nam Chí Lược*, 88–89; *Việt Sử Lược*, I, 5a. The story of Shi Xie can also be found in *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục* (21–22); *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên* (169–72); *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái Liệt Truyện* (113–14); *Thiên Nam Vân Lục* (208–09), in Chan Hing-ho, ed., *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, vols. 1–2. See also Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 70–74.

7. For instance, his biography records that “wherever he went he was accompanied by scores of Hu people bearing lighted incense.” “Hu” was a term used by the Chinese to refer to foreigners, particularly those from India and Central Asia. Some modern scholars interpret the Hu people in Shi Xie’s retinue as Indian or Central Asian Buddhist monks and take this as evidence that Buddhism was established in Jiaozhou by Shi Xie’s time. On this topic, see Hu Shih, “Mouzi Lihoulun,” in *Hu Shih wencun*, vol. 4, book 2 (Taipei: Yuandong rushu gongsi, 1932), p. 152; Fukui Kōjun, “Mushi no kenkyū,” in *Dōkyō no kiso teki kenkyū*, vol. 1 of *Fukui Kōjun chosaku shū* (Tokyo: Hōzoku kan, 1987).

8. For a detailed discussion of Kang Senghui’s life and activities, see Eric Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), pp. 51–55; for Kang Senghui’s biography, see *Gaoseng zhuan* I, T 50:326a; 235a13–236b13; *Chu sanzangji ji*, T 55:96a29–97a17; Edouard Chavannes, “Seng-Houei,” *T’oung Pao* 10 (1909): 199–212. According to Zürcher, the fact that Kang Senghui joined the *sangha* (monastic community) in Jiaozhou shows that at the beginning of the third century Jiaozhou must have been a Buddhist center with an organized Buddhist community. See Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, p. 43.

9. Both the *Cổ Châu Pháp Vân Phật Bản Hạnh Ngũ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of the Pháp Vân Buddha at Cổ Châu, henceforth referred to as *Cổ Châu*] and *Thông Biện* mention a certain Mo Luo Qi Yu (Ma La Kỳ Vực in Vietnamese) as one of the earliest eminent monks present in Jiaozhou. See *Thiền Uyển*, 20b10; *Dại Nam*, 16a3–4. This Mo Luo Qi Yu appeared to be one and the same as Qi Yu (Jīvaka?), a thaumaturge (*shen yi seng*) who traveled through Jiaozhou and Guangzhou surrounded by supernatural events and arrived in Luoyang around the end of the Jin Huidi’s reign (305–306). See *Gaoseng zhuan* (T 50:388a16–c5). See also Tsukamoto Zenryū, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From Its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yuan*, trans. Leon Hurvitz (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1979), 1:179–81. Chinese sources also report that Qi Yu arrived in China around this period (291–307). See *ibid.*, p. 243.

10. See, for instance, Phúc Điền, *Dại Nam Thiền Uyển Kế Đăng Lược Lục*, 2b8–4b1; *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu*, 13b6–9. The *Lĩnh Nam* records the story of A Man (Man Nương) as follows:

"Under Emperor Xian of Han, Governor Shi Xie established his capital city on the southern bank of the Binh Giang River. To the south of the city was located a Buddhist temple named Phúc Nghiêm. There was an Indian monk whose name was Cà-La-Xà-Lê coming to dwell there. He had the power to stand on one leg which won the admiration of many people who called him Master and practiced the Dharma under him.

"There was a girl named Man Nương, a destitute orphan, who also came with a great determination to study Buddhism. Being a girl with a stammer, she could not chant the *sūtras* with the congregation, so she would spend most of her time in the kitchen washing rice, trimming vegetables, cooking for the resident monks and guest students.

"One night in the fifth month when nights were short, Man Nương had the gruel ready for the monks, but they could not come without finishing the chanting. She then lay down to wait against the kitchen doorstep and unknowingly dropped off to sleep. When the chanting was over, the monks returned to their rooms. As Man Nương lay at the doorstep, Xà-Lê stepped across her. She instinctively felt something moving inside her and became pregnant.

"Three or four months passed by, and Man Nương felt ashamed, so she set off for home. Feeling ashamed himself, Xà-Lê also left the place. On her way home, Man Nương came across a temple at a fork in the road near the river and stayed there. When the time came, she gave birth to a girl. She went in search for the monk and turned the baby over to him. That night, the monk brought the baby girl to a fork in the road. There he saw a luxuriant hibiscus tree with a clean and deep hole in its trunk. He laid the baby into it and said, 'To you I commit the Buddha's child; keep her and you will both attain Buddhahood.' Then Xà-Lê and Man Nương took leave of each other. He gave her a staff and said, 'I give you this, take it home with you. Should drought occur some year, plant it in the ground, and water will spout out—the farmers will avail themselves of it and the people will be saved.' Man Nương reverently accepted the staff and returned to her temple.

"When there was a year of drought, she took the staff and planted it in the ground. Water gushed forth in torrents and people were saved. When Man Nương was fifty years old, the hibiscus tree fell. It drifted to the wharf before the temple where it stopped and lingered.

"People then set out to chop it up for firewood, but it would break any ax. Three hundred men combined their strength to haul it over to the bank but to no avail. Man Nương happened along as she was going down to the river to wash her hands. She jokingly tried to pull the tree trunk and it moved. The onlookers were amazed, and asked her to pull it out of the river and had it carved into [four] Buddha statues. The place where the baby had been hidden had turned into a very hard rock. They tried to break it with their axes but it shattered them all. They then threw the rock into the river. A ray of light flashed up, and there was a long moment before it sank down. All the carvers fell dead.

"Man Nương was invited to preside over a ritual. Fishermen were hired to fish the rock up. It was brought in a procession into the inner sanctuary and gilded with gold. Monk Xà-Lê named [the four images that had been carved from the log] Dharma Cloud, Dharma Rain, Dharma Thunder, and Dharma Lightning. People from all over came to pray [to these images], and their prayers were always answered, so they called Man Nương 'Mother Buddha.'

On the eighth day of the fourth month, Man Nương passed away without illness and was interred inside the temple.

"People considered her to be Mother Buddha. Every year, on that day, people from all over would gather at the temple to rejoice, and this occasion was perpetuated as the Buddha-Bathing Festival. It became a custom that has lasted to the present time." See *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái Ngoại Truyện* (162–63) in Chan Hing-ho, ed., *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, vol. 1. Slightly different versions of the story are found in *ibid.*, *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái Liệt Truyện* (69–70); *Thiên Nam Vân Lục* (233–34).

11. The *Lidai sanbao ji* records that in the year 265 Zhi Jiang Liang Zhe, a monk from Central Asia, translated the *Fahua sanmei jing* in six fascicles in Jiaozhou with the assistance of a certain native monk named Đạo Hình (Dao-xin). For a complete biographical note on Zhi Jiang Liang and a detailed discussion of his name, see Zurcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, p. 71, and chap. 2, n. 258.

12. The *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, in its "Meditation Practitioners" section, records a short biography of Huệ Thắng, a monk from Jiaozhou. According to this biography, Huệ Thắng was a free spirit who traveled widely and led a frugal life. He chanted the *Lotus Sūtra* daily. He studied meditation with an Indian monk named Dharmadeva. Every time he entered *samādhi* he would be absorbed in meditative concentration for a day before coming out of it. See *T* 50.550c8–16.

13. Mou Bo, or Mouzi, was author of the *Lihuo lun*, probably the first treatise written by a Buddhist convert in defense of Buddhism. The date of Mou Bo and his work is highly controversial. See *Hongming ji*, *T* 52:1a26–7a22; *Chu sanzangji ji*, *T* 55:82c29–83a1; *Fozu tongji*, *T* 49:332a27–b5; *Fozu lidai tongzai*, *T* 49:510b17–514a9; *Shishi jigulue* *T* 49:769a12–c6. For a detailed discussion on this subject as well as a summary of other scholars' opinions regarding it, see Zurcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, pp. 13–15. For studies concerning Mou Bo's works, see, for instance, Paul Pelliot, "Meou-tseu ou les doutes levés," *T'oung Pao* 19 (1920): 255–433; Matsumoto Bunzaburō, "Mushi riwaku ron no chosaku nendai kō," in *Bukkyō shi zakkō* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1944); Fukui Kōjun, "Mushi no kenkyū." Traditional Vietnamese Buddhists, probably basing themselves on Thông Biện's view, claim Kang Senghui as the founder of the "Zen school" of Vietnam and Mouzi as the founder of the "scriptural school." See, for instance, Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận* [Essays on the History of Vietnamese Buddhism] (reprinted Paris: Lá Bối, 1978), pp. 73–84.

14. See *Thiền Uyển*, 20a11–21a4; *Đại Nam*, 15b5–16a8.

15. See *Thiền Uyển*, 21a3–4; *Đại Nam*, 16a7–8.

16. In Vietnamese literature, besides some scant information given in the *Thiền Uyển* by way of Thông Biện's biography, the only other information we have about Buddhism during the Tang period is found in Lê Quí Đôn's *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục* [Miscellaneous Records of Things Heard and Seen, henceforth referred to as *Kiến Văn*], an encyclopedic work on a variety of subjects composed in 1777. In the chapter "Thiền Dật" (Buddhism), "Eminent Monks of Our Country" section of his work, Lê Quí Đôn devotes a section to records of eminent monks of Vietnam. It is obvious that Lê Quí Đôn did not have at his disposal any Vietnamese sources but only found in Chinese literature four poems written by four prominent Tang poets dedicated to four Vietnamese eminent monks:

1. A poem dedicated to Vô Ngai Thượng Nhân by Shen Quanqi, who, while in Jiaozhou, paid a visit to Vô Ngai at Sơn Tĩnh Temple, Cửu Chân District:

Formerly the Buddha was born in India,  
 Now he manifests himself here to convert the people of  
 Nhật Nam.  
 Free from all defilements,  
 He built a temple at the foot of the mountain.  
 By the stream the fragrant branches are the standards,  
 The boulders on the mountaintop become his home.  
 Blue doves practice meditation,  
 White monkeys listen to the *sūtras*.  
 Creepers cover the cloud-high cliffs,  
 Flowers rise above the pond at the foot of the mountain.  
 The water in the streams is good for performing ritual,  
 The trees let him hang his clothes on them.  
 This disciple regrets that he is ignorant,  
 Not able to discuss the Buddha's doctrine.  
 Who one night crossed over the Tiger-stream,  
 Amidst mountain fog under a lonely tree.

2. A poem written by Yang Juyuan bidding farewell to Dharma Master Phụng Định on the latter's trip back to Annam (former name of Vietnam):

Your native land is Nam Việt,  
 Thousands of miles away beyond the snow-capped mountains.  
 Bidding farewell to worldly discussions at court,  
 You'll sail into the ocean of fragrant flowers.  
 Despite the high waves your chanting resounds  
 Amidst layers of illusory castles.  
 Please think of the streets of Chang'an,  
 Before you sound your night bell at Jiaozhou.

3. A poem written by Jia Dao bidding farewell to Dharma Master Duy Giám on the latter's trip back home to Annam:

Expounding the *sūtras* in the royal palace,  
 Flowers fly around the emperor's throne.  
 When did you leave the Southern Sea  
 Only to return to your homeland in old age?  
 Exposed to the wind the imperial seal loses its perfume,  
 Fog and rain beat on your clothes.  
 Now that you have crossed the ocean,  
 We would hardly hear from one another.

4. A poem written by Zhang Ji dedicated to a Nhật Nam monk who dwelt in the mountain:

Growing old with the mountaintops,  
 Your two pine doors are always closed.  
 Open the *sūtras* on banana leaves,  
 Your robe falls with the flowers.

Dig a new well through the stony ground,  
Clear the forest to grow hemp.  
Comes a visitor from the Southern Sea,  
Asking in his barbaric tongue whose house this is?

(See Lê Quý Đôn, *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 1:193–209.) Through these poems, we learn of the four Jiaozhou monks, two of whom had traveled to the Tang court to lecture on Buddhism. In Chinese Buddhist literature Yijing, in his *Datang Xiyu qiu fa gaoseng zhuan* [Biographies of Tang Eminent Monks Who Traveled to India to Study the Dharma], makes mention of eminent Chinese and Central Asian monks who stopped by Jiaozhou on their way to India or had some connection with Jiaozhou monks such as Mingyuan, Huiming, Sanghavarma, Tanrun, Zhihong, and Wuxing. (On Mingyuan, see *T* 51.3c2–19; on Huiming, see *ibid.*, 4a2–21; on Sanghavarma, see *ibid.*, 4c15–24; on Tanrun, see *ibid.*, 4c29–5a4; on Zhihong, see *ibid.*, 8c19–9a20; on Wuxing, see *ibid.*, 9a21–10a13.)

17. Yijing also notes six monks from Jiaozhou who traveled to China:

1. Monk Vân Kỳ hailed from Jiaozhou. He traveled together with Tanrun. Vân Kỳ took ordination from Zhixian (Jñānabhadra). Vân Kỳ returned to Nam Hải for more than ten years. He was well versed in the dialects of Central Asia and in Sanskrit. Afterward he returned to lay life and lived in the Śrīvijaya country. At the time when Yijing was in India he was still alive. (See *T* 51.4a22–26.)

2. Mokṣadeva (Giải Thoát Thiên) hailed from Jiaozhou. His personal name was not known. He sailed across the southern sea visiting many a country. He came to Mahābodhi Temple and paid homage to all the sacred places. He died at the age of twenty-four or twenty-five. (See *ibid.*, 4a27–29.)

3. Dharma Master Khuy Xung hailed from Jiaozhou. He was a disciple of Mingyuan. His Sanskrit name was Citradeva. Together with Mingyuan he set sail across the southern sea to Sri Lanka. From there they went westward to India where they met the monk Xuanzhao and traveled together to China. Khuy Xung was brilliant by nature and was good at chanting *sūtras* in Sanskrit. Everywhere he went he would collect *sūtras* and chant them. First he paid homage to the bodhi tree, then visited Rājagṛha where he became ill at the Bamboo Grove Park. After a while he passed away at the age of about thirty. (See *ibid.*, 4b1–6.)

4. Dharma Master Huệ Diệm hailed from Jiaozhou. He was a disciple of Master Wuxing. He accompanied his teacher to Sri Lanka and remained there. No one knows what became of him. (See *ibid.*, 4b7–13.)

5. Dharma Master Trí Hành hailed from Ái Province (nowadays Thanh Hóa, North Vietnam). His Sanskrit name was Prajñādeva (Huệ Thiên). He sailed across the southern sea to India. Everywhere he went he solemnly paid homage [to sacred places]. He subsequently made his abode at Xinzhe Temple where he died in his fifties. (See *ibid.*, 4b14–16.)

6. Meditation Master Đại Thừa Đăng hailed from Ái Province. His Sanskrit name was Mahāyānapradīpa. When young he sailed with his parents to the country Dvaravati where he left home to become a monk. Afterward he accompanied the Tang emissary Tân Xu to the capital. He received ordination from the Tripitaka Master Xuanzang at C'ien Temple. He remained in the capital for a number of years during which he read widely in the Buddhist scriptures. He was eager to go on a pilgrimage to



sacred places and always yearned for India. He was by nature loyal, tolerant, and honest. He embraced the precepts and was absorbed in meditation. He set his mind on Rājagṛha and focused his heart on the Bamboo Grove. He aspired to annihilate the eight disasters and attain the four teachings. He then brought along Buddha images and Buddhist texts, crossing the southern sea to Sri Lanka where he paid homage to the Buddha's tooth and experienced various miraculous phenomena. He traveled to South India and then to East India, stopping at the country of Tamralipti. When he entered the river mouth his boat was destroyed by bandits and he could only save himself. He remained in that country for twelve years and mastered Sanskrit. He chanted the *Nidānasūtra* and so forth, and also cultivated the accumulation of merit.

He met a group of merchants and together with Yijing they traveled to Central India, first to Nālandā, after that to Vajrāsana, then back to Vaiśālī, and finally to the country of Kuśinagara. He traveled across this country with Wuxing. Master Đại Thừa Đăng often lamented, "My wish is to spread the Dharma in the East, yet it remains unfulfilled and I have become old and weak. Although I am not able to realize my wish now, I vow to fulfill it in my next life." His most cherished vow was to be reborn in Tuṣita Heaven to meet Maitreya Buddha. Each day he would draw one or two branches of Nāgapuṣpa to express his aspiration. Once on a religious trip he passed by the former domicile of Master Daoxi who already passed away at that time. Yet all the Chinese and Sanskrit texts were preserved intact. Seeing those texts, Master Đăng was moved to tears and lamented, "Formerly, in Chang'an we sat at the same Dharma assembly—nowadays in a strange country all I can see is your empty place." . . . Subsequently, he passed away at Nirvana Temple in the same Kuśinagara country in his sixties. (See 4b17–c14.)

From the above literary evidence, the general picture we can draw about Buddhism in Jiaozhou under the Tang is that although it was a time of political turmoil, there was still communication between the two lands in religious matters. Chinese monks still traveled to India to study, and many of them made prolonged stays in Jiaozhou and developed close connections with native Jiaozhou monks.

We learn from the above biographical notes that Khuy Xung was a disciple of Mingyuan, Huệ Diệm was a disciple of Wuxing, while Vận Kỳ befriended Tanrun, and Đại Thừa Đăng was a traveling companion of Wuxing. It seems that many Jiaozhou monks, due to the area's long-standing links with India through Indian merchants and monks, were well versed in Sanskrit and some Central Asian dialects. They could serve as assistants to Chinese monks in translation work (as they had been doing for Indian and Central Asian monks) or as interpreters on trips to India.

18. See *Toàn Thư*, "Ngoại Ký," 5:171–72; Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 267–71.

19. See Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 275–95; *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 2:179–87.

20. In 968 Đinh Bộ Lĩnh ascended the throne, established the name of the country as Đại Cồ Việt, moved the capital to Hoa Lư, built citadels, dug reservoirs, erected palaces, and instituted court ceremonies. The court hailed him

as Brilliant Victorious Emperor. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:180. In 970 Đinh Bộ Lĩnh established the first Vietnamese reign-era name, proclaiming the first year of the Thái Bình era. Lê Văn Hưu, the royal historian of the Trần, remarks, “When our country was without a ruler, the warlords were dividing territories. Tiên Hoàng (i.e., Bộ Lĩnh), with his supreme ability and intelligence and his unexcelled bravery, in one fell swoop, conquered the twelve warlords. Then he opened the country and established the capital. He changed his title to emperor, instituted court ranks, and deployed the six armies, so the regime was complete. Is it not Heaven’s will that a wise king was born to Việt to carry on the tradition of King Triệu?” See *ibid.* See also Maurice Durand, *Imagerie populaire Vietnamienne* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1960), pp. 205 and 236. According to K. W. Taylor, the role of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh as the first Vietnamese emperor only comes from later historians. See K. W. Taylor, “Looking Behind the Vietnamese Annals: Lý Phật Mã and Lý Nhật Tôn in the *Việt Sử Lược* and the *Toàn Thư*,” *Vietnam Forum* 7 (Winter–Spring 1986): 47–69. Assuming that Taylor is correct, that does not affect Đinh Bộ Lĩnh’s stature and achievements in Vietnamese history.

21. He made Ngô Chân Lưu tăng thống (General Supervisor of Monks) conferring on him the title Khuông Việt Thái Sư [Great Master Who Brings Order to Việt], and appointed Trương Ma Ni tăng lục (Monk Scribe). He also gave the Daoist Đặng Huyền Quang the title sùng chân uy nghi (Noble and Upright Majesty). See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:181.

Both Khuông Việt and Trương Ma Ni, two eminent Buddhist monks of the Đinh and Lê dynasties, had close affinity with popular religion. Khuông Việt was renowned, among other things, for his affinity with Vaiśravaṇa, a popular Hindu deity turned (Buddha) Dharma-protector. (See chapter 3 for a detailed discussion on this issue.) Trương Ma Ni was the monk who founded Kiến Sơ Temple, which eventually became the center of an important “Buddhist lineage” in medieval Vietnam. Kiến Sơ Temple was also the place where the legendary national hero Phù Đổng Thiên Vương (The Celestial King of Phù Đổng) was worshipped. Phù Đổng Thiên Vương was later transformed into a Dharma-protector. Note that Trương Ma Ni is mentioned only in one version of the “Phù Đổng Thần Vương Truyện” [Story of the God King of Phù Đổng] as the founder of Kiến Sơ Temple. See *Tân Định Giáo Bình Việt Điện U Linh Tập*, in Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2:110. Other versions of the story and the *Thiền Uyển* unanimously record Cầm Thành as the founder of Kiến Sơ Temple. According to the *Thiền Uyển* Cầm Thành died around 860. If we take the *Thiền Uyển* seriously, then Trương Ma Ni and Cầm Thành could not have been one and the same person.

22. See Keith W. Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam,” in David G. Marr and A. C. Milner, eds., *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), p. 161.

23. See Hà Văn Tấn, “Từ một cột kinh Phật năm 973 vừa phát hiện ở Hoa Lư” [On a Buddhist Stele of 973 Recently Discovered at Hoa Lư], *Nghiên Cứu Lịch Sử* [Studies in History] 78 (1965): 39–50; “Cột kinh Phật thời Đinh thứ hai ở Hoa Lư” [The Second Buddhist Stele at Hoa Lư], *Khảo Cổ Học* [Archaeology] 5–6 (1970): 24–31; *Chùa Việt Nam* [Buddhist Temples in Vietnam] (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1993), pp. 32–33.

24. See, for instance, Hà Văn Tấn, *Chùa Việt Nam*, p. 33. Although we do not have records of the development of Tantrism in Vietnam, there is no denying

that it has been a lasting element in popular Vietnamese Buddhism. For a brief discussion of Tantric elements in Vietnamese Buddhism, see Bruno Révertegat, *Le Bouddhisme traditionnel au Sud-Viêt-nam* (Vichy: Imprimerie Wallon, 1974).

25. Court chronicles record that Pháp Thuận (914–990), Khuông Việt (933–1011), and Vạn Hạnh (?–1025) impressed Lê Đại Hành by their wisdom and uncanny ability to foretell the future. The king entrusted them with literary and diplomatic responsibilities. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:191–92.

26. This explains the close affinity between Buddhism and popular religions in Vietnam. Even at the present time there are still temples in which a certain deity is worshipped in a separate sanctuary behind the Buddha altar. This sanctuary is usually closed and is open only on particular holidays. This practice is referred to as “tiền Phật hậu thần” (literally, “Buddha before, deity after”). See Hà Văn Tấn, *Chùa Việt Nam*, pp. 24–25.

27. For a study of the Buddhist conversion of the (non-Buddhist) gods in Chinese Buddhism, see, inter alia, Valerie Hansen, “Gods on Walls: A Case of Indian Influence on Chinese Lay Religion?” in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp. 75–113.

28. Let us look, for instance, at the legend of Lý Công Uẩn, who subsequently became Lý Thái Tổ, the founder of the Lý dynasty. Tradition has it that once Lý Công Uẩn's mother, while strolling Mount Tiêu Sơn, had intercourse with a deity, became pregnant, and gave birth to him. His mother then brought him as a child to a Buddhist temple and entrusted him to Monk Khánh Vân. Afterward Lý Công Uẩn, with the assistance of the Monk Vạn Hạnh, took over the throne from the [Former] Lê. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:207. Nguyễn Duy Hinh observes that Lý Công Uẩn's mother entrusting her son to Monk Khánh Vân was a symbolic act similar to Man Nương giving her son to Khâu Đà La. See “Chùa Đậu: Suy Nghĩ Sử Học” [Đậu Temple: Some Historical Reflections], *Nghiên Cứu Lịch Sử* [Studies in History] 4 (1983): 25. According to this, Lý Công Uẩn not only had a supernatural origin but also became son of a monk growing up in a temple receiving Buddhist education. This shows that Buddhist thought had considerable impact on the Lý ideology concerning the role of the king as a personality receiving the sanction of both the earth (representing the native land/mother) and the sky (representing Buddhism/father).

29. See Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy,” p. 149.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 150.

33. Note in this connection that although Vietnam was under Chinese domination, Buddhism in Vietnam prior to the period of independence, due to Vietnam's exposure to religious elements coming from India and Champa, appeared to share the same characteristics with the Buddhist world of Southeast Asia in general. That is, it is a composite Buddhist world view that includes elements from Brahmanical, Tantric, Mahāyāna, and Theravāda beliefs and practices. Nevertheless, after the period of independence and particularly since the beginning of the Lý dynasty (eleventh century), contemporaneous with the development of the monarchical states and the concept of Buddhist kingship in Southeast Asia, Vietnam circumstantially and voluntarily moved into the scope of Chinese culture. For instance, in his edict announcing the moving of

the capital from Hoa Lư to Thăng Long, Lý Thái Tổ praised Gao Pian, the Chinese general, as “King Cao,” in other words, as a paradigm of kingship. This, coupled with the lack of exposure to Pāli Buddhist literature, explains why the concept of *dharmarāja* or Buddhist king was never known in Vietnam. For a study of Buddhism in Southeast Asia, see Donald Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), especially chap. 2; “Buddhism in Southeast Asia,” in Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 2:385b–394a.

34. One day Lý Thái Tổ entrusted his royal robe to the Daoist priest Trần Huệ Long of the Southern Royal Daoist Temple. That night there was light all over the temple. Trần Huệ Long woke up with a start and saw a yellow dragon appear at the place where the robe was placed. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:221. Keith Taylor suggests that the Daoist priests were experts in dealing with the spirits of local cults and performed an important ritual role at the Lý court. See Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy,” pp. 148–49. The *Toàn Thư* also records that under Lý Thần Tông (r. 1128–1138) in 1128 the king sent Lý Công Bình to fight the Chân Lạp, who were plundering the province of Nghệ An. When the news of victory reached the capital, the king visited Buddhist and Daoist temples in the capital to show his gratitude. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:270.

35. See Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy,” pp. 169–70.

36. The Story of Xung Thiên Thần Vương (the title conferred on Phù Đổng Thiên Vương by Lý Thái Tổ) is recorded in various editions of the *Việt Điện*. See, for instance, “Xung Thiên Uy Tín Đại Vương” (*Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục*, pp. 35–36); “Xung Thiên Dũng Liệt Chiêu Ứng Uy Tín Đại Vương” (*Việt Điện U linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên*, pp. 205–207), in *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết Tùng San*, série II, vol. 2. For some general information on the *Việt Điện U Linh*, see “Bibliographie annamite,” pp. 126–28; Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy,” especially pp. 156–69; Taylor, “Notes on the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập*,” *Vietnam Forum* 8 (1986): 26–59; *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 352–59.

37. See, for instance, *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên*, in Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2:189.

38. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:248–49. This story is also recorded in two versions of the *Việt Điện*: *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục* and *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên*. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2:30 and 195.

39. There is evidence to believe that works such as the *Cổ Châu*, *Việt Điện*, and *Bảo Cục Truyện* were composed by Buddhist authors. For a general but good discussion of these works, see Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy.”

40. Court chronicles record that the (early) Lý kings allocated huge amounts of gold, silver, and copper from the state treasury to support the construction and embellishment of Buddhist temples. (See, for instance, *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:211, 225, 230, 242.) For instance, Lý Thái Tổ (r. 1010–1028) in the very first year of his reign gave an order that old and decayed temples and shrines in every village throughout the country should be renovated. Within the first two years of his reign, Lý Thái Tổ had eight temples built in the capital. (See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:209.) He also encouraged people to become monks. For instance, in 1010 Lý Thái Tổ presided over a mass ordination. In 1014 he again accepted the request of Trần Uyển Văn, the General Supervisor of Monks, to preside over a mass ordination ceremony at Vạn Tuế Temple. See

ibid., 2:209 and 211. In 1019 Thái Tổ again issued a royal decree encouraging people to receive ordination to become monks. See ibid., 2:213.

41. In 1018, eight years after ascending the throne, Lý Thái Tổ sent an envoy led by Nguyễn (i.e., Lý) Đạo Thành and Phạm Hạc to China to request a set of the *Tripitaka*. The envoy successfully returned in 1020. Lý Thái Tổ had the General Supervisor of Monks Phí Trí officially receive the *Tripitaka* and had an archive built to house it. In 1023 and 1027 he had it copied so that it could be more accessible to monks. (See ibid., pp. 213–15.) In 1034 Lý Thái Tông (r. 1028–1054) sent an envoy to the Song court where he received a set of the *Tripitaka*. Two years after that Lý Thái Tông had copies made and stored at the archive of Trùng Hưng Temple. (See ibid., 2:224 and 226).

We have no information about this *Tripitaka* or how widely it was circulated among the monastics. It was probably housed in the main temples in the capital and was not available for the monks at other localities. Lê Quí Đôn, a Confucian luminary of the [Later] Lê dynasty, reported that this edition of the Buddhist canon contained 4826 fascicles, and “the [Lý] kings gave order to the Confucian scholars to read it.” See Trần Văn Giáp, *Tìm Hiểu Kho Sách Hán Nôm* [The Hán Nôm Treasury] (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1990), 2:202.

42. It is recorded that when Trần Nhân Tông became Retired Emperor he took time to travel to many localities to exhort the people to renounce “superstitious beliefs” and to disband “depraved temples.” See *Tam Tổ Thực Lục*, 3a6–b1, 16b7–17a2; *Tam Tổ Hành Trạng*, 11; *Kế Đăng Lược Lục*, 7–8.

43. For instance, according to the *Toàn Thư*, (“Bản Kỷ,” 3:245), in 1070 Lý Thánh Tông had the *Văn Miếu* (Confucius Temple or Cultural Temple) built, in which the statues of Confucius, the Duke of Zhou, and the Four Eminent Disciples as well as the images of the Seventy-Two Worthies were worshipped all year round. The crown prince received his formal education there. Under the reign of Emperor Tang Xuanzong (712–756), Confucius was honored as Văn Tuyên Vương (Wen Xuan Wang), and his temple was called *Văn Tuyên Vương Miếu* (*Wen Xuan Wang Miao*). From the Yuan and Ming dynasties on, it was referred to in its short form as *Văn Miếu* (*Wen Miao*). See Hanyu Dacidian (Shanghai: Hanyu Dacidian chubanshe, 1994) 6:1528b and 1542a. A. B. Poliakov claims that “even in China, temples to Confucius were baptized Van Mieu only from 1410 onwards”; therefore, such institutions could not have existed in Vietnam in 1070. See A. B. Poliakov, “On the Date of Construction of Van Mieu (Temple of Literature) and the Beginnings of Confucianism in Vietnam,” *Vietnamese Studies* 3, 101 (1991): 28. Poliakov’s conclusion does not seem convincing to me. In my estimation, it is highly likely that Lý Thánh Tông, as part of his efforts to incorporate elements of an advanced culture—that is, China—established Confucian institutions, among which were certain temples devoted to Confucius and other Confucian luminaries. It was later historians who inadvertently used the designation *Văn Miếu* to refer to these Confucian temples.

44. For instance, in 1253 Trần Thái Tông established the Institute of National Learning (*Viện Quốc Học*), where statues of Confucius and the Duke of Zhou and portraits of the Seventy-Two Worthies were worshipped. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 5:337.

45. From the historical records it appears that the Trần dynasty did not just put on a Confucian veneer. The Trần court seemed seriously concerned with recruiting virtuous and learned men.

46. On these events, which took place in 1257 and 1284–1288, see Lê Thành Khôi, *Histoire du Viêt Nam: Des origines à 1858* (Paris: Sudestasie, 1987), pp. 182–92.

47. For instance, as early as 1244 under Trần Thái Tông, the court decreed that Buddhist monks (and Daoist priests) appointed by the Lords would now be called *tả nhai* (left officers), the highest rank that could be conferred on the Buddhist and Daoist clergies, though this rank would not be counted among court ranks. In other words, the rank now represented only a religious function and not a political one. Only those who were well-versed in their religion could be appointed to this position. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 5:332.

48. According to the *Toàn Thư*, the early kings of the Trần up to Trần Anh Tông (r. 1294–1314) would go to Mount Yên Tử to take up the monastic vocation after abdicating the throne to become “Retired Emperor.” According to Phúc Điền at least nine of the Trần kings were serious Zen practitioners who received instructions from Chinese Linji Zen masters. See *Kế Đăng Lục*, 5a2–7a10.

49. According to Phúc Điền, Trần Nhân Tông belonged to a lineage of Linji Zen. See *Kế Đăng Lục*, 11a3–4. Although some Buddhist sources give us long lists of succeeding patriarchs (for instance, *Kế Đăng Lục*, 11a1–b1), it is fair to say that the Trúc Lâm school virtually ended with its third patriarch Huyền Quang. There is no denying that some of these three patriarchs’ disciples had established various Zen groups stationed at different temples. Some undoubtedly had made efforts to revive the school. Regarding these various Zen groups, we only have a list of names but no extant writings whatsoever.

50. See, for instance, *Tam Tổ Thực Lục*, 9a8, 9b3–4, 21b1, 33b6.

51. See *Kế Đăng Lục*, 5a2–7a10; 11a–43b1.

52. It was a common practice in medieval Vietnam that monks would compose works on Buddhist “history” at the royal request. For instance, Biện Tài composed a “lamp history” text at the request of Lý Thái Tông.

53. See note 2 above.

54. See (1) Mật Thể Thích, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận* [A Brief History of Vietnamese Buddhism] (reprinted Saigon: Minh Đức, 1960); (2) Nguyễn Đăng Thực, *Thiền Học Việt Nam* [Vietnamese Zen Buddhism] (Saigon: Lá Bối, 1967); (3) Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận*, vol. 1; (4) Nguyễn Tài Thư et al., *Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Việt Nam* [History of Vietnamese Buddhism] (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1988); (5) Maurice Durand, “Introduction du Bouddhisme au Viêt-Nam,” *France-Asie* (1959): 797–800; (6) Mai Thọ Truyền, “Le Bouddhisme au Viêt-Nam,” *France-Asie* (1959): 801–10; (7) Thích Thiên-An, *Buddhism and Zen in Vietnam* (Rutland/Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1975); (8) Heinz Bechert and Vu Duy Tu, “Buddhism in Vietnam,” in Heinrich Dumoulin and John C. Maraldo, eds., *Buddhism in the Modern World* (London: Collier Books, 1976), pp. 186–93; (9) Sheng Yan, “Yuenan Fojiao shilue” [A Brief History of Vietnamese Buddhism], in Chang Mantao, ed., *Dongnan ya Fojiao yanjiu* [Studies in Southeast Asian Buddhism] (Taipei: Daisheng wenhua chubanshe, 1977), pp. 271–99; (10) Hui Hai, “Yuenan zhi Fojiao” [Vietnamese Buddhism], in *ibid.*, pp. 301–10; (11) Shi Shan-yi [Thích Thiện Nghi], “Yuenan fojiao lueshi” [A Brief History of Vietnamese Buddhism], in Wang Jianrui et al., eds., *Yindu fojiao shilun ji, dongnan ya fojiao gaishuo* (Huawu chubanshe, 1988), pp. 241–373; (12) Kawamoto Kunye, “Vietnam no Bukkyō” [Vietnamese



Buddhism], chap. 4 of Nakamura Hajime, Kasahara Kazuo, Kanaoka Shuyu, eds., *Ajia Bukkyō shi. Chūgoku hen IV* [History of Buddhism in Asia, Chinese Section IV] (Tokyo: Kosei shuppan sha, 1976), pp. 222–303.

Among these (1) is a rough, brief translation of Giáp's work. The author added some chapters on Buddhism under the Lê and Nguyễn dynasties, but they are sketchy and uncritical. (2) is a thematic doctrinal interpretation of Vietnamese Zen, now dated. Lang repeats Giáp's scheme in (3). In addition, his interpretation of the "philosophy of the Vietnamese Zen schools" is ahistorical. (4) can be considered a major disappointment. It was published as recently as 1988, yet the authors do the readers a great disservice by merely repeating the errors of previous works while not presenting anything new in terms of approach. (5) and (6) are too brief to have any value. It is unfortunate that (7) is the only book on Vietnamese Buddhism in English. It is full of errors, exaggerations, and mistranslations. Needless to say, the author only repeats Giáp's idea. (8) is too brief and concentrates more on modern times, yet the authors still follow traditional views when dealing with medieval Vietnamese Buddhism. (9) and (10) are too brief and do not offer anything new. (11) is a survey of Buddhism in Vietnam from its inception up to the French period. However, this work is not very useful because the author seems to repeat uncritically materials from his predecessors. (12) is definitely the best survey of Vietnamese Buddhism in a non-Vietnamese language. Unfortunately, the author also explains medieval Vietnamese Buddhism by relying on the content of the *Thiền Uyển* without examining influences from Chinese Buddhist literature. Besides, he seems to accept the history of Chinese Zen uncritically.

55. In fact, Giáp even devotes a section of his work to reconstructing the Zen lineage from Bodhidharma to Vô Ngôn Thông. See "Le Bouddhisme," pp. 227–34.

## Chapter Two

This chapter is a modified version of my article "Rethinking Vietnamese Buddhist History: Is the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* a 'Transmission of the Lamp' Text?" in K. W. Taylor and John Whitmore, eds., *Essays into Vietnamese Pasts* (Ithaca: Cornell University SEAP, 1995).

1. Although before the 1960s the *Thiền Uyển's* viewpoint was not widely known among the Vietnamese community, it was occasionally reiterated by some among the Buddhist elite. See, for instance, Mật Thể, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận*; and Mai Thọ Truyền, "Le Bouddhisme au Việt-Nam." Mật Thể was one of the most respected monks in central Vietnam, and Mai Thọ Truyền was a leading intellectual layman in the South.

2. That is, the overthrow of Ngô Đình Diệm's regime in 1963 after extended political disturbances in Vietnam caused by the oppression of Buddhism in Huế. Up to this time Buddhism had been content to be a popular, depoliticized religion. It seems that not of its own choice Buddhism was forced into a political struggle that eventually led to the fall of Diệm. The most complete study so far on this issue is Chính Đạo, *Tôn Giáo and Chính Trị: Phật Giáo 1963–1967* [Religion and Politics: Buddhism 1963–1967] (Houston: Van Hoa, 1994).

3. Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận*.

4. Lang's writings and hence the *Thiền Uyển's* view were particularly fortified

by the belated popularization of the ideas of D. T. Suzuki in South Vietnam through a series of translations of his works into modern Vietnamese. Suzuki's writings confirmed and convinced the Vietnamese Buddhists that Zen is the "essence" of Buddhism, the supreme teaching of the Buddha.

5. The number would be sixty-eight if we counted Biện Tài and Lý Thái Tông. I do not count them because the records on these two personages are too short to be biographies. This is according to the Nguyễn edition, the *Dại Nam*. In this edition, the compiler inadvertently mixes up the biography of Không Lộ (of the Vô Ngôn Thông school) and that of Minh Không (of the Vinītaruci school). Thus, the biography of Minh Không is missing in the Nguyễn edition. If we follow the Lê edition, i.e., the *Thiền Uyển*, there are sixty-six biographies with twenty-nine belonging to the Vinītaruci school instead of twenty-eight.

6. The earliest text of this kind is the *Zutang ji* [Records of the Patriarch Hall]. This work was lost within about 150 years of its publication in China and was preserved only in Korea. See T. Griffith Foulk, "The Ch'an *Tsung* in Medieval China: School, Lineage, or What?" *The Pacific World*, New Series, no. 8 (1992): 27.

7. For a brief discussion on this issue, see Yanagida Seizan, "Zenshū goroku no keisei," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 18, 1 (1969): 39–47; English translation by John R. McRae, "The Development of the 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," in Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), pp. 189–91. We should note in this connection that this position cannot be interpreted as simply a product of the Zen idiosyncrasy; rather, Zen inherits and carries to the extreme the spirit of interpretation of scriptures initiated by other leading Buddhist thinkers of the Tang dynasty. Stanley Weinstein has discussed at some length this aspect of Tang Buddhism in his article "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of T'ang Buddhism," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 271–73.

8. This idea is originally from the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*: *Seyyatha pi Pahārāda mahasamuddo ekaraso lonaraso, evam eva kho Pahārāda ayam dhammavinayo ekaraso vimuttiraso* [Pahārāda, just as the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt; just so this Dhamma and Discipline has only one flavor, the flavor of liberation]. See E. Hardy, ed., *The Āṅguttara Nikāya* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1899), 4:203.

9. An excellent study of this literature has been written by Tanaka Ryōshō, *Tonkō Zenshū bunken no kenkyū* [A Study of Tun-Huang Zen Manuscripts] (Tokyo: Daitō shuppan sha, 1983). See especially pp. 21–166 and 549–648. For a brief but lucid exposition, see John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), pp. 73–97.

10. For a study of the "Recorded Sayings" texts in Chinese Zen, see Yanagida Seizan, "Zenshū goroku no keisei"; McRae's English translation, pp. 185–205. For a study of the *Mazu lu*, see Iriya Yoshitaka, *Baso no goroku* (Tokyo: Zen bunka kenkyūsho, 1984); for a discussion of the thought of Mazu, see Yanagida Seizan, *Zen shisō* [Zen Thoughts] (Tokyo: Chūō kōron sha, 1975), pp. 107–53.

11. See *T* 48.139a–225c13. For a complete English translation, see Thomas and J. C. Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Records*, 3 vols. (Boston: Shambala, 1977).

12. For a discussion on this text, see Yanagida Seizan, “Zenseki kaidai,” in Nishitani Keiji and Yanagida Seizan, eds., *Zenke Goroku* [Recorded Sayings of the Zen Adepts] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1974), 2:478. For a useful outline of the text, see Ono Gemmyō, *Bussbō kaisetsu daijiten* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppan sha, 1932), 1:114–24.

13. On the significance of the Buddhas of the past, see, inter alia, Richard Gombrich, “The Significance of Former Buddhas in the Theravādin Tradition,” in Somaratna Balasooriya et al., eds., *Buddhist Studies in Honor of Walpola Rahula* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1980), pp. 62–72. For a brief description of the structure and function of the “transmission of the lamp” texts, see McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 74–76.

14. For a brief discussion on the “transmission history” in, for instance, Tiantai, see McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 82–83.

15. On Mou Bo and Kang Senghui, see chapter one, nn. 7 and 8.

16. Mou Bo’s Buddhism was rudimentary and was not clearly based on any particular scriptural sources. Kang Senghui was the translator of two *sūtras*: the *\*Śaṭpāramitāsāṃgraha*, T 3.1a–52b2, and the *Jiu zaxiyou jing*, T 4.510b3–522b12. Kang Senghui did not leave any independent works; we have no idea about his own thought, so how can we associate him with any scriptural tradition? Besides, Chinese Zen has never associated the names of Mou Bo and Kang Senghui with any scriptural tradition.

17. Paul Murray Kendall characterizes “demand biography” as “biography produced to satisfy the requirements of the predilections of an age, to act as a beast of burden for ends other than the illumination of life.” See *The Art of Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), pp. 40–41. Peter H. Lee also quotes this passage in his book and explains further that the purpose of the *Haedong Kosŭng Chŏn*—and works belonging to the “biographies of eminent monks,” we may add—is edification, since they are instruments “for conversion and propagation of the faith.” These works “uphold the values of eminent monks as a model for emulation.” See Peter H. Lee, *Lives of Eminent Monks: The Haedong Kosŭng Chŏn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 13. This description applies well to the situation of Buddhism in medieval Vietnam. For discussions on the issue of Chinese Buddhist biographies, see Yun-hua Jan, “Portrait and Self-Portrait: A Case Study of Biographical and Autobiographical Records of Tsung-Mi,” in Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, eds., *Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1988), pp. 229–46; Albert Welter, “The Contextual Studies of Chinese Biographies,” *ibid.*, pp. 247–74.

18. One has in mind, for instance, Junjiro Takakusu’s approach in his *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* (reprinted, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973).

19. See Mircea Eliade et al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 2:485. Also quoted in Foulk, “The Ch’an *Tsung*,” p. 18.

20. Foulk, “The Ch’an *Tsung*,” p. 18.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

24. Foulk remarks, “The entity I want to call the Ch’an school included far more members than the few who were recognized as Dharma heirs, although the latter were clearly the leaders. The school consisted of everyone who believed in the Ch’an lineage, gained inspiration from its lore, worshipped its patriarchs,

and followed or supported the Ch'an masters who were its living representatives." Ibid., pp. 28–29.

25. Ibid., p. 29.

26. According to historical records, under the Lý dynasty (1010–1225) envoys were dispatched to China to request Buddhist texts. It was probably through this venue that medieval Vietnamese Buddhist elites came to know the *Chuandeng lu*.

27. The story of Không Lộ in the *Dại Nam* is obviously taken from a folktale entitled "Khổng Lồ Đúc Chuông hay Sự Tích Trâu Vàng Hồ Tây" [Khổng Lồ Casting a Bell or Legend of the Golden Buffalo at the West Lake]. Besides the similarity in content, at least in one instance in Không Lộ's biography in the *Dại Nam*, the name Không Lộ is written as "Khổng Lồ" (the Giant One). See *Dại Nam*, 21b2. For the story of Khổng Lồ, see Nguyễn Đồng Chi, *Kho Tàng Truyện Cổ Tích Việt Nam* [The Treasury of Vietnamese Legends] (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1972), pp. 230–35.

28. That is, the *Tham Đồ Hiến Quyết* [Revelations of the Decisive Secret for Students]. The *An Nam Chí Lược* records: Zen Master Mai Viên Chiếu composed the *Tham Đồ Hiến Quyết*, which contains sections such as "One day Viên Chiếu was sitting in front of his house when a monk came and asked, 'What is the meaning of Buddha and Sage?' Viên Chiếu said, 'At the autumn festival the chrysanthemums are blooming under the hedge, in the pure air of spring orioles are singing in the branches.'" This is exactly the first of the many encounter dialogues included in Viên Chiếu's biography in the *Thiền Uyển*. See *An Nam Chí Lược* (reprinted Taipei: Yinying wen yuan siku quanshu, 1983), 46:15, 464–65; *Thiền Uyển*, 11b7–8; *Dại Nam*, 8b1–2.

29. See Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy," p. 146 and notes 32, 33. In addition, monks of the same generation in the same lineage were engaged in practices that were from a sectarian perspective totally different.

30. *Thiền Uyển*, 27b8–28a4; *Dại Nam*, 24a5–b1.

31. For instance, the section on "Immortals and Buddhist Monks" in the *An Nam Chí Nguyên*. See É. Gaspardone, *Ngan-Nan Tche-Yuan* (Hanoi: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1934), pp. 208–12.

32. *Thiền Uyển*, 35b6–11; *Dại Nam*, 31b7–32a1.

33. The biographies of these monks are recorded in fascicles 25–26 of the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*. See *T* 50, 643c1–678a8.

34. For a discussion of Thông Biện's model of Vietnamese Buddhist history, see appendix II.

35. *Thiền Uyển*, 44a2–45a3; *Dại Nam*, 38b6–39b–9.

36. "Le Bouddhisme," 236.

37. *T* 49.102c3–9.

38. *T* 55.275a14–19; *T* 50.433b2–6.

39. *T* 55.547c8–14.

40. *T* 55.846a8–14.

41. The *Thiền Uyển* is completely silent about this.

42. See *T* 51.245c27; Iriya, *Baso no goroku*, pp. 10 and 71. Some of these points have also been noted by Tuệ Hạnh in her article "Có Hay Không Có Dòng Thiền Tỳ Ni Đa Lưu Chi Tại Việt Nam" [Does the Vinītaruci School Exist in Vietnam?], *Nguồn Sống* 6 (1986): 88–99; 7 and 8 (1986): 77–86; 9 (1987): 70–77.

43. The *Thiền Uyển* records the dialogue between Vinītaruci and Pháp Hiền

as follows: “When Vinītaruci first came from Guangzhou and lodged at Pháp Vân Temple and met Pháp Hiền, he looked him over carefully and said, ‘What is your name?’ Pháp Hiền said, ‘What is your name, Master?’ Vinītaruci said, ‘Don’t you have a name?’ Pháp Hiền said, ‘Of course I have a name, but how can you understand it?’ Vinītaruci scolded him, saying, ‘Why use understanding?’” See *Thiền Uyển*, 45b1–3; *Dại Nam*, 40a3–5. The dialogue between Daoxin and Hongren is as follows: “One day when Daoxin was on his way to Huangmei Village he happened to meet a boy with extraordinary looks, different from other children. Daoxin asked, ‘What is your [family] name?’ The boy said, ‘I do have a name, but it is not a common name.’ Daoxin asked, ‘What kind of name is it then?’ The boy said, ‘My [family] name is Buddha.’ Daoxin asked, ‘Don’t you have a [family] name?’ The boy said, ‘It is emptiness.’” See *T* 51.3.222b10–15. Note that in this dialogue Hongren plays with the two characters *xing* 姓 and *xing* 性, which have the same pronunciation but different meanings (“family name” and “nature”). In borrowing this dialogue to make up that between Vinītaruci and Pháp Hiền, the Vietnamese authors seem to miss this point.

44. For instance, Huike studied with Bodhidharma for six years, as did Shenxiu with Hongren. See McRae, *The Northern School*, p. 48.

45. See, for instance, the biographies of Đạo Huệ (18b7), Tịnh Không (24a5), Trí Bảo (27a6), Tịnh Giới (29b), Thiền Nham (53b), Giới Không (55b), and Chân Không (58a).

46. Thông Biện seems to be the first person to give us this information.

47. *T* 85.1291a1–c13.

48. See Nguyễn Duy Hinh, “Three Legends,” *passim*; “Chùa Đậu: Suy Nghi Sử Học.” Even nowadays Cham Brahmanism can still be found in North, Central, and South Vietnam.

49. See Nguyễn Duy Hinh, “Three Legends”; Trần Văn Giáp, “Les deux sources du Bouddhisme annamite, ses rapports avec l’Inde et la Chine,” *Cahiers de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient* 33 (1942): 17–20. Note that after returning from successful expeditions to Champa, the Lý kings would give Cham prisoners to Buddhist temples to work as slaves. Among these prisoners there happened to be artists, priests, warriors, and so forth, who subsequently contributed significantly to Vietnamese architecture, music, mythology, and religion. See, *inter alia*, Nguyễn Duy Hinh, “Three Legends”; Tạ Chí Đại Trướng, *Thần Người Và Đất Việt* [Gods, People, and the Land of Việt] (Westminster: Văn Nghệ, 1989), pp. 184–89 and 259–67. See also Trần Quốc Vượng, “The Legend of Ông Dóng from the Text to the Field,” and Nguyễn Thế Anh, “The Vietnamization of the Cham Deity Po Nagar,” in K. W. Taylor and John Whitmore, eds., *Essays into Vietnamese Pasts* (Ithaca: Cornell University, SEAP, 1995), pp. 13–41, 42–50.

50. While Kawamoto Kunye expresses some doubt regarding Vinītaruci’s works in China and rejects his alleged relationship with Sengcan, he curiously still accepts that there existed the so-called Vinītaruci Zen school in Vietnam. See Kawamoto Kunye, “Vietnam no Bukkyō,” p. 250.

51. See *Thiền Uyển*, 20b10–21a3 and 45a9–46a1.

52. See *T* 51.247a2–6.

53. Kawamoto remarks that the existence of Quán Duyên at Pháp Vân prior to the arrival of Vinītaruci shows that by the first half of the sixth century the doctrine of Zen that was spread in China by Bodhidharma had already reached

Jiaozhou (i.e., Vietnam) and had been well established there. See Kawamoto, “Vietnam no Bukkyō,” p. 248. If we accept Kawamoto’s opinion, then we will have to rewrite the history of the origin and transmission of Zen in China and Vietnam. This is neither feasible nor necessary, since there is no evidence that Quán Duyên was a “Zen Master.”

54. See *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, pp. 210–11. The final remark, “Sui Gaozu ordered an envoy to build a stupa dedicated to him,” obviously refers to Pháp Hiền and not to Nguyễn Học since Nguyễn Học lived in the twelfth century.

55. *Thiền Uyển*, 45b4–6; *Dại Nam*, 40a6–7.

56. *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.18.573b25–c14. Note in this connection that Phúc Điền, in his record of Khâu Đà La at Cổ Châu (i.e., Pháp Vân) Temple, mentions the same event. Yet, according to him, it was Vinitaruci, not Pháp Hiền, who received the relics and erected stupas at the above localities. Phúc Điền probably based himself on the Cổ Châu *Pháp Vân Phật Bản Hạnh Ngũ Lục*. On this book, see *Di Sản Hán Nôm* 1:326–27.

57. According to the *Sheli ganying ji* [Miraculous Effectiveness of Relics], in the *Hongming ji*, T 52.216b10, stupas were built at Thiên Chúng Temple in Giao Châu to receive relics.

58. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

59. I am not limiting Zen to certain practices, such as contemplating on public cases (*gong'an*), engaging in encounter dialogues (*wenda*), shouting, beating, etc.—although these distinguish Zen from other Chinese Buddhist schools. I am only trying to point out that these aspects of Zen practice did not seem to be part of the Buddhist practice of the Pháp Vân lineage.

60. See Tuệ Hạnh, “Có Hay Không,” pp. 74–76.

61. See *Thiền Uyển*, 5a7–8; *Dại Nam*, 2a7.

62. See Tuệ Hạnh, “Có Hay Không,” p. 76, and “Khởi Nguyên Phật Giáo Việt Nam” [The Beginning of Vietnamese Buddhism], *Nguồn Sống* 18 (1990): 74. This author, while rejecting the existence of Vinitaruci, is of the opinion that Vô Ngôn Thông’s works in Vietnam are truthful beyond doubt.

63. *Thiền Uyển*, 4a2–4b9; *Dại Nam*, 1a3–1b8.

64. T 51.268a28–b13.

65. *Thiền Uyển*, 4b9–5a1; *Dại Nam*, 1b7–2a1.

66. T 51.268c.

67. T 51.219b4–5 and 219b9.

68. For a discussion of *biguan* (wall contemplation) from both traditional and modern viewpoints, see McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 112–15.

69. See *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.551c3–6.

70. *Ibid.*, 551c8–10.

71. See Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei liang Jin nanbeichao fojiao shi* (reprinted Banqiao: Luoto chuban she, 1976), p. 784. See also McRae, *The Northern School*, p. 113.

72. T 51.219b9.

73. T 51.263c21–268b23.

74. The Story of Xung Thiên Thần Vương is recorded in various editions of the *Việt Điện*. For instance, “Xung Thiên Uy Tín Đại Vương,” in *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục* (35–36); “Xung Thiên Dũng Liệt Chiêu Ứng Uy Tín Đại Vương,” in *Việt Điện U linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên* (205–207). See *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết Tùng San*, série II, vol. 2. For some general information on the *Việt*



*Điện U Linh*, see “Bibliographie annamite,” pp. 126–28; Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy,” especially pp. 156–69; “Notes on the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập*”; *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 352–59.

75. *Thiền Uyển*, 5b11–6a2; *Đại Nam*, 2b10–3a1; T 51.223a20; see also *Fabaodan jing* [The Platform Sūtra], T 48.349a28–b3.

76. Khuông Việt's biography also relates that he saw the celestial King Vaiśravaṇa [a “Dharma Protector” in Buddhism] in a dream in which the deity said he came to entrust him with the task of protecting Vietnam and the Buddha-Dharma. See *Thiền Uyển*, 8b2–6; *Đại Nam*, 5a7–b1.

77. That Kiến Sơ Temple was closely associated with the worship of the Celestial King of Phù Đổng, the cult of national heroes, a special trait of Lý Buddhism—and religion in general—is a topic beyond the scope of this book.

78. *Kế Đăng Lục*, 5a2–b7.

79. Note also that there are no biographies of Yuanzheng, Dadeng, and Xiaoyao in the *Thiền Uyển*. Xiaoyao was mentioned in the *Lược Dân Thiền Phái Đồ*. Trần Nhân Tông (the alleged founder of the Trúc Lâm Zen School) remarks in his “[Huệ Trung] Thượng Sĩ Hành Trạng” [Activities of the Eminent Huệ Trung]: “Even before he reached the age of twenty, the Eminent One already respected Zen. He came to study with Zen Master Xiaoyao of Futang and attained the gist of the teaching.” Huệ Trung himself mentioned Xiaoyao in three of his poems. Through this evidence we can believe that Xiaoyao was a highly respected monk who flourished in the middle of the thirteenth century.

80. *Thiền Uyển*, 71b2; *Đại Nam*, 64b4.

81. See Kawamoto, “Vietnam no Bukkyō,” p. 271.

82. T 48.1030b15–2031a2.

83. See Émile Gaspardone, in *Ngan-Nan Tche-Yuan*, p. 209.

84. See *An Nam Chí Lược*, 15:464.

85. The *Việt Sử Lược* [Concise History of Viet], 2:13b, records: “In the spring, the second month [of the first year of the Thần Vũ era (1069)], on the day *mậu tuất*, the King [Lý Thánh Tông], by royal edict, announced his expedition against Champa.” See also *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:245.

86. On the term “National Preceptor” (*quốc sư*), see, for instance, Paul Pelliot, “Les Kouo-che ou ‘maitres du royaume’ dans le Bouddhisme chinoise,” *T'oung Pao* (1911): 971–76.

87. “In the spring, the first month [of the fourth year of the Thần Vũ era (1072)], on the day *canh dần*, the king was seriously ill and passed away in the Hội Tiên Chamber, aged fifty, his temple name Thánh Tông, having ruled for nineteen years.” See *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:14b.

88. Thảo Đường was made National Preceptor in 1070–1071; the vegetarian feast where Thông Biện met Phù Thánh Linh Nhân took place in 1096. The story gives us the impression that Thông Biện was one of the elders among those present at the National Temple. He thus might have been a younger contemporary of Thảo Đường.

89. In fact, she did not seem to know of the existence of any “Zen school” in Vietnam at that time, probably because none existed.

90. See Kawamoto, “Vietnam no Bukkyō,” p. 271.

91. *Thiền Uyển*, 72b1; *Đại Nam*, 65a6. The same list also includes Grand Tutor Đỗ Anh Vũ (1114–1159) as the third patriarch of the lineage. Historical records portrayed Vũ as anything but a gentleman and did not mention any

relation between him and Buddhism. Nor did posthumous inscriptions full of Confucian eulogistic jargon dedicated to Vũ connect him to any “Zen school.” See Keith W. Taylor, “Voices Within and Without: Tales from Stone and Paper about Đỗ Anh Vũ (1114–1159),” in K. W. Taylor and John K. Whitmore, eds., *Essays into Vietnamese Pasts*, pp. 59–80.

92. See *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* [Complete History of Đại Việt, henceforth referred to as *Toàn Thư*], ed. Chen Jinghe (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku tōyō bunka kenkyūsho, 1984), 4:301.

93. The *Toàn Thư* (“Bản Kỷ” 4:311) remarked that when “Lý Huệ Tông (r. 1211–1224) first ascended the throne, he entrusted state affairs to Grand Tutor Đàm Dĩ Mông. Dĩ Mông was ignorant and incompetent, feeble and indecisive. Therefore, political affairs worsened day by day.”

94. The *Toàn Thư* (“Bản Kỷ” 4:306) also recorded that in 1198 Cao Tông “at the advice of Đàm Dĩ Mông, issued a royal decree defrocking monks and nuns.”

95. For instance, the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:17b4–6, reports: “The king [Cao Tông] had an innate fear of thunder and would shake with fright at thunderclaps. A courtier named Nguyễn Dư pretended he could silence them. At the same moment a thunderclap was heard crashing. The king told Dư to silence it. Dư looked upward and recited his spells. The thunder sounded even louder. The king demanded an explanation. Dư said, ‘I have long since warned them, but they are still that violent.’” The same event is also recorded in *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 4:309. Other instances of eccentric behavior by Lý Cao Tông can also be found in the *Việt Sử Lược* and *Toàn Thư*. The *Toàn Thư* (“Bản Kỷ,” 4:307) records the following incident: “The emperor gave an order to the musicians to compose a piece of music and called it ‘Cham Melody.’ Its sound was so mournful and sorrowful that brought tears to listeners’ eyes. Monk official Nguyễn Thường said: ‘I have heard that the Preface to the Odes says that the sound of a disturbed country is mournful and angry. At the present time, the people are in an uproar and the country faces difficulties. Your Majesty indulges himself in luxuries, court affairs are a mess, and the people’s hearts are distressed: this is the omen of annihilation.’” Lê Văn Hưu noted that Cao Tông made people call him “Buddha.” See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:224.

96. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:245 and 242. The *Toàn Thư* noted that the custom to come to these temples to worship Brahmā and Indra started from this.

97. Heinz Bechert and Vu Duy Tu remark, “the third Dhyāna School, Thao-Duong, which dates from the year 1072, has not completely disappeared but exists as a very small sect today.” See Bechert and Vu, “Buddhism in Vietnam,” p. 188. I find this statement completely groundless.

98. For the meaning of the expression “biographical images,” see Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps, eds., *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976). See also Welter, “The Contextual Studies of Chinese Biographies.”

99. In fact, even during the time of Shenhui (684–758), his “sudden enlightenment” had begun to challenge all schools of Chinese Buddhism. See Yanagida “The *Li-Tai Fa-Pao Chi* and the Ch’an Doctrine of Sudden Awakening,” p. 16.

100. For a study of the historical nature of the *Chuandeng lu*, see Ishii Shūdō, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū* [A Study of the Song Dynasty Zen] (Tokyo: Daitō shuppan sha, 1987), pp. 1–122.

## Chapter Three

1. For a general analysis of the *Dại Nam* or the Nguyễn edition of the *Thiền Uyển*, see J. C. Cleary, “Buddhism and Popular Religion in Medieval Vietnam,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59, 1 (1991): 93–118.

2. See Maurice Durand and Nguyen Tran Huan, *An Introduction to Vietnamese Literature*, trans. D. M. Hawke (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 51. Nguyễn Đình Hòa did give a survey of Lý and Trần literature in his book, but it is too sketchy. See Nguyen Dinh Hoa, *Vietnamese Literature: A Brief Survey* (San Diego: San Diego State University, 1994), pp. 39–53.

3. Durand and Nguyen, *Vietnamese Literature*, p. 51.

4. See, for instance, *Thơ Văn Lý-Trần* [Lý-Trần Poetry and Literature], vol. 1 (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1977).

5. The *Toàn Việt Thi Lục* was compiled by Lê Quý Đôn of the [Later] Lê. It is a collection of 2,303 poems composed by authors of the Lý, Trần, Hồ, and [Later] Lê dynasties. See entry 3786 in Trần Nghĩa and François Gros, eds., *Di Sản Hán Nôm Việt Nam Thư Mục Đề Yếu: Catalogue des livres en Han Nôm* (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1993), 3:350. The *Hoàng Việt Thi Tuyển* was compiled by Bùi Huy Bích of the Nguyễn dynasty. It is a collection of 526 poems written by authors of the Lý, Trần, and [Later] Lê dynasties. See entry 1503 in *ibid.*, 1:857–58.

6. According to the *Toàn Thư* (“Ngoại Ký” 3:130–31), under the reign of Han Lingdi (r. 168–189) a native of Jiaozhou was made *thủ sử* for the first time. Lý Tiến submitted a petition requesting that natives who had held the degrees of *mậu tài* and *biểu liêm* should be appointed to positions outside their provinces higher than petty positions within their own province. Under Shi Xie (187–226), a native of Jiaozhou named Lý Cầm, who was a Royal Bodyguard (*túc vệ*), together with a few Jiaozhou natives submitted a petition requesting that Jiaozhou natives with academic degrees should be promoted fairly. See also Lê Thành Khôi, *Histoire du Việt Nam*, p. 96.

7. See Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 179–239.

8. Among the modern works, see, for instance, *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, vol. I. For a brief discussion on arts under the Lý with its Buddhist influence, see Lê Thành Khôi, *Histoire du Việt Nam*, pp. 154–58.

9. *Thiền Uyển*, 9a5–8.

10. *Thiền Uyển*, 9b2–3.

11. For a study on the relationship between Zen and Tang-Song poetry, see, inter alia, Du Songbai, *Chanxue yu Tang Song shixue* [Zen and the Poetry of Tang and Song] (Taiwan: Liming wenhua shiye gongsi, 1978).

12. *Thiền Uyển*, 52b9–10.

13. *Thiền Uyển*, 17b1–5.

14. *Thiền Uyển*, 16a5–6.

15. *Thiền Uyển*, 22a10–b1.

16. *Thiền Uyển*, 23b1–2.

17. *Thiền Uyển*, 25b7–8. Không Lộ's poem is somewhat similar to a poem written by Li Ao of the Tang dynasty. The *Chuandeng lu* relates: One night Zen Master Yaoshan was walking in the mountains chanting a *sūtra*. It was a cloudless night and the moon was clear. Yaoshan burst out laughing, and his laughter traveled ninety miles until it reached east of Liyang. On that occasion Governor Li Ao composed a poem dedicated to him:

He has found a remote site that brings rustic joys,  
 All year long he greets no one, says goodbye to no one.  
 Sometimes he climbs to the solitary mountaintops,  
 To laugh under the moon and the floating clouds.

(See *Chuandeng lu*, 14:312b22.)

18. *Thiền Uyển*, 35b1–2.

19. *Thiền Uyển*, 67b1–3.

20. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:241.

21. *Thiền Uyển*, 19a4–5.

22. *Thiền Uyển*, 45a4–6.

23. *Thiền Uyển*, 53a2–3.

24. *Thiền Uyển*, 51b4–5.

25. *Thiền Uyển*, 35a4–5.

26. *Thiền Uyển*, 18b3–4.

27. Fo Tu Teng (died 349), one of the most interesting personalities of early Chinese Buddhism, was a Central Asian monk who arrived in north China around 310 C.E. and impressed the Chinese ruler with his magical powers. Fo Tu Teng's biography can be found in *Mingseng zhuan*, *Gaoseng zhuan*, 9:383b–387a; *Yishuchuan*, and *Jinshu*. For a complete account of his life, see Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, 1:251–69. For a briefer account, see Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 79–80; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 181–83. For a complete study on his life and works, see Arthur F. Wright, "Fo-t'u-teng: A Biography," *HJAS* 11 (1948): 321–71; reprinted in *Studies in Chinese Buddhism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 34–68. Kumārajīva (350–413) was a native of Kucha who came to Chang'an in 401 and translated many important Buddhist texts into Chinese, including those of the Madhyamaka School. Through his translations Kumārajīva was responsible for the establishment of the Sanlun School in China. See Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 81–83; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, p. 226; *Gaosengzhuan*, T50.330a–333a.

28. *Thiền Uyển*, 18b6–9.

29. *Thiền Uyển*, 66a9–b2.

30. Actually, the writing of "Zen poetry" in Vietnam has never completely died out. In the mid-1960s, following the fall of Ngô Đình Diệm's régime in 1963, there was some kind of a Buddhist revival in South Vietnam. This brought with it a new enthusiasm for (Zen) Buddhism and the attendant movement of writing Zen poetry that even carries over to the Vietnamese community in America nowadays.

31. *Thiền Uyển*, 15b8–16a2.

32. *Thiền Uyển*, 16a7–9.

33. From 1284 to 1288 the Mongols invaded Vietnam three times. For a study on the Trần's fight against the Mongols, see Lê Thành Khôi, *Histoire du Viêt Nam*, pp. 182–92. From 1414 to 1427 Vietnam again fell under the domination of the Ming. Lê Lợi defeated the Ming in 1428 and founded the [Later] Lê dynasty. See *ibid.*, pp. 201–18.

34. On vegetarian feasts in Chinese Buddhism, see Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 276–71.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 277.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

37. *Thiền Uyển*, 10b1–11a7.

38. *Thiền Uyển*, 19a11–b1.

39. *Thiền Uyển*, 66a4–6.

40. *Thiền Uyển*, 22a11–b2.

41. *Thiền Uyển*, 60a10–11.

42. *Thiền Uyển*, 68b5–70a10.

43. *Thiền Uyển*, 70a4–6.

44. According to the *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54.244b29–c15, the rank of National Preceptor started with the monk Fachang under the Northern Qi (550–577). The rank is defined as follows: “In terms of teachings, he must be well versed in the three baskets, and master the five sciences. The entire country takes refuge in him. This explains the title [of National Preceptor].” The five sciences are philosophy, grammar, logic, medicine, and technology.

45. The bestowal of purple robes on monks began in China with Wu Zetian (684–774). In 690 the monk Falang found in *Dayun jing* a passage justifying the enthronement of Wu Zetian, so he was made prefect and given a purple robe by her. See *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54.248c3–249a29.

46. *Thiền Uyển*, 21a11.

47. *Thiền Uyển*, 22a8.

48. *Thiền Uyển*, 66a6–7.

49. *Thiền Uyển*, 70a6.

50. On the origin of this rank in Chinese Buddhism, the *Dasong seng shilüe* recorded: “When the Yao Qin regime established its administrative system in Guanzhong, they set up the rank ‘Monk Leader’ (*Tăng Chánh*) to be the head of Buddhism. When the Wei took over the north, they changed it into General Supervisor of Monks to supervise the monks. Although a new name was created, the position was the same as before.” See *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54.243a19–b12. For a gloss on the ranks of monk officials in medieval Vietnam, see *An Nam Chí Lược*, 14:135.

51. The *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỳ,” 1:181, records: “[In the second year of the Thái Bình era (971)] the court hierarchy and ranks for monks and Daoist masters were installed ( . . . ) National Preceptor Ngô Chân Lưu was made Khuông Việt Thái Sư, Trương Ma Ni Religious Monk Scribe (*Tăng Lục*), Đặng Huyền Quang Sùng Chính Uy Nghi.” Thus, the “*Tăng Lục*” was a rank for Buddhist monks and was instituted from the reign of Đinh Tiên Hoàng. The monk Trương Ma Ni was the first to hold this office. In China, this rank began with Duanfu under Wenzong of Tang (827–840). We can glean some meaning of this rank through the following words of Wuzong: “Since Buddhism has existed until now, let the monk scribes of the two institutions together with the monks versed in the three disciplines write down what evidence there is about its ups and downs, and submit it to me.” See *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54, middle volume, 243a26–28. Thus, it seems that beside keeping documents, a monk scribe’s responsibilities also included the function of a Buddhist historian.

52. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:17a9, records: “In the second year of the Thái Bình era (971) ranks were established for administrative and military officers, monks, and Daoist masters.” The *Toàn Thư*, 1:181, also records: “In the second year of the Thái Bình era ranks for administrative and military officers, monks, and Daoist masters were first initiated,” and “General Supervisor of Monks (*Tăng Thống*) Ngô Chân Lưu was bestowed the sobriquet Great Master Khuông Việt.” Thus, Khuông Việt might have been made *Tăng Thống* in 971.

53. *Thiền Uyển*, 53b2–3.

54. *Thiền Uyển*, 53b10.

55. *Thiền Uyển*, 59a3.

56. *Thiền Uyển*, 59a4–5.

57. In this context Keith Taylor's remark proves to be insightful: "In the temples, however, ancient beliefs survived, sheltered by the Buddha and a host of native spirits who stood as guardians of the indigenous cultural heritage. Giao [i.e., Jiaozhou] was the center of Vietnamese Buddhism. The popular cultural outlook of Giao, based on spirit cults in the context of an elastic Buddhism, was eventually the source of the dominant cultural outlook of independent Vietnam as it evolved from the tenth century on." See Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 174.

58. For instance, the *Toàn Thư* records that during a drought in the fourth month of 1434, Emperor Lê Thái Tông (r. 1434–1442) had his court officials escort Pháp Vân Buddha from Cát Châu to the capital to pray for rain. See *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 9:313. In the third month of 1437, during a drought, the emperor gave the order to pray for rain at prefectures all over the country. In the sixth month of the same year, drought and insects harmed the crops, and the emperor again gave order to pray for rain. *Ibid.*, pp. 337, 339. Under Lê Nhân Tông (r. 1443–1459) in the sixth month of 1448 there was a drought. The emperor gave an order to both literary and military court officials to attend a vegetarian feast at Báo Ân Temple to pray for rain. The emperor himself came to pray. The emperor then ordered Grand Commandant Lê Khả to escort in a ceremonial procession Pháp Vân Buddha from Cổ Châu District to Báo Thiên Temple in the capital. Monks were asked to chant *sūtras* and pray. The emperor and the empress dowager came to participate in the ritual. *Ibid.*, 362.

59. The Tứ Pháp (Four Lady Buddhas) system of temples has existed at various localities in the Hồng River delta. A number of these temples, such as the Dâu (Hà Bắc Province) and the Thứa (Hải Hưng Province), celebrate the "praying for rain ceremony" on April 8 (lunar calendar), which is also the Buddha's birthday. At noontime, Pháp Lôi, Pháp Vũ, and Pháp Điện are escorted to the Dâu Temple to join Pháp Vân. Afterward, the procession proceeds to the Tổ Temple so that these four Lady Buddhas pay homage to Man Nương, their mother. The ceremony at Thứa Temple is a bit more complicated. During a year when there is a big drought, a ritual is performed at one of the four temples for three days running. Then the temple is closed for three days. If rain still does not fall, the ritual will resume for another three days. If rain still does not fall, then the officiants consult the oracles to bring together the four Lady Buddhas to join forces in the ritual. For a detailed description of this ritual at various provinces in North Vietnam, see Hà Văn Tấn, *Chùa Việt Nam*, pp. 69–72. See also Toàn Ánh, *Hội Hè Đình Dâm* [Festivals and Festivities] (Saigon: Nam Chi Tùng Thư, 1974), 1:216, 222–23.

60. *Thiền Uyển*, 34a2.

61. On Đạo Hạnh, see *Thiền Uyển*, 55a2. Thiền Nham was a very learned monk, yet he also possessed this magical power. The *Thiền Uyển* (59a8–9) relates that "during the Đại Thuận era (1128–1132) there was a drought. A royal edict summoned Thiền Nham to the capital. He was immediately effective in his praying for rain." Praying for rain was also practiced in Chinese Buddhism. For instance, the monk Amoghavajra "was once asked by the emperor to relieve the drought that had plagued the capital during spring and summer.



Amoghavajra set up the altar, performed the necessary rituals, and on the next day, adequate rain fell. The emperor rewarded him with the title 'master of the purple robe,' and presented him with 100 bolts of assorted materials. He also arranged for a thousand-monk vegetarian feast as an expression of gratitude." *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.712b. Quoted in Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 277–78. Similar to Vietnamese Buddhism, in Chinese Buddhism this and other magical powers were possessed and employed by monks who were renowned for their erudition and intellectual acuteness. It is recorded in the biography of Zhiyi (538–597), the founder of the Tiantai school of Buddhism, that he also displayed his power to produce rain. Guanding, Zhiyi's disciple and biographer, relates that once Zhiyi decided to found a monastery at a desolate and mountainous site that was haunted by ferocious gods, wild beasts, and snakes. A drought occurred that summer, and the local people thought the gods were angry. Zhiyi went to the source of the stream and recited a spell, whereupon rain fell. See Guanding, *Sui Tiantai Zhiyi dashi biezhu*, T 50.195a26–b3; *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.566c7–10. Also quoted in Valerie Hansen, "Gods on Walls," p. 89.

The fact that some Buddhist adepts like Zhiyi were not reluctant to resort to means that fall within the framework of popular beliefs has led J. C. Cleary to suggest that we should call into question the validity of the great tradition/little tradition dichotomy. See Cleary, "Buddhism and Popular Religion in Medieval Vietnam," p. 94. I am of the opinion that it is true that the Buddhist masses are not concerned with or are ignorant of the subtle issue of Buddhist philosophy. However, to exclude a Buddhist philosopher from "popular practice" hinders our understanding of him as a religious person considerably. For instance, Nāgārjuna was a practicing Buddhist, and not just a dogmatist whose life and thought should be confined in whatever we could make of the *Madhyamakakārikā*. For a useful discussion of the great tradition/little tradition issue, see Agehananda Bharati, "Hinduism and Modernization," in Robert F. Spencer, ed., *Religion and Change in Contemporary Asia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), pp. 67–104.

62. See R. E. Emmerick, *The Sūtra of Golden Light: Being a Translation of the Suvarṇabhāṣottamasūtra* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 23–43.

63. *Thiền Uyển*, 8b1–9a1.

64. On Vaiśravaṇa, see the entry "Bishamon" in Paul Demiéville, ed., *Hōbō-girin*, premier fascicle: A–Bombai, deuxième fascicle: Bombai–Bussokuseki (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1929), pp. 79–83; the entry "Vaiśravaṇa" in Fredrick W. Bunce, *An Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Deities, Demigods, Godlings, Saints and Demons*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P), 1994); Louis Frédéric, *Buddhism: Flammarion Iconographic Guides* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), pp. 242–46; Hansen, "Gods on Walls," esp. pp. 75–88; the "Chapter on the Four Great Kings" in Emmerick, *The Sūtra of Golden Light*, pp. 23–43.

65. See Eva Rudy Jansen, *The Book of Hindu Imagery: The Gods and Their Symbols* (Diever, Holland: Binkey Kok Publications, 1993), p. 70.

66. See Gail Hinich Sutherland, *The Disguises of the Demon: The Development of the Yakṣa in Hinduism and Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 63; Ram Nath Misra, *Yakṣa Cult and Iconography* (New Delhi: Munishram Manoharlal Publishers, 1979), pp. 35–45.

67. *The Disguises of the Demon*, p. 65.

68. Ibid., p. 61.

69. See n. 62.

70. See Hansen, "Gods on Walls," p. 84.

71. Ibid., p. 82.

72. Ibid., p. 87.

73. *Thiền Uyển*, 8b3–5. In India he was depicted as carrying a bag of money, a lance, or a mongoose. See Hansen, "Gods on Walls," p. 85.

74. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:63–64) "Hanoi Province, section on Temples and Shrines," records a slightly different version of Khuông Việt's dream in the record of the Shrine of Sóc Thiên Vương: "The Shrine of Sóc Thiên Vương was situated at Ninh Tảo Village, Từ Liêm Prefecture. His title was the Celestial King of Vaiśravaṇa. Around the Thiên Phúc era (980–988) during the reign of Lê Đại Hành, Great Master Khuông Việt saw him in a dream, so Khuông Việt had a statue of him cast and a temple erected on Mount Vệ Linh to worship him. When the Song army invaded our country, Emperor Lê Đại Hành sent an envoy to the temple to earnestly pray for victory. When the two armies were about to engage in battle, an immortal suddenly emerged from the waves, his hair disheveled and his eyes glaring. The Song troops were terrified and fled. Witnessing such a supernatural omen, the emperor had more shrines erected to worship him. Until the Lý dynasty, to facilitate the ceremonies, a shrine was erected at Minh Tảo Village near the West Lake. The Lý emperors also bestowed on him the title 'Supreme Deity.' Successive dynasties continued to confer him with titles. Some said he was Phù Đổng Thiên Vương." On the *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, see entry 855, *Di Sản Hán Nôm*, 1: 490–91.

75. On the *Việt Điện*, see entry 4276, *Di Sản Hán Nôm*, 3:586–88. On the *Lĩnh Nam*, see entry 2012, *Di Sản Hán Nôm*, 2:206–207.

76. Stories of some of these gods are recorded in the *Việt Điện* and *Lĩnh Nam*. So far no serious effort has been made to study these two important sources of Vietnamese myths and religion.

77. For Phù Đổng Thiên Vương story, see Chan Hing-ho, 45–46; 148–49; 199–200.

78. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 1:39.

79. Ibid., pp. 214–15.

80. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2:115.

81. Ibid., p. 222.

82. See chapter two, n. 17.

83. Ibid.

84. For a study of the role of the monks in Sri Lanka, see Michael B. Carrithers, "'They Will Be Lords Upon the Island': Buddhism in Sri Lanka," in Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich, eds., *The World of Buddhism* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1984), pp. 133–58.

85. *Thiền Uyển*, 8a6–9b5.

86. *Thiền Uyển*, 9b6–10a6.

87. *Thiền Uyển*, 49a7–8.

88. *Thiền Uyển*, 49b2–3.

89. *Thiền Uyển*, 52a4–5.

90. *Thiền Uyển*, 52a10–b3.

91. *Thiền Uyển*, 47b2–6.

92. *Thiền Uyển*, 47b7–8.

93. *Thiền Uyển*, 47b11–48a2.

94. *Thiền Uyển*, 48b1–10.

95. *Thiền Uyển*, 49a1–2.

96. This is somewhat similar to the concept *gter-ma* in Tibetan Buddhism. However, we have too little related documentation in Vietnamese Buddhism to attempt any comparison or conclusion. On the *gter-ma* literature, see Tulku Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1986).

97. *Thiền Uyển*, 51b1–2.

98. *Thiền Uyển*, 21a11.

99. *Thiền Uyển*, 22a8.

100. *Thiền Uyển*, 68b5–70a10.

101. *Thiền Uyển*, 69a6–69b7.

102. *Thiền Uyển*, 58a3–6.

103. *Thiền Uyển*, 58b2–6.

104. *Thiền Uyển*, 16b8–11.

105. *Thiền Uyển*, 65a7–65b1.

106. *Thiền Uyển*, 17b6–18a6.

107. *Thiền Uyển*, 27a8–27b7.

108. *Thiền Uyển*, 27b8–28a2.

109. *Thiền Uyển*, 32b2–7.

110. *Thiền Uyển*, 31a3–9.

111. *Thiền Uyển*, 67b6–9.

112. *Thiền Uyển*, 49b5–51a5.

113. *Thiền Uyển*, 25a11–25b1.

114. *Thiền Uyển*, 34b11–35a3. Kenneth Ch'en makes mention of the *Sou-shen chi* by Kan Pao of the Chin dynasty, in which four categories of magical feats are ascribed to the Buddhist magicians of China. Ch'en also refers to other eminent monks such as Fo Tu Teng and Kumārajīva who also displayed their magical powers. See *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 272–74.

115. *Thiền Uyển*, 62b4–9.

116. *Thiền Uyển*, 64a8–64b2.

117. *Thiền Uyển*, 55a6–56b1. Note that Buddhists believe that those who have achieved a high level of spiritual attainment develop the supernatural power to choose their own births, including their parents and the time and place of birth. According to the *Lalitavistara Sūtra*, for instance, the future Buddha made a careful search for the best situation. See P. E. de Foucaux, trans., *Le Lalitavistara: L'histoire traditionnelle de la vie du Bouddha Çākyamuni* [reprinted] (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1988), pp. 20–28; *The Voice of the Buddha*, trans. Gwendolyn Bays (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1983), 1:37–43.

118. Even nowadays, dramas reenacting the life story of Đạo Hạnh are part of the annual Buddhist festivals in northern Vietnam. See Hà Văn Tấn, *Chùa Việt Nam*, p. 197. According to Hà Văn Tấn, the deification of eminent monks of the Lý such as Đạo Hạnh, Không Lộ, and Minh Không started with the Trần dynasty. Yet worshipping them as deities in temples in the style of “tiền Phật hậu Thánh” (“first Buddha, second sage”) was a practice of the Lê dynasty. See *ibid.*, pp. 53 and 199.

119. *Thiền Uyển*, 59b9–60a1.

120. *Thiền Uyển*, 60a3–11.

121. *Thiền Uyển*, 17a3–17b1.
122. *Thiền Uyển*, 32b11–33a3.
123. *Thiền Uyển*, 38a5–38b5.
124. *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu*, 15b9–17a1.
125. See Takasaki Jikidō, "A History of East Asian Buddhist Thought: The Formation of a Sphere of Chinese-Canon-Based Buddhism," *Acta Asiatica* 66 (1994): 1–32.
126. For a study of various modes of reception of scripture in Buddhism, see Miriam Levering, "Scripture and Its Reception: A Buddhist Case," in Miriam Levering, ed., *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 58–101.
127. In daily chanting and special occasions, chapter 25, "The Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds," is chanted. See Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sūtra* (Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 299–306.
128. *Thiền Uyển*, 17b10–11.
129. *Thiền Uyển*, 21b5.
130. *Thiền Uyển*, 26b5.
131. *Thiền Uyển*, 65a8–9.
132. *Thiền Uyển*, 16a7.
133. *Thiền Uyển*, 26b5; 27b2.
134. *Thiền Uyển*, 30b2. Kenneth Ch'en gave a vivid description of the teaching of *sūtras* in medieval Chinese Buddhism that resembles the practice observed by the *Thiền Uyển*. Ch'en wrote: "In preaching, it was the practice of the Chinese masters to mount a high platform and lecture on their favorite text. Thus we read about a certain Pao-liang, who lectured on the *Nirvāṇasūtra* eighty-four times; the *Vimalakīrti*, twenty times; the *Śrīmālā*, forty-two times; the *Satyasiddhi*, fourteen times; and ten or more times on each of the following *sūtras*: *Prajñā-sūtras*, *Lotus*, *Daśabhūmika*, *Amitāyus*, *Śūraṅgama*, etc. The audience numbered more than 3,000 clergy and laymen. Such a lecturer would wander from temple to temple lecturing to large audiences of monks and laymen." See *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, p. 241.
135. *Thiền Uyển*, 37a1–2.
136. *Thiền Uyển*, 46a8–9.
137. *Thiền Uyển*, 64a1.
138. A student asked: "I am sick because all sentient beings are sick. Why should you have an aversion to sound and form?" Diêu Nhân quoted the *sūtra*, saying: "If someone sees me through form or looks for me through sound, that person is following a wrong path and cannot see the Tathāgata." This is obviously the famed verse in the *Diamond Sūtra*. *Thiền Uyển*, 67a8.
139. *Thiền Uyển*, 29a9; 26b5.
140. *Thiền Uyển*, 29a9.
141. *Thiền Uyển*, 54a6–10.
142. *Thiền Uyển*, 35b10–11.
143. *Thiền Uyển*, 59a3–4.
144. See, for instance, Lama Anagorika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974), pp. 17–47.
145. The practice of mantras is also widespread in Hinduism, ancient and modern. For a brief but useful survey, see Harold Coward and David Goa, *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India* (Chambersburg: Anima Books, 1991).

146. Chanting mantras and *dhāraṇīs* is part of both daily and occasional practice and ritual in modern Vietnamese Buddhism.

147. For a general discussion on Pure Land Buddhism, see the entry “Ching-T’u,” by David W. Chappell, in Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 3:329–33. Pure Land is probably the most common form of practice in Vietnamese Buddhism. Unfortunately, there has not been any serious study on this topic. According to Hà Văn Tấn, a statue of Amitābha has been recently found at Hoàng Kim Temple in Hà Tây Province. This statue was cast in 1099 by Trì Bát, who belonged to the twelfth generation of the Vinītaruci school. His “Verse to Amitābha” inscribed on the socle of the statue shows that Trì Bát had faith in Amitābha and his Western Paradise. See Hà Văn Tấn, *Chùa Việt Nam*, p. 39.

148. See, for instance, the short treatise on Buddha-contemplation (niệm Phật) written by Trần Thái Tông, the founding emperor of the Trần dynasty and Buddhist leader of medieval Vietnam. See *Khóa Hư Lục* [Instructions on Emptiness], Lower Book, 18b7–20b4, vol. 7 of the *Việt Nam Phật Điển Tùng San* [Collected Vietnamese Buddhist Texts].

149. *Thiền Uyển*, 30b1–2. Although Pure Land belief and practice has always been a central element in Vietnamese Buddhism, Pure Land has never developed into a “school” the way it has in China and Japan. There is no evidence that the works of the Chinese Pure Land masters have been known, studied, or commented on by any Vietnamese Buddhist author. From my observation, the practice of contemplating and reciting Buddha-name seems always to involve Amitābha Buddha. Hà Văn Tấn (*Chùa Việt Nam*, p. 39) reports that of the three Buddha statues of the Lý dynasty recently discovered, one is a statue of Amitābha Buddha. It was cast in 1099 under the supervision of Trì Bát (1048–1117), who also composed the “A Di Đà Phật tụng” [Amitābha Buddha Chant], which was carved on the base of the statue. In this chant Trì Bát expressed faith in Amitābha’s salvific power and rebirth in his Pure Land. Note that according to the *Thiền Uyển*, Trì Bát belonged to the twelfth generation of the Vinītaruci school.

150. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 14–16.

151. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

152. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

153. See T. Griffith Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism,” in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T’ang and Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993), p. 150.

154. *Ibid.*

155. *Ibid.*

156. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

158. In addition to bibliographical works that have been referred to, see also Trần Văn Giáp, *Contribution à l’Étude des Livres Bouddhiques Annamites conservés à l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient* (Tokyo: La Société Internationale du Bouddhisme au Japon, 1943). This is a useful bibliography, although most of the books listed are translations of Chinese works.

159. Except, of course, a few revival movements of the sort both in Vietnam and overseas. However, most of these movements consist of a single “Zen master” with obscure Zen training or connection who claims that he is transmitting

“Patriarchal Zen.” There are not enough elements to constitute a Zen institution or community.

160. Contemporary Japanese Zen has been well documented. For a study of contemporary Korean Zen, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). In this book Buswell studies the Zen practice at Songgwang-sa, a major Korean Buddhist monastery. There is definitely no equivalent Zen institution in contemporary Vietnam.

161. Foulk wrote, “The realism that characterizes the records of the patriarchs’ words and deeds is often so finely detailed that it betrays the works as fiction. The point is particularly apt in cases where not only the exact words but also the unspoken thought of a master are quoted verbatim. Raconteurs, poets, and novelists are privy to the innermost thoughts and feelings of their subjects; mere reporters are not.” See “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice,” p. 153. I am aware that one can argue that the Zen recorded sayings and encounter dialogues should not be taken literally but rather as a mode of Zen discourse. Even so it still does not contradict my conclusion. See also note 162 below.

162. I have been arguing throughout this study that a continuous, cohesive history of Vietnamese Buddhism is only a construction based on the model of Chinese Zen history. On discontinuity in history as discussed by Michel Foucault, see, for instance, Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault’s Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 246–49.

163. Daya Krishna, in his analysis of the Vedānta “school” of Indian philosophy/religion from various perspectives, also comes to the conclusion that one cannot find an entity that corresponds to that designation. In other words, there is no Vedānta “school” outside the imagination of the traditionalists. I found Krishna’s observation that instead of “schools” there are only styles of thinking particularly useful. See Daya Krishna, *Indian Philosophy. A Counter Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 163–71.

## PART II THE THIỀN UYỂN TẬP ANH: A TRANSLATION

1. Bhīṣmagarjitasvararāja Buddha was a Buddha of ancient times. On this Buddha, see, for instance, Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 279–80. In Zen literature his name is used symbolically to refer to time immemorial.

2. According to Buddhist cosmology, the Sāhā-world is the world where Buddha Śākyamuni carries on his salvific activities. See, for instance, Randolph Kloetzli, “Buddhist Cosmology,” in Eliade et al., eds. *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 4:113–119.

3. On the six migrations or the six realms of rebirth, see, for instance, John S. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretations* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1995), pp. 28–31.

4. The four characteristics are suffering, impermanence, no-selfness, and emptiness.

5. Turtle-hair and hare-horn are terms in Buddhism indicative of things that exist only in terms of name and concepts but not in the true sense. In this context, I believe the writer meant he and the Zen man were talking about the unreality of the phenomenal world.



6. Kiến Sơ Temple was probably one of the most important sites in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism. A careful study of this temple, both historically and archaeologically, will definitely help clarify many obscure points in the study of the history of the formation of Zen in Vietnam. The *Thiền Uyển* tells us that Kiến Sơ Temple started with Cầm Thành. See *Thiền Uyển*, 5b4; *Dại Nam*, 2b4. The *Việt Điện* recorded that formerly there was a certain Zen Master named Chí Thành, who resided at Kiến Sơ Temple. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2:35, 205. Chí Thành might have been Cầm Thành's original name. According to Cầm Thành's biography, his original Dharma name was Lập Đức. The name Cầm Thành was given to him by Vô Ngôn Thông. Note that the meanings of Chí Thành ["Utmost Sincerity"] and Cầm Thành ["Moving Sincerity"] are very similar. Kiến Sơ was closely connected with the cult of Phù Đổng Thiên Vương [The Celestial King of Phù Đổng], a legendary hero of ancient Vietnam. Kiến Sơ thus can be considered a sacred place in Vietnamese religion.

7. According to the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28: 11), "Bắc Ninh Province, section Kiến Trí Diên Cách," Tiên Du District was located ten *li* to the northeast of Từ Sơn Province. Its width from east to west measured eighteen *li*, from north to south, ten miles. Nowadays it is known as Tiên Sơn Prefecture, Hà Bắc Province.

8. *Không học* 空學 [Ch: *kong xue*] in the original text, a term that literally means "the study of Emptiness." Since Emptiness (*sūnyatā*) is a concept that looms largest in Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy and soteriology, the term Emptiness has become an epithet for Buddhism for the Buddhists.

9. Wuzhou was a subprefecture of Jinhua in Zhejiang, China, now Wuchuan District, Guizhou.

10. For Vô Ngôn Thông's biography in the *Chuandeng lu*, see T 51.268a28–b13. Thông's biography in the *Chuandeng lu* is shorter than the one recorded in the *Thiền Uyển*. It also did not record the date of his death. See also *Wudeng huiyuan*, upper volume, pp. 195–96.

11. Mazu Daoyi (709–788) was a native of Hanzhou. According to the *Chuandeng lu*, during the Kaiyuan period of the Tang, while practicing Zen at Hengyue he met Nanyue Huairang (677–744) and subsequently received the mind-seal from him. During his lifetime Mazu trained around 140 enlightened students who each later became leaders of Buddhist communities in various localities. In the first month of the fourth year of the Zhenyuan era he went up to Mount Shimen at Jianchang to practice *sūtra*-circumambulation. He felt pleased with the scene and made a prophecy to his attendant that the place would be a site for his burial in the following month. During the second month of the same year, he felt a bit indisposed, took a bath, sat in the lotus posture, and passed away. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.245c23–246c7; *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 1:377–382, 387–396.

12. Jiangxi is located on the northern bank of the middle section of the Yangtze. Under the Tang it belonged to the southern part of Jiangnan.

13. The *Dại Nam* has *huai* 淮 instead of *huai* 懷. Baizhang Huaihai (749–814) was a native of Changluo, Fuzhou. At a tender age, he left home to become a monk. Subsequently, he received the mind-seal from Mazu Daoyi. According to tradition, Baizhang established the monastic rules for the Zen tradition. The most famous principle of these rules is "A day without work—

a day without eating.” He died on the seventeenth day of the first month of the ninth year of the Yuanhua era of the Tang at the age of ninety-five. For a complete biography of Baizhang, see *Chuangdeng lu*, T. 51.249b26–250c27. For a detailed discussion on Baizhang’s life and teaching, see *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 2:327–95. The Vietnamese Buddhist tradition claims to have adopted Baizhang’s monastic disciplines. For a discussion of Baizhang monastic discipline, see *ibid.*; a brief discussion in English can be found in Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism*, trans. Paul Peachy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

14. *Pháp môn* 法門 [Ch: *fa men*] or *Dharma-paryāya* in Sanskrit. For a brief but comprehensive discussion of the term *paryāya*, see Gadjin M. Nagao, *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*, trans. Leslie S. Kawamura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 132–133. The term *paryāya* means synonym, method, etc. For instance, there is a section in the *Madhyāntavibhāga* called *Śūnyatāparyāya* where all the synonyms of *śūnyatā* (Emptiness) are enumerated and explained. See Gadjin M. Nagao, ed., *Madhyāntavibhāga-Bhāṣya* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1964), pp. 23–24. *Dharma-paryāya* is rendered into Chinese as *fa men* (or *pháp môn* in Vietnamese) and has the meaning of discourse or teaching. See, for instance, Edward Conze, *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Roma: Is. M. E. O., 1974), p. 32; Conze, *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1973), p. 210.

15. See *Chuangdeng lu*, T. 51.250a17: “A monk asked Zen Master Baizhang, ‘What is the sudden enlightenment method of the Great Vehicle?’ Baizhang said, ‘You people should first calm down all karmic conditions, cease all affairs, both wholesome and unwholesome, both mundane and supramundane. As regards all phenomena, don’t keep track of them, don’t think of them with attachment, let go of your bodies and minds, let them be free. Let your minds be like wood and stone, do not conceptually construct anything. Let the mind have no activity. When the mind-ground is empty, the sun of wisdom spontaneously appears. It is like the sun coming out when there are no clouds.’”

16. Yangshan Huiji was a disciple of Guishan Lingyou (771–853). They were the founders of the Guiyang Zen school. For a complete biography of Yangshan, see *Chuangdeng lu*, 11:282a28–283c26. For a short discussion of the Guiyang school, see Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism*, pp. 107–108.

17. *Thiền duyệt* or *thiền duyệt thực* 禪悅食 [Ch: *chan yue shi*] means having the joy of meditation as food. An advanced meditation practitioner does not eat coarse food but only uses the joy of Dharma or joy of meditation to nourish his body and mind. See, for instance, the *Lotus Sūtra*, “Chapter on Receipt of Prophecy by Five Hundred Disciples” (*Pañcabhikṣuśatavyākaranaparivarta*): *tena khalu punarbhikṣava samayena tasmin buddhaksetre teṣāṃ sattvānāṃ dvāvāharau bhaviṣyataḥ/ katamau dvau? yaduta dharmapṛītyāhāro dhyānapṛītyāhāraśca/* (And at that time, Bhikṣus, the living beings of that Buddha-realm, shall feed on two kinds of food, namely, the joy of Dharma-joy and the joy of meditation).” See P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmapundarikasūtra*. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, no. 6 (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1960), p. 129. For an English translation from the Chinese version, see Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, p. 159.

18. *Diện bích* 面壁 [Ch: *mianbi*] comes from the legend of Bodhidharma, the alleged founder of Zen Buddhism in China. According to the Zen tradition, Bodhidharma came to China during the time of Liang Wudi (502–550) to

teach Buddhism. When he found out that nobody could understand his teaching, Bodhidharma went to dwell at Shaolin Temple on Mount Songshan. He sat silently all day facing the wall, so people called him “Wall-Facing Brāhmaṇa.” For Bodhidharma’s biography, see *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.217a10–220b33. For a discussion on the practice of “wall contemplation,” see McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 112–15. In Vietnam the Vô Ngôn Thông school was also called the *Quán Bích* (Wall Contemplation) school.

19. Nanyue Huairang (677–744), whose family name was Du, was a native of Jinzhou. According to the *Chuangdeng lu*, he became a monk at the age of fifteen and studied the *Vinaya* diligently. Later he came to study with Huineng (638–713), the Sixth Patriarch, and served him unstintingly for fifteen years. In the second year of the Xiantian era he moved his abode to Panruo Temple at Hengyue. He died on the eleventh day of the eighth month of the third year of the Tianbao era. For a complete biography of Huairang, see *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.240c7–241a26. For a brief discussion on his life, lineage, and teaching, see *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 1:382–87.

20. Compare to an instruction by Nanyue Huairang: “All phenomena are born from mind. Mind is noncreated and phenomena have nowhere to abide. If you realize the mind ground, your actions are unobstructed. Unless you meet someone with superior faculties, you should be careful with what you say.” *Chuangdeng lu*, 5:241a13–15.

21. A stupa is a tower-like shrine built to house scriptures or sacred objects. For a study of the origin, development, and meaning of a stupa in Buddhism, see Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Psycho-cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa* (Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1976). See also Giuseppe Tucci, *Stupa: Art, Architectonics and Symbolism*, trans. Uma Marina Vesci (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988). For a study of stupas in Vietnam, see Nguyễn Văn Tố, “Le stoupa (Tháp) en pays annamite,” *BSEMT* 14, (July–Sept. 1934): 466–67.

22. The original text reads as follows: *thời đường bảo lịch nhị niên bình ngô chính nguyệt thập nhị nhật nhị thập bát niên hựu chí khai hựu định sửu nhị thập tứ niên* 時唐寶曆二年丙牛正月十二日二十八年又至開祐丁丑二十四年. The meaning of the first thirteen characters is clear: “The time was the twelfth day of the first month of the second year, *bình ngô*, of the Baoli era.” The confusion lies in the last fourteen characters, which mean “twenty-eight years. Again until the year *định sửu* of the Khai Hựu era (1337), twenty-four years.” See, inter alia, Émile Gaspardone, “Bibliographie annamite,” p. 174. Lê Mạnh Thát suggests some solution to this. However, I found his arguments unconvincing. See *LMT*, p. 169, nn. 14 and 15.

23. Actually, according to the Vietnamese tradition, Vô Ngôn Thông was the founder of the second Zen sect of Vietnam; the first one was founded by Vinītaruci, who arrived in Vietnam two centuries before Vô Ngôn Thông. (Vinītaruci arrived in Vietnam in 580, whereas Vô Ngôn Thông arrived in 820.) This remark by the compiler and the fact that the lineage of the Vô Ngôn Thông school was recorded before that of the Vinītaruci school only shows that the compiler himself might be an adherent of the Vô Ngôn Thông school. For a general history of the development of these two schools, see, for instance, Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận*, 1:111–86; “Le Bouddhisme,” pp. 243–44, 235–36; Durand, “Introduction du Bouddhisme au Viet-Nam,” pp. 797–800; Mai Thọ Truyền, “Le Bouddhisme au Viet-Nam,” pp. 801–10; Mật Thố, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận*, pp. 75–106; Nguyễn Tài Thư et al., *Lịch Sử*

*Phật Giáo Việt Nam*, pp. 93–121. Note that these discussions are all traditional and historically uncritical.

24. Mount Phật Tích at Tiên Du Prefecture is also called Mount Tiên Du. Legend has it that once when a woodcutter named Vương Chất went to the mountain to collect firewood, he happened to see two old men playing chess under a pine tree. Vương Chất laid down his axe and stood there watching. The game finished, he looked again but did not see anybody around, and the handle of his axe was burned. Therefore, the name of the mountain was changed into Mount Lạn Kha (Burnt Handle Mountain). See also *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:29–30), “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Mountains and River”; *An Nam Chí Lược*, 1:22.

25. *Trì tụng* 持誦 [Ch: *chì sòng*]; usually *trì* stands for *trì chú* [reciting the mantras] and *tụng* for *tụng kinh* 誦經 [chanting the *sūtras*].

26. See *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-Sūtra*, chapter “Skillful Means,” in Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, pp. 22–47.

27. That the Buddha only appears entering nirvana after accomplishing his salvific works is a very significant point in Mahāyāna Buddhist Buddhology. According to this, the historical Buddha that living beings see is only one of countless manifestations or Emanation Bodies (*nirmānakāya*) of Buddhahood or Buddha in his true essence, i.e., his Truth Body (*Dharmakāya*). Buddha in his Truth Body is ever-present and is constantly carrying out his salvific activities. The act of entering nirvana is only a manifestation on the part of the Emanation Body. This is because from the Mahāyāna point of view, Buddha as Truth Body has attained enlightenment since time immemorial. In other words, Buddha in his essence (i.e., Truth Body) is truth or enlightenment itself. Acts of attaining enlightenment or entering nirvana are only salvific manifestations on the part of the Emanation Bodies. See, for instance, Nishio, *Buddhabhūmi-Sūtra*, part 1, pp. 6–7. For Śīlabhadra’s commentary, see *ibid.*, pp. 74–76; for Bandhuprabha’s commentary, see *Buddhabhūmi-Śāstra*, T 26.307b24–308a1.

28. See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.205b26–28: “When the Buddha was about to enter nirvana, he told his disciple Mahākāśyapa, ‘I entrust to you the pure Dharma eye, the wondrous mind of nirvana, the uncharacterizable true reality, the subtle true Dharma. You should preserve it well.’”

29. On Bodhidharma, see *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.217a10–220b33. For a discussion on the legend of Bodhidharma and his teaching, see, for instance, *Zen-shūshi kenkyū*, 1:2–36; Sekiguchi Shindai, *Daruma daishi no kenkyū* [A Study on Bodhidharma] (reprinted. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1969); Heinrich Dumoulin, “Bodhidharma und die Anfänge des Ch’an-Buddhismus,” *MN* 7 (1951): 67–83; McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 15–19; Bernard Faure, “Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm,” *History of Religion* 25, 3 (1986): 187–98.

30. For a discussion of historical issues concerning the Sixth Patriarch and the *Platform Sūtra*, see Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), esp. pp. 58–88. For the biography of the Fifth Patriarch (601–674), see *Chuangdeng lu*, 3:222c26–223b5; McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 35–36.

31. Hongren’s instruction to Huineng: “Formerly, when the Great Master Bodhidharma first came to this country, people did not believe him yet. Therefore, he passed along this robe as a sign of faith, and generation after generation received it from one another. The principle is to transmit directly from mind to mind, enabling people to attain enlightenment and understand themselves.

Since the days of old, Buddhas transmitted true reality to each other, and enlightened teachers intimately handed the original mind to each other. Now, the robe has become an object of contention; therefore, let it stop with you and don't transmit it." See *Platform Sūtra*, T 48.394a28. This is also recorded with some slight differences in *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.223a20. Our text obviously took it from the *Chuangdeng lu*.

32. This line is taken from a verse traditionally thought to be uttered by Bodhidharma at the moment he transmitted the mind-seal to Huike. The entire verse reads: "I originally came to China, to transmit the teaching and save deluded beings. One flower opens into five petals, and the fruit ripens of itself." See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.219c17–18. See also Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra*, p. 176. The third line, "one flower opens into five petals," is traditionally interpreted as Bodhidharma's prophetic statement about the later division of Zen into five schools: Linji, Caodong, Yunmen, Fayen, and Guiyang. For a brief discussion on these five schools, see Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism* pp. 106–22.

33. According to the *Chuangdeng lu*, in his final instruction to Huike, Bodhidharma also said: "In hidden accord with the Secret Realization, thousands and thousands have an affinity with it. When you promulgate the Dharma, don't take lightly those who are not yet enlightened." See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.219c15.

34. See Venerable Baozhi's "Fourteen Periods of Chanting" in *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.450c13–14: "The ignorant are bound by it, while for the wise ones all contrivances are empty. The Literalist Disciples in contact with defilement got bogged down, whereas the Bodhisattva has perfectly clear eyes." See also *Biyan lu*, T 48.182a5.

35. According to Trần Văn Giáp, it is the Định Thiên Temple, which was another name for Pháp Vân Temple. It is, however, not the same with the Pháp Vân Temple, which was situated at Văn Giáp Village, Thượng Phúc Prefecture, Hà Đông Province. Before the Trần dynasty (1225–1400), it was called Thiên Định Temple. See "Le Bouddhisme," pp. 244 and 236, n. 3. Lê Mạnh Thát suggests that "Định Thiên" might have been a scribal error for the correct form "Thiên Định," which denotes Thiên Định Temple at Khương Tự Village, Siêu Loại District, now Thuận Thành, Hà Bắc. Thát might be correct, since it is written in the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:73), "Bắc Ninh Province, section on Temples and Monasteries": "The Diên Ứng Temple at Khương Tự Village, Siêu Loại District houses four statues of Pháp Vân, Pháp Vũ, Pháp Lôi, and Pháp Điện which have some supernatural traces about them. During the Trần dynasty Mạc Đình Chi built a temple with a hundred compartments, a nine-story stupa, a nine-span bridge; the old foundations still remain. According to the *Pháp Vân Phật Truyện* [Story of the Buddha of Pháp Vân], when Sĩ Nhiếp was Prefect stationed in Luy Lâu, there lived a monk named Khâu Đà La on the mountain to the west of the city. Once Khâu Đà La violated A Man, the daughter of Tu Định. A Man became pregnant and subsequently gave birth to a girl. Khâu Đà La hid the girl in a large tree trunk deep in the mountain. Later, the tree was uprooted by a storm and drifted on the river to Luy Lâu. People were struck by the event, pulled it out of the water, carved it into four Buddha statues, and built a temple called Thiên Định, now Diên Ứng Temple, to house those statues for worship. Afterward, prayers for rain got responses each time. Therefore, they named the statues Pháp Vân, Pháp Vũ, Pháp Lôi, and Pháp Điện

[which mean Dharma Cloud, Dharma Rain, Dharma Thunder, and Dharma Lightning]. According to the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:75), there were also four temples bearing the names Pháp Vân, Pháp Vũ, Pháp Lôi, and Pháp Điện situated in the vicinity of the two villages of Văn Giáp and Gia Phúc of Thượng Phúc District. It is also written in the *Thập Di Ký* [Ten Posthumous Records] of Lý Tế Xuyên: ‘People at Cổ Châu used to gather together annually at Thiền Định Temple to celebrate the Buddha’s birthday. Under Emperor Trần Nghệ Tông the temple was given a title honor. The *Lê Chronicle* recorded that in the sixth year of the Thái Hòa era (1448), Lê Nhân Tông sent Grand Commandant Lê to Cổ Châu to bring the Pháp Vân statue to Báo Thiên Temple in the capital to pray for rain.”

36. Belongs to a district in the province of Bắc Ninh. Siêu Loại Village was formerly called Thổ Lôi Village. Its name was changed into Siêu Loại in the first year of the Long Chương Bảo Tự era of the Trần dynasty (1266) following the birth of Prince Kiền Đức whose mother hailed from this village. See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 244, n. 2.

37. Nothing is known about this monk. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:10b3, Đông Lâm Temple was built in the second year of the Long Thụy Thái Bình era (1055), but it does not tell us the exact location except that it was on Mount Đông Cưu. According to this biography it must have been in Diên Lân.

38. *Nhập thất* 入室 [Ch: *ru shi*] is a practice in Zen Buddhism: an advanced student, after contemplating on the essence of Zen for a long time, enters into the teacher’s room to enquire about truth.

39. *A tăng kỳ kiếp* 阿僧期劫 or *asamkhyeyakalpa* in Sanskrit. This metaphorically means that Buddhahood can only be attained after a long period of accumulating both merit (*punya*) and wisdom (*jñāna*). On this concept of three *asamkhyeyakalpa*, see inter alia, Randy Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), p. 87; Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, chap. 3, p. 209; Étienne Lamotte, *Enseignement*, p. 296, n. 37.

40. *Tức tâm tức Phật* 即心即佛 [Ch: *jixin jiffo*], one of the fundamental teachings of Zen, made famous by Mazu Daoyi. For a brief interpretation of Mazu’s teaching including this principle, see Yanagida Seizan, *Zen shisō*, pp. 121–30.

41. See, for instance, *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*, T 16.498c17–19: “During the time between the night I attained perfect enlightenment until the night I entered into Nirvana, I did not speak a word. Nor had I spoken or am currently speaking. Nonspeaking is the Buddha’s way of speaking.” See also Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1932), pp. 123–24.

42. Zen Master Dazhu Huihai said: “Those who search texts to gain enlightenment become more bogged down. Those who search for Buddhahood through austerities are all deluded. Those who seek Buddhahood apart from mind are outsiders. Those who think that mind is Buddha are deluded demons.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.248a1–3.

43. Our text is somewhat corrupted here. The two characters *sư vân* on 7a6 are obviously superfluous. See *Dại Nam*, 4a3.

44. A Zen practitioner asked Zen Master Dazhu Huihai: “‘The mind itself is Buddha,’ which mind is Buddha?” The Master said: “Please point out to me anything you suspect is not Buddha.” The man had no reply. The Master continued: “If you reach enlightenment, all phenomena [are Buddha]. If you do



not awaken, you're forever at odds with everything." See *Chuandeng lu*, 6:247a22–24.

45. *Huatou* 話頭 means a meditation saying. For a brief discussion of this concept, see, for instance, Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *The Korean Approach to Zen* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1983), pp. 68–69.

46. According to the *Tây Hồ Chí*, section on "Ancient Vestiges": "The Khai Quốc Temple was located on the banks of Nhị Hà River to the north of the West Lake [Tây Hồ], now Yên Phụ Landing Stage. It had the name Khai Quốc because formerly King Nam Đế (r. 544–548) of the Former Lý dynasty (544–602) had it built on the old foundation of An Trì Temple under the Hồng Bàng dynasty. Afterward it was repaired by Nguyễn Văn Phong of Từ Liêm, an eminent monk under the Ngô dynasty. Under the two dynasties Đinh and Lê, National Preceptor Ngô Khuông Việt used to be the abbot there. The temple was also repaired under the [Later] Lý dynasty." The section on "Temples and Monasteries" in the *Tây Hồ Chí* again recorded: "The Khai Quốc Temple was built by King Nam Đế of the Former Lê dynasty based on the old foundation of the An Trì Temple. The temple was located on the Yên Phụ Landing Stage on the northern banks of the river outside the dam to the north of the pond. When the Lý moved their capital there, they had the temple repaired. Eminent monks such as Lý Thảo Đường, Ngô Thông Biện, Viên Học, and Tịnh Không each had once made his abode there. The emperors of the Trần dynasty used to visit it." See *LMT*, p. 175, n. 1.

47. Formerly Hoa Lư was the capital of Vietnam. It was Lý Thái Tổ who decided in 1010 to move the capital to Đại La and then renamed it Thăng Long. *Việt Sử Lược*, 2: 2b8–10 commented on this particular event as follows: "The Emperor [Lý Thái Tổ] once found the Hoa Lư Citadel too confined for space and transferred his capital to the Đại La Citadel. During the transfer, while the royal galley was moored at the foot of the citadel, a yellow dragon appeared aboard it, hence the citadel was renamed Thăng Long (which means "Rising Dragon"). See also *Toàn Thư*, 2:207. See Lý Thái Tổ's "Thiên Đô Chiếu" [Edict Announcing the Moving of the Capital], in *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:229–31.

48. According to the *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 6:65: "During the Lý and Trần dynasties Vinh Khang Prefecture was established in Từ Liêm District." As regards Từ Liêm District, it is written in the *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:12–13): "Hanoi Province," "Từ Liêm District, its width from the east to the west measured eleven miles, from north to south measured fourteen miles. It is located a mile east of Vinh Thuận Prefecture, ten miles to the west of Đan Phụng District, five miles from Thanh Trì District, Thượng Tín Province, nine miles to the north of the bank of Nhị Hà River across the border of Đông Ngạn Prefecture, Bắc Ninh Province, and An Lăng Prefecture, Sơn Tây Province. Under the Han it became part of the Luy Lâu District, which was changed into Giao Chỉ [Jiaozhi] District under the Sui. In the fourth year of the Wude era of the Tang dynasty (621) it was separated and added to Từ Liêm Prefecture. (. . .) It was so named because the Từ and the Liêm Rivers were in that district."

49. "Someone asked Zen Master Qiru: 'When birth and death come, how can we avoid it?' The Master answered: 'Let them come.' The man continued: 'What does it mean by being taken away by birth and death?' The Master replied: 'Ah ha ha.' See *Chuandeng lu*, 21:372c12–13. "Someone asked Dasui Fazhou: 'What do we do when birth and death come?' Fazhou answered: 'When

tea is served, drink it; when rice is served, eat it.” Ibid., 286a22–23; also 358c16–17.

50. Actually, Chân Lưu was his personal name. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:181.

51. According to the *Thái Bình Hoàn Vũ Ký*, Thường Lạc District was later changed into An Thuận District and was located at the area southeast of Châu Ái. According to Đào Duy Anh in his *Đất Nước Việt Nam Qua Các Đời* (The Country of Vietnam Through Generations), Thường Lạc District belongs to the present-day Tĩnh Gia District, Thanh Hoá Province. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:208, n.2.

52. This seems to be very common in Vietnamese Buddhism. It shows that during these centuries both Confucianism and Buddhism flourished in Vietnam. It also implies that for a Vietnamese intellectual or spiritual person at that time, Confucianism represented the mundane or ordinary way, whereas Buddhism represented the supramundane or extraordinary way.

53. *Trúc phần* 竺墳 [Ch: *zhu fen*] in the original (*Thiền Uyển*, 8a9; *Dại Nam*, 5a4). *Trúc* is an abbreviation for *Thiên Trúc* 天竺 [Ch: *tianzhu*], which means India.

54. Đinh Tiên Hoàng, whose personal name was Bộ Lĩnh, was the founder of the Đinh dynasty (968–980). Bộ Lĩnh hailed from Hoa Lư and was of humble origin. He was the first Vietnamese king who used his own reign style instead of using the current Chinese one. Bộ Lĩnh was also the first king to enlist the help of the Buddhist monks.

55. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:17a9, recorded: “He [Bộ Lĩnh] instituted the court hierarchy and ranks for monks.” Eminent monks such as Ngô Chân Lưu, Trương Ma Ni, and Đặng Huyền Quang all held official positions in the Đinh court. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:181. See also “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 257 and n. 1 on the same page; *Lịch Chiêu Hiến Chương Loại Chí*, p. 7. The *Toàn Thư*, 1:181, also recorded that “In the second year of the Thái Bình era ranks for administrative and military officers, monks, and Daoist masters were first initiated,” and “General Supervisor of Monks (*Tăng Thống*) Ngô Chân Lưu was bestowed the sobriquet Great Master Khuông Việt.” Thus, Khuông Việt might have been made *Tăng Thống* in 971. On the origin of this rank in Chinese Buddhism, the *Dasong seng shilüe* records: “When the Yao Qin established its administrative system in Guanzhong, they set up the rank “Monk Leader” (*Tăng Chính*) to be the head of Buddhism. When the Wei took over the north, they changed it into General Supervisor of Monks to supervise the monks. Although a new name was created, the position was the same as before.” See *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54.243a19–b12. For a gloss on the ranks of monk officials in medieval Vietnam, see *An Nam Chí Lược*, 14:135.

56. Lê Đại Hành, whose personal name was Hoàn, was the founder of the Former Lê dynasty (980–1009). Hoàn hailed from Trường Châu and was made the Commander of the Ten Armies by Đinh Tiên Hoàng in 971. When the latter was murdered by Đỗ Thích in 979, Vệ Vương, the Crown Prince, was still an infant. Hoàn took up the regency and proclaimed himself viceroy. In 980, the Song sent Hou Renbao to fight Vietnam. In face of this danger, the court officials made Hoàn King lead the country to resist the Song. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:18b3–21a4; *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:188.

57. Mount Vệ Linh is located at Kim Hoa District, Bắc Hà Prefecture. Kim Hoa was later changed into Kim Anh. Nowadays there is a Kim Anh

District in Vinh Phú Province. According to the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:474, n.1, Bình Lỗ County is probably the present day Phù Lỗ. Mount Vệ Linh was considered to be a sacred site in Vietnamese popular religion, since it was believed to be the place where Phù Đổng Thiên Vương [the Celestial King of Phù Đổng], the legendary Vietnamese hero, left behind his armor to go back to Heaven after defeating the Yin armies. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:39, 214.

58. According to the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:474, n. 1, Bình Lỗ Prefecture is probably the present day Phù Lỗ area. See also *LMT*, pp. 178–79, n. 6.

59. Regarding the event of Khuông Việt's dream, the *Việt Điện* records: "According to the *Thiên Uyển*, under Emperor Lê Đại Hành, the Great Master Khuông Việt, whose family name was Ngô, used to visit Mount Vệ Linh in Bình Lỗ District to enjoy its beautiful landscapes and had a mind to build a temple there. One night he saw in a dream a spirit clad in golden armor holding in his left hand a golden lance and in his right hand a jeweled stupa, with a retinue of over ten beings all fearsome looking. The spirit came before him and said, 'I am the great celestial King Vaiśravaṇa. My attendants are all *yakṣas*. By order of the Lord of Heaven, I come to this country to protect its people. I have a karmic affinity with you, so I have come to discuss this task with you.' Khuông Việt woke up frightened and heard roarings in the mountain. He felt very apprehensive. The next morning, he went into the mountain and found a giant tree with a dense foliage and crowned with five-colored clouds. Khuông Việt had some workmen fell it and carve it into the image of what he had seen in his dream. He also had a temple erected." See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết* 1.1:115, 222; 2.2:39, 214. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:63–64) "Hanoi Province, section on Temples and Shrines," records a slightly different version of Khuông Việt's dream in the record of the Shrine of Sóc Thiên Vương: "The Shrine of Sóc Thiên Vương was situated at Ninh Tảo Village, Từ Liêm Prefecture. His title was the Celestial King of Vaiśravaṇa. Around the Thiên Phúc era (980–988) during the reign of Lê Đại Hành, Great Master Khuông Việt saw him in a dream, so Khuông Việt had a statue of him cast and a temple erected on Mount Vệ Linh to worship him. When the Song army invaded our country, King Lê Đại Hành sent an envoy to the temple to earnestly pray for victory. When the two armies were about to engage in battle, an immortal suddenly emerged from the waves, his hair disheveled and his eyes wide open. The Song troops were terrified and fled. Witnessing such a supernatural omen, the king had more shrines erected to worship him." Until the Lý dynasty, to facilitate the ceremonies, a shrine was erected at Minh Tảo Village near the West Lake. The Lý kings also bestowed on him the title "Supreme Deity." Successive dynasties continued to confer him with titles. Some said he was Phù Đổng Thiên Vương [The Celestial King of Phù Đổng].

60. The *Việt Điện* also recorded this story, claiming to have quoted from the *Thiên Uyển*. However, there are some slight differences. See my discussion on this issue in Chapter Three.

61. Regarding this event the *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:19a8–9, recorded: "In the spring, the third month of the first year of the Thiên Phúc era (981), Hou Renbao's army arrived at Ngân Sơn, Chen Qinzuo's at Tây Kết, Liu Cheng's at the Bạch Đằng River. The king himself took the command of the armies to oppose the Song. He had stakes planted across the river. The Song troops

withdrew to Ninh River and held it. The king feigned surrender to trick Renbao. The Song troops were defeated. Renbao was captured and killed. At the news of the defeat, Qinzuo withdrew." See also *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:188.

62. The original text (*Thiên Uyển* 9a1; *Đại Nam*, 5b6) has *Nguyễn Giác*. This is further evidence that the *Thiên Uyển* must have been composed during the Trần dynasty since the family name Lý is changed into Nguyễn.

63. For the biography of Đỗ Thuận (or Pháp Thuận or Đỗ Pháp Thuận), see 49a3–49b4. This sentence seems to be out of place here.

64. *Giang lệnh* 江令 [Ch: *jiangling*], which means "River Officer."

65. Concerning this event, the *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:191–92, recorded: "[In the eighth year, *đinh hợi*, of the Thiên Phúc era (987)], the Song again sent Li Jue for investiture. The emperor had Dharma Master Thuận disguise himself as a boatman to greet him. Li Jue was very fond of literature. At that moment, there happened to be a pair of wild geese swimming in the river. Li Jue playfully hummed:

Geese, geese, a pair of wild geese,  
Looking upward toward the sky.

Pháp Thuận, still holding on to the oar, continued the rhyme, chanting:

White feathers spread over blue water,  
Red oars cutting through green waves.

Li Jue was quite impressed. When he arrived at the embassy he composed a poem dedicated to Pháp Thuận, which read:

I'm fortunate to live in a righteous era to help with royal affairs,  
I've been by myself twice as an envoy to Jiaozhou.  
Twice saying farewell to the east my heart's yearning,  
I'm still looking toward Nam Việt ten thousand miles away.  
My horse steps on thick clouds, crossing stone waves,  
My chariot leaves behind green mountain and my sails set.  
Beyond the sky there is another sky which we must reflect  
back on,  
When the waves are quiet the autumn moon is seen  
in the brooks.

Pháp Thuận submitted the poem to the King Lê Đại Hành, who sent for Khuông Việt to take a look at it. Khuông Việt said: 'This shows that he honors Your Majesty no different than his own lord.' The king was pleased with that idea and rewarded Li Jue munificently. When Li Jue came to bid farewell, the king by royal edict had Khuông Việt write him a farewell verse:

Embroidered sails extended in the auspicious sunshine and  
the fair wind,  
The spirit immortal returns to the sovereign's home.  
Thousands of miles across the blue waves,  
The road home to the ninth heaven is long.  
How sad human feelings are as we face the cup of parting,  
Fondly we try to hold you back, illustrious Sir,  
We hope you will exercise your profound intent on behalf  
of this southern land,  
Report clearly to our sovereign.

Li Jue bowed and left.” See also *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, pp. 96–97. The *Toàn Thư* also recorded this farewell verse without giving a title. According to the compilers of the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, “Vương Lang Qui” might have been the name of a style of song and not necessarily the title of the verse. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:209, n. 1.

66. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (9a7) and the *Dại Nam* (6a2) have *phan luyến tình tình lang* 攀戀星星郎. The correct form should be *phan luyến sử tình lang* 攀戀史星郎. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần* 1:209.

67. The compilers of *Thơ Văn Lý Trần* (1:208) give us the date 933–1011 for Khuông Việt, probably following the *Thiền Uyển* and the *Dại Nam*. Thus Khuông Việt must have been seventy-nine years old when he died rather than fifty-two according to our text. The dates 933–1011 seem to make better sense. Our text says that Khuông Việt was already in his forties during the reign of Đinh Tiên Hoàng (968–979), and he died in 1011. There is an interval of thirty-two years between the last year of Đinh Tiên Hoàng’s reign (979) and the year when Khuông Việt died (1011). If Khuông Việt was already in his forties by 979, he could not have been fifty-two when he died in 1011. Lê Mạnh Thát also argues that according to this biography, Khuông Việt was made General Supervisor of Monks when he was forty. Yet we learn from both *Việt Sử Lược* (1:17a10) and *Toàn Thư* (“Bản Kỷ” 1:181) that not until the second year of the Thái Bình era (971) was the determination of ranks completed for administrative and military officers as well as monks and Taoist masters. Therefore, the appointment of Khuông Việt to the the position of General Supervisor could not take place prior to 971. So, Khuông Việt must have been born in 930. Now, if Khuông Việt passed away in the second year of the Thuận Thiên era of the Lý dynasty (1011), he must have been eighty-two years old. Both *Thiền Uyển* and *Dại Nam* recorded that Khuông Việt passed away at the age of fifty-two. Thát suggests that there is some scribal error here. Besides, if Khuông Việt died in 1011 at the age of fifty-two, he must have been born in 959. He could not have been Vân Phong’s disciple, since Vân Phong died in 956 when Khuông Việt was not yet born. We learned that Khuông Việt came to study with Vân Phong when he was already a young man.

68. Lý Thái Tổ (974–1028) was the founder of the Lý dynasty. His personal name is Công Uẩn. According to *Toàn Thư*, Uẩn hailed from Cổ Pháp Village, Từ Sơn District, Bắc Ninh Province (nowadays Tiên Sơn District, Hà Bắc Province). Nothing is known about his family except the fact that his mother’s maiden name was Phạm and he was adopted by the monk Lý Khánh Vân, the abbot of Cổ Pháp Temple. Afterward he studied with the monk Vạn Hạnh and took office in the Lê court to the rank of Commandant of the Palace Guards. When Lê Ngoại Triều (r. 1006–1009) died, the court officials supported Uẩn’s bid for the throne. Trần Văn Giáp seems to follow this information. See *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, 1:138–39. However, according to the *Toàn Thư*, when Lý Công Uẩn ascended the throne, he made his father Lord of Hiễn Khánh, his uncle Lord of Vũ Đạo, his older brother Lord of Vũ Uy, and his younger brother Lord of Đức Thanh. This shows that Uẩn did know his father, siblings, and relatives. Trần Quốc Vượng, in his translation of the *Việt Sử Lược* (p. 64, n. 2), points out that according to a Chinese source, Lý Công Uẩn was originally from Fujian, China. Trần Quốc Vượng is of the opinion that Uẩn himself might have fabricated the legend to hide his Chinese origin in order

to win the people's support. Lý Khánh Vân was probably the real name of Vạn Hạnh, since there was curiously no mention of him after Lý Công Uẩn ascended the throne.

69. This is an expression borrowed from the *Yijing*. The dragon symbolizes the creative forces. "Hidden dragon" means that the creative force is still hidden beneath the earth and thus has no effect. It also means a great man who is still unrecognized. See, for instance, Wilhelm/Baynes, *The I Ching or Book of Changes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 7; Thomas Cleary, *The Taoist I Ching* (Boston: Shambala, 1987).

70. *Nam diện* 南面 [Ch: *nan mian*] (facing the south) means to become king, because the king sits facing the south. See, for instance, Burton Watson, section on Han Fei Tzu, p. 90 in *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsun Tzu and Han Fei Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964). According to the records of both the *Việt Sử Lược* (2:1a5–6) and the *Toàn Thư* (2:207), it seems to be Vạn Hạnh, and not Đa Bảo, who made this remark about Lý Thái Tổ. However, the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập* did record some relationship between Lý Thái Tổ and Đa Bảo. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:35–36, 205–6; see also n. 72 below.

71. Mandate of Heaven (*thiên mệnh* 天命 or *tianming* in Chinese) is borrowed from the *Zhongyong* [Doctrine of the Mean], one of the Confucian Classics. This concept originated in the early Zhou period. H. G. Creel gives a very clear explanation: "The fundamental theory of the Chinese state and governmental authority in China is that of the Decree of Heaven. . . . The essence of the theory is simple. It holds that rulers are appointed by Heaven, that is, the supreme deity, for the purpose of ruling the world so as to bring about the welfare of men. The ruler may legitimately rule only so long as he does so in the interest of his subjects. The moment he ceases to bring about the welfare of the people, it is the right and duty of another to revolt and displace him, taking over the appointment of Heaven and administering the government for the public good." See H. G. Creel, *The Birth of China* (New York: F. Ungar, 1937), p. 367. For more recent and detailed discussion on the Mandate of Heaven by the same author, see H. G. Creel, *Origins of Statecraft in China*, vol. 1, *The Western Chou Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 81–100. See also A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), pp. 108 and 134.

72. Regarding Đa Bảo's visit to Kiến Sơ Temple and his relationship with Lý Công Uẩn, the *Việt Điện* recorded: "The *Bảo Cục Truyện* recorded: He is said by tradition to be the incarnation of the local god of the Kiến Sơ Temple. Once Zen Master Chí Thành of Kiến Sơ Temple at Phù Đồng Village erected a temple to worship the local god on the right side of the temple and serve as a clean and quiet place for the praying to Buddha. As time goes on, things lose their origins, and the monks have not the faintest idea of them. The native population who believe in ghosts and devils will burn incense and pray and bow. The temple is called Dâm Tự (Wicked Temple). When it was in need of repair, Zen Master Đa Bảo had a mind to pull it down for its bad name. One day at the foot of the old tree beside the temple the following verse was seen:

Who preserves the Buddha's Law?  
Let him hear the words in Jetavana.  
Had I not arranged things well,



I would have been removed to somewhere else.  
 The *Diamond Sūtra* is not to be carried along,  
 The mystic sign is not to be divulged.  
 To realize emptiness there are only a few,  
 Practicing Buddhism becomes a punishment.

"Shortly afterward, the god again manifested himself in the following eight-line verse:

The Buddha's Law consists of great compassion,  
 Its august light fills universes of galaxies.  
 All gods are transformed by it,  
 The three realms are suffused with it.  
 Our teacher gives his order,  
 How dare the spirits not obey?  
 I daily make a vow to receive the command,  
 To protect the Jetavana come what may.

"Amazed, the Master set up an expiatory altar with vegetarian food as an offering.

"Emperor Lý Thái Tổ, while still a hidden dragon [i.e., before he ascended the throne], knew that Master Đa Bảo was a lofty-minded man. He made himself a benefactor of the convent. After ascending the throne, he visited the temple. The Master greeted him and, when they passed by the side of the temple, asked in a loud voice: 'Buddhist, you're greeting the new Son of Heaven, aren't you?' 'I am,' a voice was heard, and on the bark of the tree appeared the following poem:

The emperor's virtues are as immense as heaven and earth,  
 His authority and prestige awe the eight regions into obedience.  
 In the underworld I benefit from his favor,  
 My deep gratitude rises up in the sky.

"The emperor read it and took the hint. He on the spot conferred on the god the title of "Xung Thiên Thần Vương" (Heaven Storming God King), and the poem vanished by itself. Amazed, the emperor had majestic-looking statues carved of the god together with eight attendants, and had them crimsoned and gilded. On the inaugural day, the following four-line poem was seen at the foot of the old tree:

A bowl of the water of merit,  
 According to the circumstances transforms the world.  
 The torch is beaming with radiance,  
 Dark comes, the sun ascends the mountain.

"Đa Bảo reported the poem to the emperor. The latter did not grasp its meaning. After eight reigns the Lý ceded the throne to the Trần. The words *bát* 鉢 (bowl) and *bát* 八 (eight) are pronounced the same. Emperor Lý Huệ Tông's name was San (昀), a word formed by the character *nhật* (日) (sun) with the character *son* 山 (mountain) under it, hinting that the sun ascends the mountain. What a wonderful oracle!" See "Xung Thiên Dũng Liệt Chiêu Ứng Uy Tín Đại Vương," in *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:35–36, 205–206. Three versions of the same story are also recorded in the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái* with some slight differences. See *ibid.*, 1.1:126–27; 183–84; 225–26. However,

according to this book the story was taken from the *Cổ Châu Phấp Ký* and *Kỳ Đức Ký*. Yet according to the *Toàn Thư*, 4, 35a4–b1, in Ngô Sỹ Liên's comment on the decline of the Lý dynasty, the monk in the story happened to be Vạn Hạnh and not Đa Bảo. Ngô Sỹ Liên wrote: "According to tradition, Emperor Lý Thái Tổ, after ascending the throne, returned with his retinue to Cổ Pháp to visit the temple at Phù Đồng Village. There was a spirit who wrote a poem on the temple's pillar:

A bowl of the water of merit,  
According to the circumstances transforms the world.  
The torch is beaming with its radiance,  
Dark comes, the sun ascends the mountain.

"Master Vạn Hạnh showed the emperor the poem. After reading it, Lý Thái Tổ remarked, 'This is a supernatural event, it is beyond our comprehension.' The poem was handed down among the people without really knowing its meaning. Not until the Lý declined did people know that the poem was true. Huệ Tông's name was San; it means that when the sun ascends the mountain, the shade disappears."

The *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, p. 165, also recorded the event of Lý Thái Tổ coming across this poem without saying who presented it.

73. The *Dại Nam* (7a2) has Bà Sơn instead of Tiêu Sơn. However, in Viên Chiêu's biography it is said that Viên Chiêu came to study with Định Hương on Mount Ba Tiêu. Thus, Bà Sơn, Tiêu Sơn, and Ba Tiêu Sơn must be identical. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:1b3, wrote: "Master Vạn Hạnh told Lý Công Uẩn, 'Recently, I heard of a strange oracle. I know the Lê shall fall and the Lý shall rise. Nobody of Lý name can equal you in compassion and tolerance and win people's hearts as you do. I am over seventy now. What I most regret is that I will not be able to live long enough to witness a reign of prosperity and peace.' Afraid that such words might leak out, Uẩn told Vạn Hạnh to go and seek refuge at Bà Sơn." The *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:202, has "Tiêu Sơn" instead of "Bà Sơn." The *Việt Sử Tiêu Án* (p. 104) also has Tiêu Sơn. It is clear that "Tiêu Sơn" under the Lê dynasty is "Bà Sơn" under the Lý and Trần dynasties.

The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:30–31) "Bắc Ninh Province" wrote: "Mount Tiêu Sơn is located eleven miles southwest of Yên Phong District. On it were the temples of Thiên Tâm and Trường Liêu. Once, Lý Thái Tổ's mother visited Tiêu Sơn Temple, had intercourse with a god, and gave birth to him. The oracle of the kapok tree promulgated by Vạn Hạnh, the National Preceptor of the Lý dynasty, has its origin here."

74. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:2b10, in 1010 Lý Thái Tổ changed Cổ Pháp into Thiên Đức Prefecture. See also *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 2:208.

75. Chu Minh Hamlet is located in Thiên Đức Prefecture. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:237, n.1.

76. Both the *Thiên Uyển* (10a9) and the *Dại Nam* (7a4) have *quốc bào hoà* 國抱和, which should be emended to *quốc sư bào hoà* 國師抱和. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:237.

77. Zen Master Baizhang Huaihai instructed: "Therefore, the patriarch said, 'Even when I have understood, it is no different from when I did not understand.'" See *Chuangeng lu*, T 51.264b25. See also the "Judun song" by Venerable Long'ya: "After you have awakened you're like an ignorant man. Mindless, you're calm in spirit when faced with victory or defeat. Since the old days the

ancient worthies call themselves the poor religious men. How many of those are there in our school?" Ibid., 453a1–2.

78. According to both *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:9a2, and *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 2:236, the year *cánh dân* was the second year of the Sùng Hưng Đại Bảo era and not the third. Lý Thái Tông (1000–1054), whose personal name was Phật Mã, was the eldest son of Lý Thái Tổ. Lý Thái Tông reigned for twenty-seven years (1028–1054). He was well versed in history and literature. A devout Buddhist, he often got together with learned monks at Thiên Phúc Temple to discuss Buddhist philosophy. Among his literary works are the *Hình Thư* [Penal Code], a three-volume book on law. See "Les chapitres," pp. 47 and 99; "Bibliographie annamite," p. 43; *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, pp. 139–40; *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:4b2–9b6.

79. See Zen Master Tong'an Cha's "Ten Talks on the Arcane": "The wondrous essence originally has no abode, the supernatural power has no source." *Chuan-deng lu*, T 51.455b9–10. Zen Master Shouren instructed his students: "All phenomena are originally without abode, the round bright moon reflects on the mind's pond." Ibid., 412a21.

80. Mount Thiên Phúc is the same as Mount Tiên Du or Mount Lạn Kha or Mount Phật Tích which is located in now Tiên Du Prefecture, Hà Bắc Province. See n. 24 above.

81. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Từ Sơn here must also be Mount Tiên Du, because according to Thiền Lão's biography, he never left Từ Sơn after planting his staff there, and it is said that "Thiền Lão is of Trùng Minh Temple on Mount Thiên Phúc in Tiên Du Prefecture." See *LMT*, p. 187, n. 3. According to the compilers of the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, Mount Từ Sơn is probably in Từ Sơn Prefecture, Vũ Ninh Province, Bắc Giang Lộ, which is the present-day Hà Bắc. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:239, n. 1.

82. Dazhu Huihai said: "The green bamboos are all the Truth Body, the yellow flowers are all wisdom." See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.247c15–16. The terms *nhật* (日) and *nguyệt* (月) can also mean days and months.

83. According to this, Thiền Lão must have died during the reign of Lý Thái Tông. However, in Quảng Trí's biography (18a9–10) we read: "In the first year of the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh (1059), he left the conventional world and went to study with Thiền Lão on Mount Tiên Du." From this it is clear that Thiền Lão could not have died during the reign of Lý Thái Tông, because the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh was the reign era of Lý Thánh Tông, whereas Lý Thái Tông died in 1054.

84. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, since Phúc Đường includes Long Đàm, it must include the present Thanh Trì District as well as some others, among them probably Thượng Phúc. The name Phúc Đường was still in use up to the Trần dynasty. Huệ Trung Thượng Sĩ's teacher was Tiêu Diêu, who hailed from Phúc Đường. See *LMT*, p. 188, n. 2.

85. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:10), Hà Nội Province, section "Kiến Trí Diên Cách," wrote: "Formerly, Thanh Trì District was Long Đàm Châu and belonged to Giao Châu Prefecture." According to the compilers of the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, Long Đàm Prefecture belonged to Thượng Phúc Province during the Trần dynasty (1225–1400). It was changed into Thanh Trì Prefecture during the Lê. Nowadays it is a suburb of Hanoi. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:257.

86. Lý Linh Cảm, whose maiden name was Mai, was the mother of Lý Thánh Tông. She was made empress dowager in 1054. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2, 11a1,

wrote: “In the tenth month he (Lý Thái Tông) changed his reign’s style, taking the sixth year of Sùng Hưng Đại Bảo (1054) as the first year of the Long Thụy Thái Bình. He made his mother Mai empress dowager of Linh Cảm.” See also *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:238.

87. *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* or *Dafangguang yuanjie xiuduoluo liaoyi jing*, translated by Buddhatrāta. See *T* 17, no. 842.

88. 圓覺三觀 means the three methods of contemplation according to the *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment*. They are (1) contemplation through calming (*śamatha*), (2) contemplation through concentration (*śamapatti*), and (3) contemplation through meditation (*dhyaṇa*). The first method is to generate quiet wisdom by pacifying all conceptualizations about body and mind. The second is to realize that all phenomena are illusory in order to attain the pure practice of seeing things as illusory and to generate compassion. The third is not to be attached to either purity or illusion in order to transcend all kinds of conceptual obstacles. See *T* 17.917c14–918a4.

89. In the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, Mañjuśrī is the Bodhisattva of Wisdom. For studies on Mañjuśrī, see, inter alia, Bhattacharyya Benoytosh, “Mañjughosa,” in *Jha Commemoration Volume* (Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1937), pp. 59–68; Étienne Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” *T’oung Pao* 48 (1960): 1–96; Marie-Thérèse de Mallman, *Étude iconographique sur Mañjuśrī* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1964); Alex Wayman, trans., *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī* (London: Shambala, 1985). The *An Nam Chí Nguyên* (p. 209) also commented on this event as follows: “Zen Master Viên Chiếu was a monk of Thanh Đàm Prefecture. He was intelligent, studious, and loved to study the Zen school. One night in a dream he saw Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī cut open his stomach with a knife and wash out his guts. Then Mañjuśrī gave him some medicine. Since then what Viên Chiếu practiced in his mind seemed preordained to mesh [with Reality]. Subsequently, his school flourished greatly.”

90. Concerning this anecdote, see *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:209. See also Appendix III.

91. See *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra*, *T* 25.400c28–29.

92. Trùng dương 重陽 [Ch: *zhongyang*] is the ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar. It is also called *trùng cửu*.

93. According to the *An Nam Chí Lược*, 15:147, this passage came from the *Tham Đồ Hiến Quyết* [Revelations of the Decisive Secret for Students]: “The Zen Master Mai Viên Chiếu composed the *Tham Đồ Hiến Quyết*, which contains sections as follows: ‘One day Viên Chiếu was sitting in front of his house when a monk came and asked, ‘What is the meaning of Buddha and Sage?’ Viên Chiếu said, ‘At the autumn festival the chrysanthemums are blooming under the hedge; in the pure air of spring orioles are singing in the branches.’ His book contains mostly sayings like this.” Based on this remark by Lê Trắc, all the dialogues in this biography might come from the *Tham Đồ Hiến Quyết*, or be the entire work itself.

94. The *Dại Nam* (8b3) has *huyền cơ thị nhược như hà* 玄機是若如何. The character *nhược* 若 is superfluous there.

95. Thiếu Thất 少室 [Ch: *Shaoshi*] in the original text. Shaoshi is the name of the mountain on which Bodhidharma had his abode, so the term is indicative of him.

96. Ma Kiệt 摩竭 [Ch: *Majie*] is the Chinese rendition of Magadha, the name of the city where, according to tradition, the Buddha was born.

97. According to tradition Bodhidharma spent nine years contemplating the wall on Mount Shaoshi. Buddha Śākyamuni spent twenty days in full absorption in Magadha. See Venerable Linji Jingtuo's "Verses on Shallow and Deep Entry into the Path":

Bodhidharma and Śākyamuni,  
Successively rise to extol [the Dharma].  
Now I'm asking you, my students,  
Who will take charge in the future?

See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.454a21.

98. *Yue* 岳 means a big mountain and is also a short form for *wu yue*, denoting the five great mountains of China. *Huai*, one of the great rivers of China, originates in Hanan, running through Anwei and Jiangsu.

99. Based on the two lines of poetry by Emperor Taizong of Tang: "Only in a storm do we know which plants are strong; only when we're hard-pressed we know which ministers are loyal." See *Quan Tangshi*, 101:2a9–10.

100. *Bách niên* 百年 [*bai nian*] in the original text, which means a hundred years. A human being's lifespan is thought to last at most a hundred years. Hence, the expression "a hundred years" means man's lifespan; "after a hundred years" thus means after one dies.

101. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.247c15–16; 23:391a25–27.

102. A monk asked Zen Master Mingzhao: "The whole treasury is round and bright, what is its essence?" Mingzhao answered: "You exerted yourself coming from afar." The monk continued: "Isn't that the whole treasury round and bright?" Mingzhao said: "Have a cup of tea." See *Chuandeng lu*, 20:367c13–15.

103. A monk asked Zen Master Chang: "What is it like when one refuses to discuss?" Chang answered: "Then what does he come here for?" The monk continued: "Even if he comes, he doesn't discuss." Chang said: "Then what is the use of coming here in vain?" See *Chuandeng lu*, 20:363b15–17.

104. Dong A was where the old man made a rendezvous with Zhang Liang after thirteen years. Zhang Liang was a subject of Han. After Qin Shihuang unified China, Zhang sought revenge for his country but was not able to come up with any effective plan. One day he met a man on a bridge. The man dropped his shoe and told Zhang to get it for him. Offended, Zhang still did as he was told. After that the old man gave Zhang a plan and told him to meet him at Gu Cheng thirteen years later. Gu Cheng was at Dong A District. This anecdote is recorded in the *Shiji* [Records of the Historian], quoted in *LMT*, p. 190, n. 12.

105. Yexuan (or Dã Hiên in Vietnamese) was the name of a Zen Master of whom we know nothing. In his *Thượng Sĩ Hành Trạng* [Religious Activities of the Eminent One], printed in *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of the Eminent One] (40a4–5), Emperor Trần Nhân Tông wrote that while he was mourning for his mother, he requested Huệ Trung to explain to him the sayings of Xuedou and Yexuan. Xuedou was the Chinese Zen Master Chongxian (980–1052). As for Yexuan, we still do not know who he was. He probably was a Vietnamese Zen Master who lived before Viên Chiếu.

106. Jin Gu [Golden Valley] was where Shi Song, the richest man during the Qin dynasty, built an extremely lavish and luxurious palace. Subsequently, his beloved concubine, Liuzhu, committed suicide. It is now in the northwest of Luoyang District, Honan Province. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:291.

107. *Thị lâu* 市樓 [Ch: *shi lou*], brief form for *bãi thị thần lâu* [Ch: *hai shi shen lou*], the Chinese rendition of the Sanskrit *gandharvanagara*, which means the city of the Gandharvas, or an imaginary city in the sky. In Hindu and Buddhist mythology, the Gandharvas are the celestial musicians or heavenly singers.

108. For this particular anecdote, see Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, pp. 200–201. See also Venerable Danxia's "Song to the Jewel Verse: The Dragon Girl on Mount Lingshan personally offers her Jewel to the Buddha, this poor monk follows suit." See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.463b25.

109. Viên Chiếu's metaphor of the mirror should remind us of the use of the mirror in the *Buddhabhūmi-Sūtra* to explain an aspect of Buddha's wisdom that is called the Mirror-Like Wisdom (*adarśajñāna*). According to this *sūtra*, the Buddha's wisdom is likened to a mirror since, among other things, it has the function of reflecting all objects faithfully without being influenced by the objects themselves. See Kyoo Nishio, *The Buddhabhūmi-Sūtra and the Buddhabhūmi-Vyākhyāna of Śīlabhadra*, part 1 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankokai, 1982), pp. 8–12. \*Bandhuprabha glosses in his *Buddhabhūmi-Śāstra*: "Like a round mirror of the world, the Mirror-Like Wisdom of the Tathāgata is without discrimination: They both can make all images appear without any discrimination. This is why [the Buddha's Wisdom] is called the Mirror-Like Wisdom." See T 26.310a16–17. See also Alex Wayman, "The Mirror-Like Knowledge in Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 25 (1961):353–63; "The Mirror as a Pan-Buddhist Metaphor-Simile," *History of Religions* 13 (1974): 251–69.

110. The metaphor of the raft came from a statement of the Buddha in the *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*: "Subhūti, if the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, generate a perception of a dharma or a non-dharma, there would be in them an attachment to a self, to a being, to a soul, to a person. Why so? Because, Subhūti, the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, should not be attached to either a dharma or a nondharma. Therefore, this saying has been taught by the Buddha with a hidden intention. By those who know that the teaching on dharma is likened to a raft, even dharmas should be renounced, how much more so nondharmas." (*sacet Subhūte tesām bodhisattvānām mahāsattvānām dharma-samjñā pravarteta, sa eva tesām ātma-grāho bhavet, sattva-grāho jīva-grāhaḥ pudgala-grāho bhavet. saced adharma-samjñā pravarteta, sa eva tesām ātma-grāho bhavet, sattva-grāho jīva-grāhaḥ pudgala-grāha iti. tat kasya hetoḥ? na khalu punaḥ Subhūte bodhisattvena mahāsattvena dharma udgrahītavyo na-adharmah. tasmād iyam Tathāgatena sandhāya vāg bhāsitā: kolopamam dharma-paryāyam ājānadbhir dharmā eva prahātavyaḥ prāg eva-adharmā-iti*). Sanskrit text from Conze, *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, pp. 31–32. *Diamond Sūtra*, T 8.749b10. Zen Master Yongjia Xuanjue wrote in his "Ten Ways of Contemplating the Mind": "Yet if one wants to cross the ocean one has to get on a raft, without a raft how can one cross the ocean?" See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.242a18–19.

111. Compare to the verse transmitting the Dharma traditionally attributed to Manorhita, the so-called twenty-second Zen patriarch in India:

The mind transforms following all phenomena,  
The transformation is really profound.  
One must follow the stream to realize true nature,  
Then one is free from both joy and sorrow.

See *Chuangdeng lu*, 2:214a24–25. Also: A monk asked Venerable Dalang,



"If one were already the river god, why is he swept away by the water?" Dalang said, "One must follow the stream to attain the wondrous truth, if one clings to the shore one becomes deluded." See *ibid.*, 396a18–19.

112. Jingke was a swordsman who was sent by the Prince of Yan to assassinate the emperor of Qin. See *Zhangguo ce*, 31:5b10–11. See *LMT*, p. 191, n. 19.

113. Jing Guo of Qi wanted to build the Jie Citadel. There were many who wanted to talk him out of it. Guo told the guard not to let them in. A man from Qi asked for permission to come in to say just three words and was willing to die after that. The permission being granted by Guo, the guest came in shouting three words: "big ocean fish," then turned and ran away. Guo was flabbergasted and had the man brought back. He then explained what those three words mean. Guo gave up his idea of building the citadel. See *Zhangguo ce*, 8:1b–2a quoted in *LMT*, pp. 191–92, n. 21.

114. "There were two men of Chu who competed at drawing a snake as an excuse to drink. See "Qi Wen" in *Zhangguo ce*, 9:2b–3a quoted in *LMT*, p. 192, n. 22.

115. Zen Master Qinglin said: "A snake has died on the road. I advise you not to deal with it." See *Congrong lu*, T 48.264a26–c6; *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.362a15–16.

116. Xu Zhen, whose personal name was Zun, was governor of Xingyang during the Northern Wei dynasty. Tradition has it that he practiced Daoism and flew up to the sky. The Zhaosong conferred on him the title "Shengong miaoqi zhenjun," hence the name Xu Zhenjun. See *Weishu*, 46:2b8; see also *Taiping Guangji*, "Shen Xian" 14. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:292.

117. Here "the ocean store" denotes the Buddhist teachings in the scriptures while Caoxi symbolizes the Zen school. Foguo came to ask for instruction from Zhenjue Sheng. Sheng cut his hand to draw blood and said: "This is a drop from Caoxi." See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.450b16–17; 634a5.

118. "It's not different from now," an expression in Zen literature that means that after one has attained enlightenment, it is no different from when one has not attained it.

Suppose your mind is clear since beginningless time,  
Through innumerable lives it's not different from now.

See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.50b16–17; 395b8–9.

119. Zen Master Mingjue ascended the pulpit. A monk asked: "It is clear in the mind's eye and yet not characterizable. It is bright in forms yet one can't discriminate it by truth. If it is in the mind's eye, why can't one see it?" See *Mingjue Yulu* [Sayings of Mingjue], T 47.670a4.

120. See Zen Master's Tong'an Cha's "Ten Talks of the Arcane":

Even inside the citadel of nirvana it's still perilous,  
Unexpectedly we meet one another in the streets.  
Provisionally wearing dirty clothes and is called  
being a Buddha,  
What are you called if you wear royal clothes?  
At midnight the wooden man puts on his shoes  
and leaves,  
Early in the morning the stone girl wears her hat  
and returns.

Since time immemorial the moon is reflected  
in the blue pond,  
It is only after searching again and again  
that one understands.

See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.455c5–8.

121. The *Đại Nam* (10a2) has *mạc* 幞; it should be emended to *hãn* 爔. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:289, n. 4.

122. This is based on an anecdote from chapter “Wu Du” [The Five Vermin] in *Hanfei zi*: Once there was a farmer in the Song country who happened to see a rabbit accidentally bumping into a tree and die. The farmer took the rabbit home, cooked it, and ate it. The next day, he went to the field, forsaking his work, to sit at the foot of a tree and wait for another rabbit. Not only couldn’t he catch any more rabbits, but he became a laughingstock for the entire Song country. See Watson, trans., *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsun Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu*, p. 67. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:29.

123. This metaphor comes from chapter 8, “Receipt of Prophecy by Five Hundred Disciples,” of the *Lotus Sūtra*. See, for instance, Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, pp. 157–67.

124. This is based on an anecdote from the *Zhuangzi*, chapter “Daozhi” [Robber Zhi]: Weisheng had a tryst with a girl under a bridge. She did not show up. The river ebbed. Weisheng held on to the bridge-post and was drowned. English translation can be found in A. C. Graham, *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1986), p. 238.

125. “Spring birth, summer growth, autumn harvest, and winter store: this is the great principle of heaven and earth.” This saying is taken from the preface to the *Shiji* [Recorded History] by the author himself.

126. Zu Long is a nickname of Qin Shihuang, who became interested in the art of longevity and sent the Daoist master Xu Fu leading one thousand children to the eastern sea to search for paradise in 217 B.C.E. He never found paradise, and seven years later Qin Shihuang died. Xu Fu and the children never returned. See *Shiji*, 6:11a11 and 21a8, quoted in *LMT*, p. 193, n. 32.

127. Someone asked Zen Master Huiqing: “What is it like when the ancient Buddha hasn’t yet appeared in the world?” Huiqing answered: “An egg-fruit plant that bears fruit every thousand years.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.297c18–19.

128. See Zen Master Fayen Wenyi’s “Wenyi’s Verses”:

The mani jewel does not rely on the colors,  
Within the colors there is no jewel.  
The mani jewels and the many colors,  
Are neither together nor apart.

See *Ibid.* 454b19.

129. *Hồ tãng* 胡僧 [Ch: *hu seng*]. *Hu* means Indian or barbarian, *seng* means monk. In Zen literature, this term refers to Bodhidharma. See, for instance, *Biyan lu*, T 48.183b18–19.

130. This is based on an anecdote in the *Hanfei zi*: “Bian Hua of the Chu country obtained a natural jewel and submitted it to King Li. The king instructed the jeweler to examine it. The jeweler reported that it was only a stone. So King Li had one of Bian Hua’s feet cut off, thinking that he was trying to deceive him. Afterward, Bian Hua again submitted it to King Wu,

who succeeded King Li, and again had the other foot cut off for the same reason. Bian Hua went to the foot of the Chu Mountains and wept for three days and nights. Hearing this, the king sent someone to question him. Bian Hua replied that he did not weep because his feet were amputated. He wept because a precious jewel was thought to be a mere stone and a man of integrity was called a deceiver. Finally, the king ordered the jeweler to cut and polish the matrix, and after he had done so, they really found a precious jewel." See Watson, *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsun Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu*, p. 80.

131. Shishuang Qingzhu came to Daowu for instruction, asking: "What is the enlightenment that is obvious to the eye?" Daowu called out to a novice. He answered: "Yes?" Daowu said; "Put more water into the jug." See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.320c11. A monk asked Venerable Quanzhou of Mount Shuilong: "What is the enlightenment that is obvious to the eye?" Quanzhou chased him with his stick. The monk went out." Ibid., 373b22–23; *Mingjue yulu*, T 47.676a16.

132. See, inter alia, Yongjia Xuanjue's *Zhengdao ge* [Song of Enlightenment]: "Pulverizing this body it is not enough to repay [the benevolence of the Buddha]. When you completely comprehend a single phrase you transcend thousands of millions of phrases." *Zhengdao ge*, T 48.316c21. Also *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.304b20–21: A monk asked Zen Master Shoushan Shengnian: "'When you completely comprehend a single phrase you transcend thousands of millions [of phrases].' What is this single phrase?" Shoushan said: "Tell it to people everywhere."

133. The *Đại Nam* (11a1) has *khước*; it should be emended to *nguồn*. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần* 1:271.

134. This means that only the teaching of "One Vehicle" is real. The rest, i.e., the teachings of Two or Three Vehicles, are not. See, for instance, chapter on "Skillful Means" in the *Lotus Sūtra*; Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, p. 30.

135. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (14b5) and the *Đại Nam* (11a5) have *gian* 間, obviously a mistake for *vấn* 問.

136. "What is the meaning of the Patriarch [Bodhidharma] coming from the west?" is one of the most fundamental Zen koan. The question is similar to "what is the meaning of Zen?" See, for instance, *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.246a25–26: "A monk asked Mazu, 'What is the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the west?' Mazu said, 'What is the meaning of the present moment?'" See also *ibid.*, 423b24–26; 396b1–2.

137. This is borrowed from a phrase in the *Lunyu*: "xảo ngôn lệnh sắc, tiền hĩ nhân" [Ch: *qiaoyan lingse xian xi ren* 巧言令色矣仁] (Those with clever speech and enticing appearance hardly have the mind of comiseration). See chapter "Xue Er" in *Lunyu*, 1, 1b8 and 17, 6b7.

138. See Yongjia Xuanjue's "Song of Enlightenment":

Mind is the base, phenomena are objects,  
They are like stains on the surface of a mirror.  
It is only when the stains are wiped out, that its brightness  
appears,  
When mind and phenomena are both forgotten,  
inherent nature is real.

See "Zhengdaoge," T 48.396b22.

139. A man asked Zen Master Mingjue: "What is the nature of the Buddhas"

original vow?" Mingjue answered: "The cold color of a thousand mountains." The man continues: "Is there a cause for the transcendent path?" Mingjue said: "The raindrops fall on the cliffside flowers." See *Xu chuandeng lu*, T 51.476a8–9.

140. The *Lüshi chunqiu*, "chapter Benwei" wrote: "Bo Ya played his lute, Zizhi listened. When Bo Ya thought about Mount Tai while playing, Zuzhi would say: 'How good your playing is, it is as lofty as Mount Tai.' A little while later, Bo Ya was thinking about a drifting stream, Zuzhi would say: 'You're playing really well, it is as overwhelming as a flowing stream.' When Zuzhi died, Bo Ya destroyed his lute, cut the strings and never played music again, thinking that there was no one in this life who could really appreciate his playing." See *Lüshi chunqiu*, 14, 4a7–14, quoted in *LMT*, p. 194, n. 35.

141. According to the *Dai Nam*, Viên Chiếu's dialogues with his students end here. Thus, compared with the *Thiền Uyển*, more than 360 words are missing.

142. See *Yuanjue jing* [Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment], T 17.920b19–c3: "Son of a good family, the wise one who realizes the true Dharma should be free from the four kinds of illness. What are these four kinds of illness? The first kind is the illness of contrivance: Some wish to attain complete enlightenment, thinking that 'I have performed various practices regarding the mind.' But since complete enlightenment is not attained through contrived practice, this is called illness. The second kind is the illness of passivity: Some wish to attain complete enlightenment thinking that, 'We do not cut off saṃsāra, nor strive for nirvana. Nirvana and saṃsāra are beyond the concepts of origination and annihilation. Let everything follow its true nature.' But since complete enlightenment does not come about through chance, this is called illness. The third kind is the illness of cessation: Some wish to attain complete enlightenment thinking that, 'I have pacified forever all thoughts in my mind and have realized that all things are equally peaceful.' But since complete enlightenment is not identical with cessation, this is called illness. The fourth kind is the illness of annihilation: Some wish to attain complete enlightenment, thinking that 'Now I have annihilated all afflictions, my body and mind are ultimately nonexistent, much less are the sense-faculties, the sense objects and the illusory objects which are eternally nonexistent. But since complete enlightenment is not of the nature of nonexistence, this is called illness. When one is free from these four kinds of illness, one realizes peace. To contemplate this way is called right contemplation. Otherwise, it is called wrong contemplation."

143. See *Lotus Sūtra*, "Chapter on Skillful Means," T 9.5c10–14: "Regarding the true, precious, and hard to understand objects that the Buddha has realized, only Buddhas can exhaust their true characteristics, namely, their true characteristics, their true nature, their true essence, their true powers, their true functions, their true causes, their true conditions, their true fruitions, their true retributions, and their ultimate beginning and ending." See also, Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, pp. 22–23. The Sanskrit is somewhat different: *tathāgata eva śāriputra tathāgatasya dharmān deśayet, yān dharmān tathāgato jñāti / sarvadharmānapi śāriputra tathāgata eva deśayati / sarvadharmānapi tathāgata eva jñāti, ye ca te dharmāḥ, yathā ca te dharmāḥ, yadṛśas ca te dharmāḥ, yallakṣaṇāś ca te dharmāḥ, yatsvabhāvāś ca te dharmāḥ, ye ca yathā ca yadṛśas ca yallakṣaṇāś ca yatsvabhāvāś ca te dharmā itī / tesu dharmesu tathāgata eva pratyekṣo-parokṣaḥ* // See *Saddharmapundarikasūtram* (Vaidya ed., p. 21).

144. Zen Master says: “The black beans hang at the tree top; the wind blows without making a tune.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.358c25–26.

145. See Xuanjue’s “Song of Enlightenment”:

[Do not] abandon the false mind and be attached to the truth,  
The mind of abandonment and attachment becomes error.

See *Chuandeng lu*, 30:460c5–6.

146. A monk asked Zen Master Jianshan Cheng of Hongzhou, “How do the patriarchs of our [Zen] school explain the entire teaching of the Buddha to the present time?” Cheng said, “There are already people who enquired about that issue.” The monk continued, “How do you, Teacher, explain it to people?” Cheng said, “How sad that the amaranth plant in the front yard, every year sprouts leaves but grows no flowers.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.384a1–4.

147. See *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra*, T 25.61b6–8; *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.457b23–24; 395c29–396a1.

148. A monk asked Nanquan Puyuan, “The patriarchs transmit it to each other. What should they transmit?” Nanquan said, “One two three four five.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.259a8–9.

149. Zen Master Nanyang Huizhong says: “When you’re hungry you eat, when you’re cold you put on clothes.” See *Chuandeng lu*, 28:439a22–23.

150. A monk asked Zen Master Xingchong, “What is the general meaning of the Buddha’s teaching?” Xingchong said, “Crush it in a mortar.” The monk continued, “I beg you to illustrate the one path of Caixi.” Xingchong said, “Aren’t you wronging Caixi?” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.383c1–3.

151. This anecdote is taken from the *Lüshi chunqiu*. For a similar anecdote, see *The Sūtra of a Hundred Examples*, T 4.545c619: “Once there was a man who crossed the ocean on a boat and happened to drop a silver nail in the water. He thought, ‘Now I will draw a picture of the water and memorize it. I’ll just leave it here and get it later.’ After a two-month trip he arrived at the Lion Country where he saw a river. The man dived into the water to look for the nail that he lost. When people asked what he was doing, the man answered, ‘I lost a nail, now I’m looking for it.’ They asked, ‘Where did you lose it?’ The man said, ‘I lost it when I crossed the ocean.’ They then asked him when he lost it. The man said, ‘Two months ago.’ They asked, ‘You lost it two months ago, why look for it here?’ The man said, ‘When I lost it, I drew a picture of the water and memorized it. The water that I drew a picture of is not different from this. Therefore, I’m looking for it here.’ People said, ‘Although the water is not different, you were there when you lost it. Now you’re looking for it here, how can you find it?’ At that time everyone burst out laughing.” See also *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.454b15.

152. Lê Quý Đôn’s *Nghệ Văn Chí* [Description of Arts and Literature] recorded: “*Được Sư Thập Nhị Nguyện Văn* [The Twelve Vows of the Medicine King], 1 book, composed by Zen Master Viên Chiếu of Long Đàm.” Phan Huy Chú’s *Văn Tịch Chí* [Descriptive Bibliography] only recorded the title without mentioning the author. This was probably an essay on the twelve vows of Bhaiṣajyarāja. See *Les Chapitres*, pp. 95 and 139; “Bibliographie annamite,” p. 138.

153. Lý Nhân Tông (1066–1128), whose personal name was Càn Đức, was the son of Lý Thánh Tông. Nhân Tông reigned for fifty-six years (1072–1127). See *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, 1:145.

154. Lê Mạnh Thát suggests that this might have been the envoy of 1087 headed by Gentleman Lê Chung as chief envoy and Đỗ Anh Bối as deputy envoy, because Zhezong ascended the throne in 1086, and not until 1090, the year Viên Chiếu passed away, did Vietnam send another diplomatic envoy to China. Therefore, if the envoy of 1090 brought the *Essays on the Twelve Vows of the Medicine King* to China and the book was acclaimed by Chinese eminent monks, Viên Chiếu did not survive the event to receive praise from Lý Nhân Tông. See *LMT*, p. 196, n. 53.

155. The two words *sư vân* 師云 in the text (also *Đại Nam*, 16a1) after the phrase *thiện thuyết kinh pháp* 善說經法 seem to be out of place here.

156. A word denoting the day seems to be missing from our text, since it only has “*Quảng Hựu lục niên canh ngọ cữu nguyệt nhật*.” The *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:266 gave the date of Viên Chiếu’s death as the twenty-sixth day of the twelfth month of the sixth year of the Quảng Hựu era [i.e., January 18, 1091]. Trần Văn Giáp also gave the same date; see *Lược Truyện Các Tác Gia Việt Nam*, p. 141.

157. Sanskrit: *mahābhūta*, which means the four gross elements of reality, namely, earth, water, fire and space. See Nakamura Hajime et al., *Bukkyō jiten* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), p. 3611.

158. Here (16a6) there is one character *sắc* too many. The character *tuông* 相 should be added instead.

159. *Thiền Uyển* lists another work entitled *Essays on the Twelve Vows of the Medicine King*. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:266. These works are indefinitely lost, except a part of the *Revelations of the Decisive Secret for Students* part of which is probably included in this present biography. Note that we read in the biography of Minh Tâm and Bảo Giám that “Viên Chiếu left behind many songs and poems lauding their lofty aspirations. These have been gathered together in Viên Chiếu’s collected works and need not be recorded here.” This seems to suggest that there was another work by Viên Chiếu, probably his collected literary works.

160. Mount Long Đội, also called Mount Đội, is located at Đội Sơn Village, Ly Nhân District, Ly Nhân Province, Đại La, which is the present-day Đội Sơn Village, Duy Tiên Prefecture, Hà Nam Province. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:253, n. 2.

161. *Lỗ trúc chi thư* 魯竹之書 [Ch: *lu zhu zhi shu*] in the original text (*Thiền Uyển*, 16a11; *Đại Nam*, 11b10). *Lỗ* (Ch: *Lu*) means the country of Lu and *trúc* (Ch: *zhu*) stands for *thiên trúc* (Ch: *tianzhu*) which means India. Confucius was a native of Lu and the Buddha was from India, hence *lỗ trúc chi thư* means Confucian and Buddhist books.

162. In Mahāyāna Buddhism ultimate truth or ultimate reality (*paramārtha-satya*) is synonymous with the absolute identity (*pariṇiṣpanna-svabhāva*), the Realm of Ultimate Reality (*dharmadhātu*), True Reality (*dharmatā*), Thusness (*tathatā*), the true nature of mind-only (*cittadharmatā*), Emptiness (*śūnyatā*), Truth Body (*dharmakāya*), etc., the many various terms that are used to denote the true reality as opposed to phenomenal reality in Mahāyāna Buddhism. See, for instance, *Buddhabhūmi-Sūtra*, *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, pp. 22–24; *Madhyānta-vibhāṅgabhāṣya*, pp. 23–24; *Madhyāntavibhāṅgaṭīkā*, pp. 49–51.

163. Note the tendency toward austerity among the Vietnamese eminent monks. See Appendix III.



164. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (16b10) and the *Dại Nam* (12a8) have Lương Văn Nhậm, but both the *Việt Sử Lược* and the *Toàn Thư* have Lương Nhậm Văn. According to the *Việt Sử Lược* and the *Toàn Thư*, Lương Nhậm Văn was made Grand Preceptor in 1028 by Lý Thái Tông. Nhậm held positions of *Viên Ngoại Lang* and *Ngự Sử Đại Phu* under Lý Thái Tổ. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:218; *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:5a3. On the two ranks of *Viên Ngoại Lang* and *Ngự Sử Đại Phu* in Vietnamese history, see *Lịch Triều Hiến Chương Loại Chí*, 13:67 and 71.

165. Compare to a verse by Huisi (514–577); see *Chuangdeng lu*, 27:431b5–9.

166. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:103) “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Buddhist Monks” records a brief biographical note about these two Zen masters: “Both these two Zen masters hailed from Đông Ngạc District. They erected a lecture hall to explain Buddhist scriptures [to the people]. Subsequently, they entered into the fire [of samādhi] to immolate themselves. The relics were transformed into seven kinds of precious jewels. Emperor Lý Thái Tông ordered them to be kept in Trường Thánh Temple. See also *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:211; Appendix III.

167. These works are indefinitely lost. See n. 159 for a brief discussion on Viên Chiếu’s works. See also *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, 1:141–42.

168. See Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, pp. 293–302.

169. *Sơ phát tâm nhân* 初發心人 [Ch: *chu faxin ren*] literally means “those who just generate their mind [of enlightenment].” The generation of the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*) is the first and most essential step in a Mahāyāna practitioner’s path toward the attainment of Buddhahood. A detailed discussion on the mind of enlightenment and its association with other qualities of a bodhisattva is found in Edward Conze, *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 45–55; *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, pp. 13–19; *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, pp. 5–14; *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, pp. 1–21; *Kāśyapaparivartakā*, p. 37. Cecil Bendall and Louis de La Vallée Poussin have provided a useful outline of this concept in English in “Bodhisattva-Bhumi: Sommaire et Notes,” *Le Muséon*, n.s. 6 (1905): 45–52. For an interesting interpretation of this concept, see Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 113, n. 60.

170. Or the degenerate age of the Dharma (*mo fa*). On this concept in Chinese Buddhism, see, for instance, Alfred Bloom, *Shinran Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), pp. 12–13.

171. On the topic of self-immolation in Buddhism, see Yun-hua Jan, “Buddhist Self-Immolation in Medieval China,” *History of Religion* 4, 2 (1965): 243–58. In this article Jan mentioned in passing the issue of self-immolation in modern Vietnamese Buddhism. See also Walpola Rahula, “Self-Cremation in Mahāyāna Buddhism,” in *Zen and the Taming of the Bull: Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1978), pp. 111–14.

172. *Huaguang sanmei* 華光三昧 in Chinese or *tejeprabhāsamādhi* in Sanskrit. In a Vinaya text of the Mūla-Sarvāstivādin, it is related that the Buddha entered into the samādhi of firelight and emitted successively fire and water from various parts of his body to convert the women in the palace. See Noel Péri, “Les femmes de Śākya-Muni,” *BEFEO* 18, 2 (1918): 6. See also *Fo benxing jijing*, 40: “At that time the Tathāgata also entered into the samādhi of fire-light, and his body emitted a great fire.”

173. The seven kinds of jewel are described somewhat differently in different *sūtras*. See, for instance, Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, p. 125; *Buddha-bhūmisūtra-Śāstra*, T 26.393a13–16. See also Xinru Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China. Trade and Religious Exchanges AD 1–600* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 92–102.

174. The *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:224, recorded: [In the fourth month of the seventh year of the Thiên Thánh era (1034)] the reign’s style was changed into the first year of the Thông Thụy era. At that time, two monks, Nghiêm Bảo Tính and Phạm Minh Tâm, immolated themselves and were transformed into the seven kinds of jewel. The emperor issued an edict to have the remains kept in Trường Thánh Temple for worship. The emperor thought it was a good omen, and so he changed the reign’s style into Thông Thụy [Thoroughly Auspicious].

175. The *Cương Mục Chính Biên*, 13, 34b4–5, wrote: “Mount Không Lộ was in Thạch Thất District, Quốc Oai Prefecture, Sơn Tây Province. On it was Lạc Lâm Temple. Formerly, this mountain was the site of Zen Master Không Lộ’s transformation, hence the name.” See *LMT*, p. 199, n. 1. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:44–45), “Sơn Tây Province, section on Mountains and Rivers,” however, corrects the above note from the *Cương Mục Chính Biên* as follows: “According to the inscriptions on the stele at Lạc Lâm Temple on Mount Phụng Hoàng, An Sơn District, this temple was erected by the Chinese under the Lý dynasty [of Vietnam]. There was no mention of Không Lộ’s death there, nor was he worshipped inside the temple. The *An Nam Chí Lược* said that this mountain is at Thạch Thất District. Thạch Thất was formerly called An Xuyên, and the mountain was named Sơn Lộ after the district. Here Sơn is changed to Không. That might have been the origin of the name [Không Lộ].”

176. *Phương ngoại kế* 方外契 [*fang wai qi* in Chinese]. The term *fang wai* is derived from *Zhuangzi*, chapter “Dazongshi,” and means beyond the conventional world. It is subsequently used to designate Buddhist monks or Daoist masters. See Victor Mair, trans., *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), pp. 51–65.

177. Nothing is known of Minh Huệ. According to both the *Thiền Uyển* (11a8) and the *Dại Nam* (8a2), the seventh generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông School consists of seven persons. Yet only six—if Lý Thái Tông’s is also counted—biographies are counted. Minh Huệ might have been the seventh person of this generation.

178. Hanshan and Shide were two Zen companions of the Tang dynasty. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51. 433c6–434a18. Hanshan himself was a renowned poet.

179. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (18b2) and the *Dại Nam* (14a1) have Liễm, but it is obviously a scribal error. All other sources have 欽 Khâm. Nothing is known about when he was born or when he died. We only know that he was minister of public works under Lý Nhân Tông (1072–1127). His poetry shows Buddhist influence. See *Lược truyện Các Tác Gia Việt Nam*, 1:149; *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:335. In the biography of Chân Không (66a9) is also recorded a poem written in 1100 commemorating him; its author is said to be the minister of public works, Đoàn Văn Khâm. The two poems by Đoàn Văn Liễm in this biography were also recorded by Lê Quý Đôn in his *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 4: 13a6–b6 and their author was said to be the minister of public works, Đoàn Văn Khâm.”

180. The *Thiền Uyển* (18b3) and other texts [*Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:335] have *trụ tích* 住錫 [planting his staff]. The *Dại Nam* (14a1) has *quải tích* 掛錫 [hanging his staff].

181. *Lục trần* 六塵 literally means “the six kinds of impurity” and stands for the six sense objects: form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental objects.

182. Fo Tu Teng (died 349), one of the most interesting personalities of early Chinese Buddhism, was a Central Asian monk who arrived in North China around 310 and impressed the Chinese ruler with his magical powers. Fo Tu Teng's biography can be found in *Mingseng zhuan*, *Gaoseng zhuan*; *Yishu-chuan*, and *Jinshu*. For a complete account of his life, see Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, 1:251–69. For a briefer account, see Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 79–80; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 181–83. For a complete study of his life and works, see Arthur F. Wright, “Fo-t'u-teng: A Biography,” *HJAS* 11 (1948): 321–71; reprinted in *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 34–68. Kumārajīva (350–413) was a native of Kuccha who came to Chang-an in 401 and translated many important Buddhist texts into Chinese, including those of the Madhyamaka school. Through his translations Kumārajīva was responsible for the establishment of the Sanlun school in China. See Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 81–83; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, p. 226; *Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.330a–333a.

183. According to the *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 4:295, this poem was dedicated to Zen Master Không Lộ Quảng Trí.

184. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (18b6) and the *Dại Nam* (14a3) have *man* 蠻. According to the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:337, n. 1, most other texts have *loan* 鸞.

185. See *Chuangdeng lu* for Bodhidharma's shoe. *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:337, n. 2. Three years after Bodhidharma passed away, Song Yun, heading a diplomatic envoy to the eastern country, met Bodhidharma on Mount Congling, carrying one shoe on his shoulder. When he was back in China, Song Yun reported the event to King Xiaozang of the Northern Wei (528–530), who had Bodhidharma's grave opened. Only one shoe was found in his coffin. Thenceforth, the expression “*chích lý tây qui*” [returning to the west with a single shoe] or “*đi lý*” [leaving behind a shoe] is used to denote the death of a Zen Master. See *Chuangdeng lu*, 3:220b5–10.

186. Quảng Trí's biography ends here. However, in the text, 18b10–19a6, (*Dại Nam*, 14a6–14b3) there follows a short paragraph about Lý Thái Tông that reads: “Emperor Lý Thái Tông often came to Thiền Lão of Mount Thiên Phúc for instructions of Zen teachings. As soon as the needle and the hammer\* came down, his brain immediately became clear. Whenever he was free from his duties, the emperor was engrossed in the joy of meditation. Therefore, he loved to compare his understanding with the Zen adepts from all over the country. The emperor once said,† ‘I contemplate on the mind-source of the Buddhas and patriarchs, together with the sages of old; even they themselves are not free from reproach, much less the students of today. Now, I wish to present my own understanding to you, sirs. Each of you please give me a

\* *Châm chùy* [Ch: *zhen zhui*] is an expression denoting severe training in Zen Buddhism. See *Biyān lu*, T 48.139a5.

† The text has: *Đế tiên vị viết, trẫm duy Phật tổ*. . . ; perhaps it should be emended to *Đế vị viết, tiên trẫm duy Phật tổ*. . .

verse, so that I can observe the way you apply your mind.' They all bowed and obeyed the order. While they were still thinking, the emperor had already finished his verse, which reads:

*Prajñā* is really without a source,  
It teaches the emptiness of both persons and phenomena.\*  
The Buddhas of the past, present, and future,  
Are identical in the Dharma nature.†

They all admired his intelligence.

187. On the term *quốc sư* [National Preceptor], see, for instance, Paul Pelliot, "Les Kouo-che ou 'maitres du royaume' dans le Bouddhisme chinois," *TP* (1911): 971–976.

188. Now belonging to Hòa Đức Prefecture, Hà Đông Province. See n. 48 of Vân Phong's biography.

189. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:17–18), "Sơn Tây Province," recorded: "Đan Phượng Prefecture is located thirty-five miles east of the town. Its width from the east to the west measures twenty miles; from the north to the south twenty-five miles. From its district town to the east of Từ Liêm Prefecture of Hà Nội is a distance of twelve miles, its western side is eight miles from the Hát River across from the territory of An Sơn Prefecture. Its southern side is thirteen miles from Từ Liêm, Hà Nội. Its northern side is twelve miles from Phúc Thọ Prefecture, Quảng Oai Province. It was a remote land under the Han and was changed into Đan Phượng before the Trần dynasty." It is now Đan Phượng Prefecture, Hà Tây Province.

190. These are the three trainings (*trīṣikṣā*) that a Buddhist practitioner must master in order to attain enlightenment. For a discussion on these by an Indian authoritative master, see Alex Wayman, "Asaṅga's Treatise on the Three Instructions of Buddhism," in George Elder, ed., *Buddhist Insight. Essays by Alex Wayman* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), pp. 353–66.

191. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (19a10) and the *Dại Nam* (14b5–6) have *thăng kinh quốc tự* 升京國寺. Lê Mạnh Thát suggests that the word "Khai" (開) might have been omitted from the text, since it probably denotes Khai Quốc Temple of the Capital of Thăng Long. Khai Quốc Temple used to house many eminent monks of the Đinh and Lê dynasties. See *LMT*, p. 203, n. 4. On this temple, see n. 46 to Vân Phong's biography.

\* These are the two fundamental categories of Mahāyāna Buddhist ontology. These two kinds of emptiness are antidote to the substantial view of the reality of persons (*pudgala*) and phenomena (*dharma*). The realization of these two kinds of emptiness leads one to liberation (*mokṣa*) and omniscience (*sarvajñā*). For a most insightful exposition of this topic, see, for instance, Sylvain Lévi, ed., *Vijñaptimatratāsiddhi: Deux traités de Vasubandhu: Vimśatikā et Trīṣikā* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1911), p. 15.

† It is curious that this passage on Lý Thái Tông is found here. It does not seem to be a biography of Lý Thái Tông as a patriarch of the school due to its length and structure. However, the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* [Simplified Diagram of the Zen School] found in the beginning of the *(Huệ Trung) Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of the Eminent Huệ Trung], 5b6–7a6, tells us that Lý Thái Tông received the Dharma from Zen Master Thiền Nguyệt. Our text said that "the emperor often came to Thiền Lão of Mount Thiên Phúc for instructions on Zen." Thiền Lão's real name must be Thiền Nguyệt. It was changed to avoid the name taboo.

192. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (19a11) and the *Đại Nam* (14b6–7) have “Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Cẩm Linh Nhân.” Yet, according to the *Việt Sử Lược* and *Toàn Thư*, it should be changed into “Phù Thánh Linh Nhân.” Linh Nhân, whose family name was Lê, was Emperor Lý Nhân Tông’s mother. She was a native of Thổ Lỗi Village, became a concubine of Lý Thánh Tông in 1063, and was named Lady Ý Lan. In 1073, after ascending the throne for one year, Nhân Tông had Empress Dowager Dương killed and made his mother Empress Dowager Linh Nhân. She died in 1117 and was given the posthumous title Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Linh Nhân. Linh Nhân was a devout Buddhist and had contributed considerably to the propagation of Buddhism during her time. See Hoàng Xuân Hãn, *Hồ Xuân Hương Thiền Tĩnh Sui* [Hồ Xuân Hương: A Love Story] (Hanoi: Nhã Học, 1995), pp. 57–174; *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:352; *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, p. 145.

193. Yang Xuanzhi asked Bodhidharma: “What is the meaning of ‘patriarchs?’” Bodhidharma answered: “The patriarchs are those who illuminate the source of the Buddha-Mind and whose understanding and conduct are in accord.” *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.220a5.

194. The word “buddha” derives from the root *budh*, which means to wake, wake up, be awake, etc. See Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1899), p. 733, col. 2. note that the term “buddha” [awakened or enlightened one] was used by many religions during the Buddha’s time.

195. See “Mouzi Lihoulun” in *Hongmingji*, T 52.1c25–26: “Therefore he was born in India, which is the center of heaven and earth, and dwells in harmony.”

196. For the age at which Śākyamuni left home to search for enlightenment, see Étienne Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna*, (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1981), 1:208, n. 1.

197. According to the Zen tradition, this is the first transmission of the mind outside the scriptures. Wang Anshi asked the monk Huiquan about the origin of this anecdote. Huiquan said he did not find it recorded in the Tripiṭaka. Wang said he chanced upon it in the *Da Fantianwang wen fo jueyi jing*. According to Wang, the story reads as follows: “Brahmā came to Mount Lingshan, brought yellow bala flowers as offerings, and offered his body as a chair, requesting the Buddha to preach the Dharma for the good of sentient beings. The Lord ascended the pulpit and raised a flower. None among the millions of celestial and worldly beings who were present could understand the message. Only Mahākāśyapa cracked a smile. The Lord said, ‘I have the true eye treasure of the True Dharma, the wondrous mind of nirvana, the uncharacterizable true reality, now I transmit it to Mahākāśyapa.’ Wang also remarked that this scripture discusses mostly royal affairs. Therefore, it was stored in royal palace and thus not many people know of it.” See *Rentian yanmu*, T 48.325b3–13.

198. Kāśyapa Mātāṅga was one of the first Indian Buddhist missionaries and translators who came to China. See *Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.1:322c13–323a23. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 28 and 30.

199. “Liu Han” in the original text. The Han dynasty is called thus because it was founded by Liu Bang. There are two Han dynasties: the Former Han [206 B.C.E.–8 C.E.] and the Later Han [25–219 C.E.].

200. The Liang dynasty [502–557], the Wei dynasty [534–556].

201. I.e., Zhiyi (538–597). Since Zhiyi made his abode on Mount Tiantai, he was called Great Master Tiantai. He was the founder of the Tiantai school based on the *Lotus Sūtra*. The Tiantai school was famed for its particular method of practicing *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. For a biography of Zhiyi, see *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, 17:564a18–568a15. For studies on Zhiyi and his teachings, see, inter alia, Leon Hurvitz, “Chih-i (538–597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk,” *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, 12 (1960–62); Neal Donner and Daniel B. Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation: A Study and Annotated Translation of the First Chapter of Chih-i's Mo-ho Chih-kuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993); Paul L. Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989).

202. For Zen followers the term “scriptural teachings” denotes all the other schools of Buddhism. It is odd that Thông Biện particularly identifies the “scriptural teachings” with Tiantai.

203. I.e., Huineng (638–713), also called Caoxi because he lived in Nanhua Temple near Caoxi. See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.235b10–237a12 and *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.754c1–755c10. For a thorough study of historical issues concerning Huineng, see Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*.

204. Mou Bo or Mouzi, author of the *Lihuolun*, probably the first treatise written by a Buddhist convert in defense of Buddhism. The date of Mou Bo and his work is highly controversial. See *Hongmingji*, T 52.1a26–7a22; *Chu sanzangji ji*, T 55.82c29–83a1; *Fozu tongji*, T 49.35:332a27–b5; *Fozu lidai tongzai*, T 49.510b17–514a9; *Shishi jiigulue* T 47.769a12–c6. For a detailed discussion on this subject as well as a summary of other scholars' opinions regarding it, see Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 13–15. For studies concerning Mou Bo's works, see, for instance, P. Pelliot, “Meou-tseu ou les doutes levés,” *TP* 19 (1920):255–433; Matsumoto Bunzaburō, “Mushi riwaku ron no chosaku nendai kō,” in *Bukkyō shi zakko* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1944); Fukui Kōjun, “Mushi no kenkyū,” in *Dokyō no kiso teki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Risōsha, 1952).

205. Kang Senghui, a Sogdian monk born in Jiaozhou, was one of the most important Buddhist figures in Wu. For a detailed discussion on Kang Senghui's life and activities, see Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 51–55; for his biography, see *Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.326a; 235a13–236b13; *Chu sanzangji ji*, T 55.96a29–97a17.

206. For the biography of Tanqian (542–607), see *Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.571b12–574b6; for a summary of his biography in English, see Whalen Lai, “T'an-ch'ien and the Early Ch'an Tradition: Translation and Analysis of the Essay 'Wang-shih-fei-lun',” in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), pp. 65–87. Obviously, this is Dharma Master Tanqian of the Sui dynasty and not the Capital Tanqian of the Qi (*Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.413a18–26) as Trần Văn Giáp has erroneously identified him in “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 210. Tanqian had a very close relationship with Sui Gaozu.

207. Obscure passage (*Thiền Uyển*, 20b1; *Đại Nam*, 15b6). The five characters *chi pháp dã hậu vân* 之法也后云 should be emended to *chi pháp sư vân* (之法師云). Trần Văn Giáp [“Le Bouddhisme,” p. 208] interprets the



character *bậu* as “the Queen,” i.e., Sui Gaozu’s wife; this is wrong, since in his reply Tanqian said, “You are the compassionate father [*tử phụ* 慈父] of all the world,” and he was obviously responding to Sui Gaozu. See *Thiền Uyển*, 21a3; *Dại Nam*, 16a7.

208. The original text has *điều ngự* 調御, which is one of the ten epithets of the Buddha. The ten epithets of the Buddha have been discussed by Kotatsu Fujita, *Tamaki Comm. Vol.*, pp. 81–98.

209. *Giang đông* 汪東 [Ch: *jiangdong*] in the original text.

210. Luy Lâu was the capital of Giao Châu (Jiaozhou).

211. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (20b10) and the *Dại Nam* (16a3) have *khâu ni danh* 丘尼名. The editor(s) of the *Dại Nam* added a smaller character *tỳ* 毘, which seems to have been a correction added to it later to make the phrase read *tỳ khâu ni danh*. This does not seem to be the case with the *Thiền Uyển*. Lê Mạnh Thát suggests that *khâu ni danh* must be a scribal error for Khâu Đà La 丘陀羅, who, according to the *Cổ Châu Pháp Vân Phật Bản Hạnh Ngũ Lục*, together with Mo Luo Qi Yu were two monks who came to the Luy Lâu Citadel, administrative territory of Shi Xie (Sĩ Nhiếp) around the end of Han Lingdi’s reign (168–189). They were invited by a layman named Tu Định to stay. Mo Luo Qi Yu declined and went on with his journey. Khâu Đà La remained and later on transmitted his teaching to A Man, and with this the provenance of the four sages Pháp Vân, Pháp Vũ, Pháp Lôi, and Pháp Điện [Dharma Cloud, Dharma Rain, Dharma Thunder, and Dharma Lightning]. The *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu*, upper volume, 9b6–9, in the section “Indian Monks Under King Hùng” considered Khâu Đà La one of those monks who had met Tu Định and transmitted his teaching to A Man. See *LMT*, p. 206, n. 17. In three different versions of the same story recorded in the *Linh Nam Chính Quái*, the monk was referred to as Xà Lê or Ca Xà Lê and not Khâu Đà La. See *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:69, 162, 234. Note, however, that “xà lê” simply means “master,” and “Ca Xà Lê” might be another reading for “Khâu Đà La.” Concerning Tu Định, the *Cổ Châu Tứ Pháp Phả Lục* recorded as follows: “At the time when King Sĩ [Nhiếp] governed Giao Châu, a man from Cambodia [Cao Man in Vietnamese] named Tu Định came to settle down at Mân Xá Village, Siêu Loại District. He was a simple man who preserved his good nature, but his behavior was beyond all conventional rules. He took ‘Man’ as his family name.” See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 219, n. 1.

212. The *Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.388a16–c5, mentioned a Qi Yu, who had traveled through Jiaozhou and Guangzhou amidst supernatural events and arrived at Luoyang around the end of the Jin Huidi’s reign (305–306). The *Cổ Châu Pháp Vân Phật Bản Hạnh Ngũ Lục* [Recorded Sayings of the Pháp Vân Buddha at Cổ Châu] also recorded a Qi Yu [Kỳ Vực], who arrived in Luy Lâu at the same time with Khâu Đà La toward the end of the Han Lingdi era (168–189). Note a difference of almost a hundred years between the dates given by the two texts. Lê Mạnh Thát, distrusting the accuracy in terms of dates given by the *Cổ Châu Pháp Vân Phật Bản Hạnh Ngũ Lục*, is of the opinion that the Qi Yu mentioned in these two texts was one and the same person who arrived in Luy Lâu simultaneously with Khâu Đà La around 290–300. See *LMT*, p. 206, n. 18.

213. Zhi Jiang Liang or Zhi Jiang Liang Zhe (c. third century). Not much is known about this man except that he was an Indo-scythian who translated

the *Fahua sanmeijing* in Jiaozhou. According to Zurcher, Zhi Jiang Liang might have been the same as Zhi Liang Lou Zhi, who translated the *Shi'er youjing* in Guangzhou. See Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, p. 71.

214. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (20b11–21a1) and the *Dại Nam* (16a4–5) have *kim hựu hữu pháp đắc biên thượng pháp sĩ u tỳ ni đa lưu chi*, which should be emended to *kim hựu hữu pháp biên thượng pháp sĩ đắc pháp u tỳ ni đa lưu chi* 今又有法賢上士得法於毘尼多流支. For Pháp Hiền's biography, see this translation.

215. We do not find such conversation in Tanqian's biography in the *Gaoseng zhuan*.

216. Quan Deyu (757–818) was prime minister under Tang Xianzong. Quan was also a Buddhist and wrote extensively on the temples and lives of the monks of his time. However, according to Trần Văn Giáp, this “preface” could not be identified. Giáp reported that he had searched through Quan Deyu's literary works entitled *Quan Wengung shi*, published in the *Qinding quantangwen*, but could not find this “preface.” See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 211.

217. For a biography of Zhangjing Yun (?–818), see *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.252b19–c23; *Wudeng huiyuan*, upper vol., pp. 153–54. Yun seemed to be a minor figure in the Chinese Zen tradition. We do not know why Thông Biện especially mentioned him in this connection.

218. On the relations of the Wu-Yue Kingdom with Buddhism, see Albert A. Dalia, “The Political Career of the Buddhist Historian Tsan-ning,” in David W. Chappell, ed., *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society. Buddhist and Taoist Studies II* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), pp. 155–66.

219. Lâm Huệ Sinh (?–1063) or the National Preceptor Huệ Sinh of the thirteenth generation of the Vinītaruci school. According to our text, this generation consists of six persons, but the biographies of only three of them are recorded, namely, those of Lâm Huệ Sinh, Khương Thiền Nham, and Nguyễn Bốn Tịch. See also *Lược truyện Các Tăng Gia Việt Nam*, 1:140.

220. According to our text (65a1–66b3), Vương Chân Không (?–1100) was one of the three Masters belonging to the sixteenth generation of the Vinītaruci school. The other two are Trí Nhân and Đạo Lâm. See also *Lược truyện Các Tăng Gia Việt Nam*, 1:143.

221. Mai Viên Chiếu (998–1091) belonged to the seventh generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school. See also *Lược truyện Các Tăng Gia Việt Nam*, 1:141.

222. Nhan Quảng Trí also belonged to the seventh generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school.

223. The phrase “the successor of Kang Senghui” figures only in the *Dại Nam* (16b3) in smaller characters as a marginal note obviously by the compilers of the *Dại Nam*. The *Thiền Uyển* does not have it. See *Thiền Uyển*, 21a10. Nothing is known about this Lôi Hà Trạch. According to Thông Biện, the scriptural teachings began with Mou Bo and Kang Senghui. It is not known whether Lôi Hà Trạch studied directly with Kang Senghui or whether Thông Biện only referred to him as someone who carried on the scriptural school represented by Kang Senghui. The *Lĩnh Nam Chính Quái* says that when they first became monks Không Lộ and Giác Hải came to dwell at the temple of Hà Trạch. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:173–74.

The biography of Giác Hải (who belonged to the tenth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school) in our text also tells us that at first Không Lộ (who belonged to the ninth generation of the same school) and Giác Hải served

Master Hà Trạch. So there might have been a Zen Master named Hà Trạch belonging to either the seventh or eighth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school under whom both Giác Hải and Không Lộ studied. However, according to our text the seventh generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school consists of seven persons. Yet it only recorded the biographies of six persons, namely, Mai Viên Chiếu, Đàm Cứu Chỉ, Nghiêm Bảo Tĩnh, Phạm Minh Tâm, Nhan Quảng Trí, and probably Lý Thái Tông. Besides, none of the patriarchs who belonged to generations either before or after the seventh has the name Lôi Hà Trạch. According to the *Thiền Uyển*, Hà Trạch was the name of a Zen Master who lived at Mộc Ngưu Temple at Đồ Bộ District. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:443, n. 2. However, we do not know whether Lôi Hà Trạch was the same as this Hà Trạch.

224. The *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:181, records, “[In the second year of the Thái Bình era (971)] the court hierarchy and ranks for monks and Daoist masters were installed ( . . . ) National Preceptor Ngô Chân Lưu was made Khuông Việt Thái Sư, Trương Ma Ni Religious Monk Scribe, Đặng Huyền Quang Sùng Chính Uy Nghi.” Thus, the “Tăng Lục” was a rank for Buddhist monks and was installed since the reign of Đinh Tiên Hoàng. The monk Trương Ma Ni was the first to hold this office. In China, this rank began with Duanfu under Wenzong of Tang (827–840). We can glean some of the significance of this rank through the following words of Wuzong: “Since there was Buddhism until now, what evidence there is about its ups and downs, let the monk scribes of the two institutions together with the monks versed in the three disciplines write down and submit it to me.” See *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54.243a26–28. Thus, it seems that a monk scribe’s responsibility beside keeping documents, also holds the function of a Buddhist historian.

225. The bestowing of a purple robe to a monk began in China with Wu Zetian (684–774). In 690, monk Falang found in *Dayun jing* a passage justifying the enthronement of Wu Zetian, who was made prefect and given a purple robe by the latter. See *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54.248c3–249a29.

226. According to the *Dasong seng shilüe*, T 54.244b29–c15, the rank National Preceptor started with monk Fachang under the Northern Qi (550–577). The rank is defined as follows: “In terms of teachings, he must be well versed in the three baskets, and master the five sciences. The entire country takes refuge in him. This explains the title [of National Preceptor].” The five sciences are philosophy, grammar, logic, medicine, and technology.

227. This is obviously a paraphrase of the famous passage from the *Hṛdaya-Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra* [Heart Sūtra]: *rūpam śūnyatā śūnyatāiva rūpam, rūpān na prthak śūnyatā śūnyatāya na prthag rūpam, yad rūpam sa śūnyatā yā śūnyatā yad rūpam*. For an extensive study of the statement “form is emptiness, emptiness is form” in the Heart Sūtra, see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *The Heart Sūtra Explained* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), pp. 57–93; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Heart of Wisdom* (London: Tharpa Publications, 1986), pp. 26–76.

228. For the expression “rain of Dharma,” see, for instance, *Mahāyānasūtrā-lamkāra* 9.6: Buddhahood is said to be all phenomena, and alternatively to be removed from all phenomena. Because it produces the jewel of Dharma so great and vast, it resembles the mine of Dharma-jewels. Because it is the cause producing the accumulation of virtues for living beings, it becomes a cloud showering on them a rain of Dharma, vast, well disposed, and inexhaustible. (*buddhatvam sarvadharmah samuditamatha vā sarvadharmavyapetam, prodbhūte-*

*dharmaratnapratatasumahato dharmaratnākarābham/ bhutānām śuklasasyaprasava-sumahato hetuto meghabhūtam, dānāddharmāmbuvarsapratatasuvihitasyāksayasya prajāsu//*). See Sylvain Lévi, *Asaṅga. Mahāyāna-Sūtrālamkāra. Exposé de la doctrine du grand véhicule selon le système Yogācāra* Tome I. Texte (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1907), p. 34.

229. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (21b5) and the *Dại Nam* (16b9) have Long Chương Bảo Tự, but it should be corrected to Thiền Chương Bảo Tự. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:277; *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:2a5.

230. Cửu Liên was the name of a prefecture. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3, 20b7 “in the fourth month of the eighth year of the Kiến Gia era (1218), the king visited Cửu Liên Châu to watch fishing.” It was also the site where Trần Tự Khánh stationed his troops in the spring of 1215 to fight Nguyễn Nộn.

231. Hoàng Xuân Hân reported in *Lý Thường Kiệt* that according to the *Tư Trị Thông Giám Trường Biên*, the original name of Mãn Giác’s father was Lý Hoài Tổ, who led an envoy to the Song court in 1073 to report the death of Lý Thánh Tông. Because of the name taboo under the Trần, the last name Lý was changed into Nguyễn. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:298, n. 1.

232. Teacherless wisdom is a term used to denote the Buddha’s wisdom or omniscience. “Chapter on Parable” in the *Lotus Sūtra* talks about “Omniscience, Buddha’s wisdom, natural wisdom and teacherless wisdom.” See Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, p. 63.

233. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:12b6–7, in the eighth month of the seventh year of the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh era (1065), Lý Nhân Tông visited the Cửu Lan Provincial Palace and named it Cảnh Hưng.

234. *Chí nhân* 至人 [Ch: *zhiren*] in the original text. The term obviously denotes a Bodhisattva according to Mãn Giác’s teaching.

235. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Mãn Giác might not have died in 1096, because Mãn Giác had a disciple named Bốn Tịnh, who belonged to the ninth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school, and Bốn Tịnh died in 1176 at the age of seventy-seven. Bốn Tịnh, thus, must have been born in 1110 and could not have met Mãn Giác to become his disciple. See *LMT*, p. 210, n. 6.

236. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:30), “Hà Nội Province,” wrote: “Mount Ninh Sơn was nineteen miles to the north of the district town Chương Đức, opposite the Hát River. Under the Lê a provincial palace was built there as a recreation place.” According to the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:16–17), Chương Đức District was contiguous to Thanh Oai District in the east, to Mỹ Lương District Sơn Tây Province to the west, Hoài An District to the south, and Yên Sơn District Sơn Tây Province to the north. Chương Đức is thus now Chương Mỹ District, Hà Đông Province.

237. Ứng Thiên Prefecture, also called Nam Kinh, was a prefecture belonging to the capital Thăng Long. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:264, n. 1. See *LMT*, p. 210, n. 2.

238. The name Kim Bài appeared twice in our text. Thần Nghi’s biography said: “Zen Master Thần Nghi of Thảng Quang Temple Village, Kim Bài . . .” (39b8). Kim Bài thus must be a geographical unit larger than a village. Yet in this biography Kim Bài is said to be a village. Lê Mạnh Thát suggests that there might have been a Kim Bài Village pertaining to Kim Bài Prefecture or Kim Bài Province. See *LMT*, p. 211, n. 3.

239. See A. Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (London, 1949), p. 128.

240. A monk asked Zen Master Zhaozhou: “Does a dog have Buddha-nature?” Zhou said: “No!” See *Wumenguan*, T 48.1:292c21.

241. A monk asked Zen Master Weikuan: “What is the Tao?” The Master said: “The great mountain is beautiful.” The monk continued: “I asked you about the Tao, why are you talking about the beautiful mountain?” Weikuan said: “You only know about the beautiful mountain, how can you attain the Tao?” The monk asked: “Does a dog have Buddha-nature?” Weikuan said: “Yes!” The monk asked: “Do you have it, Teacher?” Weikuan said: “I don’t.” The monk said: “All sentient beings have Buddha-nature, why don’t you alone have it?” Weikuan said: “I’m not all sentient beings.” The monk asked: “If you’re not all sentient beings, are you a Buddha then?” Weikuan said: “I’m not Buddha either.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.255a16–22.

242. Bo Juyi used to come and asked Zen Master Weikuan: “What do you use, sir, to preach the Dharma?” Weikuan said: “Supreme enlightenment clothing one’s body is the precept, speaking from one’s body is the law, acting through one’s body is meditation. Its application is threefold but the goal is one. It is like the rivers of Yangzi, Huang, Huai, and Han; each has its name according to its site. The names are various, yet the nature of water is nondual. Since the precept is the law, and the law is meditation, how could any discrimination arise between them?” See *Chuandeng lu*, 7:255a25–29.

243. At the end of Đạo Huệ’s biography we read: “His disciple Quách Tăng Thống prepared offerings and brought his body back to his native district to cremate it.” Based on this passage, Lê Mạnh Thát suggests that Như Nguyệt must be a district under the Lý. It might have been a brief name for Như Nguyệt Giang Lộ that the *An Nam Chí Lược*, 1:19, has mentioned. Its territory probably includes the villages at the trifurcation at present-day Như Nguyệt Village, including the Yên Phong Village, Yên Phong Prefecture, Bắc Ninh Province.

244. Which is now Chân Hộ Village, Yên Phong Prefecture, Bắc Ninh Province.

245. I.e., Thông Biện, whose last name was Ngô and who was well versed in the *Lotus Sūtra*.

246. According to tradition the Buddha, after leaving home to search for enlightenment, spent six years in the snow mountain (or the forest) practicing austerities. See, for instance, *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* [*Sūtra on the Past and Present Cause and Effect*] T 3.622b4–6. This seems to have a very significant meaning in Vietnamese Buddhism.

247. We read in the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 4:293: “In the spring, the tenth month [of the twelfth year of the Đại Định era (1151)], Princess Thụy Minh passed away.” Thus, in 1151 Princess Thụy Minh, Lý Anh Tông’s grandmother and Lý Thần Tông’s daughter, was already dead. So what is recorded here might be an error.

248. Lý Anh Tông (1136–1175), whose personal name was Thiên Tộ, was the second son of Lý Thần Tông. Anh Tông was particularly interested in geography. During his reign, he traveled to all the islands and areas in the North and the South and had maps drawn and records made about the landscapes of those areas. He had composed a work on geography entitled *Nam Bắc Phiên Giới Địa Đồ*, which is now lost. See *Lược Truyện Các Tác Gia Việt Nam*, 1: 147; *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:2b4–8b1.

249. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:73), “Hà Nội Province,” wrote: “Bảo Thiên Temple was located at Thiên Thi Village, Thọ Xương Prefecture, formerly called Bảo Thiên, erected by Lý Thánh Tông. The emperor also had the Đại Thắng Tự Thiên Stupa erected, which stood about a few dozen yards high, consisting of twelve stories. Thánh Tông also had 12,000 pounds of copper taken from the royal store to build the bell.” The *Việt Sử Lược* and the *Toàn Thư* recorded that in 1056 Lý Thánh Tông had the Sùng Khánh Bảo Thiên built, and the following year he had the Đại Thắng Tự Thiên Stupa erected.

250. According to both the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:7b9, and the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 4:299, the tenth year of the Chính Long Bảo Ứng era was the year of *nhâm thìn* and not *ất bợi*. Lê Mạnh Thát pointed out that none of the years during the Chính Long Bảo Ứng era (1163–1172) was the year of *ất bợi*. See *LMT*, p. 214, n. 8.

251. *Diệu thể* 妙体 [Ch: *miaoti*] in the original; obviously means the Dharmakāya.

252. Note a mispunctuation in the *Dại Nam* (19a10) here: a period is placed at the end of the words Thăng Long, which reads: *tống xá lợi an trí thăng long* 送舍利安置升龍 [brought his remains to be kept in Thăng Long]. However, the punctuation should be before the words Thăng Long, since they are the site where Vạn Tuế Temple was located. This temple was the abode of Zen Master Biện Tài, only a paragraph of whose biography was recorded following Đạo Huệ’s biography. It reads as follows [24a11–24b1]: Zen Master Biện Tài of Vạn Tuế Temple\* in the capital of Thăng Long was a native of Guangzhou who came to our country during the reign of Lý Thánh Tông.† He received the Dharma from National Preceptor Thông Biện and, obeying the royal edict, edited the *Chiếu Đối Lục* [Collated Biographies].‡

253. According to the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:17), “Sơn Tây Province, Kiến Trí Diên Cách section,” Mỹ Lương District formerly was Quảng Oai District. According to *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:482, it is Mỹ Lăng 美浪, and not Mỹ Lương 美良, which nowadays belongs to Hòa Bình Province.

254. Here it is only said that Bảo Giám was a native of Trung Thụy Village, yet in Quảng Nghiêm’s biography we read that his temple, Tịnh Quả, was in Trung Thụy, Trường Canh (36a11). Regarding Trường Canh, we read in the

\* The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:3a6, wrote: “In the same year (i.e., 1011), in the precincts of the city were built the Thái Thanh Palace, the Vạn Tuế temple . . .” The *Tây Hồ Chí*, section on “Temples,” wrote: “Vạn Niên Temple was located to the west of Tây Hồ (West Lake) in the territory of Quán La Village, formerly called Vạn Tuế, subsequently changed to Vạn Niên. In the fifth year, *giáp dần*, of the Thuận Thiên era (1014), the General Supervisor of Monks of the Right Office petitioned to establish an altar there to ordain monks. The emperor granted permission. During that period, eminent monks such as Lâm Huệ Sinh, Lý Thảo Đường, successively became its abbot. Afterward, there was an extraordinary monk from Guangzhou who made his abode there. He also edited the *Collated Biographies*, which is still in circulation. This temple still exists today.”

† The text has Hiếu Thánh Tông. *Hiếu* 孝 should be emended as *Lý* 李.

‡ The *Chiếu Đối Lục* [Collated Biographies] was also mentioned in Thần Nghi’s biography (40a9) as *Chiếu Đối Bản*, whereas here it is called *Chiếu Đối Lục*. This text is lost, and the *Tây Hồ Chí*, a work written after 1851, was the only book that mentioned this work.



*Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 6:65, that “the Lý and Trần dynasties established the Trương Canh District at Đan Phụng.” The same book (6:63) also tells us that Trung Thủy Village belongs to Đan Phụng District.

255. These are the principal scriptures of Confucianism. The *Book of Odes* recorded some of the most ancient folk poems and songs of China. Tradition has it that Confucius edited it. The *Book of Documents* is a book of history. The *Book of Rites* recorded the rites and rules of behavior of ancient China. The *Book of Changes* is, among other things, a book of divination.

256. On this rank, see *An Nam Chí Lược*, 14:133.

257. See Dongshan Liangjie’s “*Baojing Sanmei Ge*” [Song of the Precious Mirror of Concentration]:

The archer Yi relies on the strength of his skills,  
Hits the target within a hundred feet everytime.  
But what makes the tip the arrow hit [the mark],  
Does not have anything to do with the strength of his skills.

See *Rentian yanmu*, T 48.321b5. See also *Huainanzi*, 20, 3b4–6.

258. The *Buddhabhūmisūtra* uses the metaphor of space to describe the ten characteristics of the *Dharmadhātu* [the Realm of Ultimate Reality] or the ground of the Tathāgata’s wisdom. The original Sanskrit of this *sūtra* is lost. The Tibetan text is found in Nishio Kyoo, *The Buddhabhūmi-sūtra*, pp. 4–8. Chinese text in *Buddhabhūmi-sūtra*, T 16.721a4–b11. For Śīlabhadra’s commentary, see Nishio, part 2, pp. 213–28; for Bandhuprabha’s commentary, see *Buddhabhūmusūtra-sāstra*, T 26.304b25–306a18.

259. There is definitely some confusion regarding the name Không Lộ. The biography of a man by the name of Không Lộ has been recorded in many books. See, for instance, *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái* (*Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:173–74); *An Nam Chí Lược*, 15:147. According to the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:384, n. 4), the biography of a certain Không Lộ is also recorded in the *Thịnh Thánh Vương Không Lộ Thiền Sư Đại Khoa*. This book is unfortunately not available to me at the present time.

260. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, “Nam Định Province, section on Temples and Shrines,” records: “Thần Quang Temple, formerly Nghiêm Quang, is located at Dừng Nhuệ Village, Giao Thủy District. A big temple, which used to be the abode of Dương Không Lộ, it is now considered to be miraculous. Whenever there is calamity or drought people would come to the temple and pray, and every time their prayer is answered.”

261. According to our text, Giác Hải belonged to the tenth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school. His biography is recorded in many literary sources.

262. Hà Trạch Temple might be the temple of Lôi Hà Trạch, a Zen Master, who, according to Thông Biện, was the same generation as Mai Viên Chiếu and Nhan Quảng Trí. See n. 223 to Thông Biện’s biography. Ngô Thì Sĩ remarked in *Việt Sử Tiêu Án* (p. 143): “The Lý dynasty supported Buddhism. Since Vạn Hạnh became famous, people took after him. Then there were Dương Không Lộ and Nguyễn Giác Hải, both natives of Hải Thanh, who served Hà Trạch as their teacher. . . .”

263. The *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:211, recorded as follows about Không Lộ: “Zen Master Không Lộ was a monk from Giao Thủy Prefecture. He could fly in the air and walk on water, tame tigers and subdue dragons. [His supernatural

powers] were magnificent and multifarious. No one was able to fathom them.” Note that the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* does not agree with the *Thiền Uyển* and the *Đại Nam* as regards where Không Lộ came from. The *An Nam Chí Nguyên* said nothing about Không Lộ’s relationship with Giác Hải but recorded that Giác Hải also hailed from Giao Thủy. The *An Nam Chí Nguyên* was composed later, when geographic names might have been changed. The fact that it recorded that Không Lộ and Giác Hải came from the same place simply confirms that these two masters were actually religious companions, since according to the *Thiền Uyển*, Không Lộ and Giác Hải came from the same place [i.e., Hải Thanh]. Note that the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái* recorded in another story about Minh Không that formerly Minh Không lived at a temple named Không Lộ at Giao Thủy Village. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:80.

264. The King of Emptiness means the Buddha, because he has realized the emptiness of all phenomena. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.303b5.

265. Zen Master Zongxin told his teacher Daowu: “Since I’ve been here I haven’t been given instruction about the essence of the mind.” Daowu said: “Ever since you’ve been here there hasn’t been a moment that I didn’t give you instruction about the essence of the mind.” Zongxin said: “When did you instruct me?” Daowu said: “You brought the tea, I took it. When you greeted me, I bowed my head. When have I not instructed you about the essence of the mind?” See *Chuandeng lu*, 14:313b19–22. See also Shenhui’s remark in his biography in *ibid.*, 324b6.

266. One night Zen Master Yaoshan was walking on the mountain chanting a *sūtra*. It was a cloudless night and the moon was clear. Yaoshan burst out laughing, and his laughter traveled ninety miles until it reached the east of Liyang. On that occasion Governor Li Ao composed a poem dedicated to him:

He has found a remote site that brings rustic joys,  
The entire year he greeted no one, bade farewell to no one.  
At times he would climb to the solitary mountaintops,  
And utter a laughter under the moon and the floating clouds.

See *Chuandeng lu*, 14:312b22.

According to the *Đại Nam*, Không Lộ’s personal name was recorded as Chí Thành or Minh Không, his family name was Nguyễn, and Không Lộ was apparently his Dharma name. In the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái* there are two biographies: one of Không Lộ and one of Nguyễn Minh Không. According to this book, Không Lộ’s family name was Dương and he was a native of Hải Thanh District. This Không Lộ was a religious companion of Giác Hải, also of Hải Thanh, and both served Master Hà Trạch in their early days as monks. The other biography is of Zen Master Minh Không. According to this, Minh Không’s personal name was Nguyễn Chí Thành. He was a native of Đại Hoàng Đàm Xá District, Trường An, and was a disciple of Từ Đạo Hạnh. It was this Nguyễn Minh Không who cured Lý Thần Tông’s illness. It is quite clear that according to *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái*, Dương Không Lộ and Nguyễn Minh Không were two different persons: Minh Không was a disciple of Từ Đạo Hạnh, Không Lộ was a companion of Giác Hải. Some earlier authors, such as Hồ Nguyên Trừng and Phan Huy Chú, were of the opinion that there was only one Không Lộ (*Thơ Văn Lý Trần*). It is difficult to say whether there was only

one Không Lộ since not only are different family names given but also different dates regarding his death. The *Thiền Uyển* recorded that he died in 1119; the *Toàn Thư*, 1141, whereas in the present biography we have 1151. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:80–81; 92–94; 172–74; 229–33. I am of the opinion that Dương Không Lộ and Nguyễn Minh Không are two different persons, and that it was the compiler(s) of the *Thiền Uyển* who inadvertently mixed two biographies into one and took Minh Không and Không Lộ to be one and the same person. Note that the *Việt Điện* also recorded that Đạo Hạnh, Minh Không and Giác Hải were religious companions. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:221–25.

See Appendix II for complete translations of Không Lộ's biography from the *Dại Nam* and the *Linh Nam*.

267. The text has Kiệt Trì but should definitely be amended to Kiệt Đặc. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Mount Chí Linh is identical with Mount Phụng Hoàng, Kiệt Đặc. This is based on the description of Mount Phụng Hoàng in the *Lịch Triều Hiến Chương Loại Chí* and the description of Mount Chí Linh, Kiệt Đặc, in *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí* and *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*. Kiệt Đặc Village is now Chí Linh District, Hải Dương Province. See *LMT*, p. 220, n. 1. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:506, n. 1.

268. Now Phù Diễn Village, Hoài Đức District, Hà Đông Province.

269. On Ngụy Quốc Bảo, see *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:263, 265, 269, 271, 273.

270. Lê River [Li in Chinese] is in Yunnan (China). It is also called Jinsha River. According to the *Hanfeizi*, chapter “Daoyan,” there was gold in the Li River in Jingnan. The government put a ban on panning gold from it. Those who violated it would be killed and their bodies exposed in the marketplace. Yet people continued stealing gold, knowing that they would not be apprehended. Hanfeizi remarked: “Even with the severe punishment of being killed and one's corpse being exposed, if we cannot catch those who do it, the stealing will not cease.” See *LMT*, p. 221, n. 6.

271. According to this, Bồn Tịnh died in 1176 at the age of seventy-six. Thus, he must have been born in 1100. If that is the case, Bồn Tịnh could not have “received the essence [of Zen] from Master Mãn Giác of Giáo Nguyên Temple” as the text has it, since Mãn Giác died in 1096 at the age of forty-five. Either the year of Mãn Giác's death or the lifespan of Bồn Tịnh is incorrect.

272. Now Phù Cầm Village, Yên Phong District, Bắc Ninh Province.

273. *Nhược quan* 弱冠 [Ch: *ruo guan*]: in ancient China when a young man reached the age of twenty, a “hat” (*quan*) ritual was organized for him to mark his maturity. Subsequently, the expression *ruo guan* was used to denote a young man around twenty years old.

274. I.e., the *Renwang panruo boluomi jing*, trans. Kumārajīva, 2 vols., T 8.245. This probably was the text in circulation during the Lý dynasty. There is an earlier translation by Amoghavajra in 765 bearing the same title and also in two volumes. See also T 8.246.

275. This probably refers to a dialogue between the two Zen masters Shitou and Yinfeng recorded in the *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.259b11: “One day while Shitou was cutting grass, Yinfeng stood by one side, his arms folded. Shitou threw the sickle down in front of him cutting a blade of grass. Yinfeng said,

'Venerable sir, you can only cut this one, not that one.' Shitou picked up his sickle. Yinfeng took it and made a gesture as if he were cutting grass. Shitou said, 'You can only cut that one, not this one.'"

276. According to the *Vimalakīrtinīrdeśa-sūtra*, when all the Bodhisattvas had given their explanations on the principle of nonduality, Mañjuśrī asked Vimalakīrti to elucidate on the subject. Vimalakīrti just kept silence, saying nothing at all. Mañjuśrī then praised Vimalakīrti for giving the profoundest explanation of nonduality. See Étienne Lamotte, *L'enseignement de Vimalakīrti* (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1962), p. 317; Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, p. 77.

277. I.e., the doctrinal school as opposed to the Zen School.

278. One day Zen Master Yangshan Huiji was talking to a monk when another monk who stood next to them said, "Talking is Mañjuśrī, keeping silent is Vimalakīrti." Huiji said, "Neither talking nor keeping silent, isn't that you?" The monk had no answer. Huiji said, "Why haven't you shown your supernatural power?" The monk said, "I'm not declining to show my supernatural power. I'm only afraid that you will include me among the adherents of the verbal teaching." Huiji said, "Considering where you're coming from, you're not the eye of the transmission outside the teaching yet." See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.283b29–c3.

279. *Hí dì* 希夷 [Ch: *xī yí*] are terms borrowed from the *Daodejing*. See Ellen M. Chen, *The Tao Te Ching* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), p. 88.

280. *Yang yan* 陽焰, see *Lankāvatāra-sūtra*, T 16.491a7–10.

281. The *Dai Nam* (23b3) has *sắc tướng* 色相 [form and characteristic] instead of *sắc thân* [the form body].

282. Self-immolation, such as burning one's finger, is a form of offering to the Buddha or showing one's seriousness in taking a particular vow. This practice is still observed in Vietnamese Buddhism.

283. On the three contemplations according to the *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment*, see n. 88.

284. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3, the fifth year of the Thiên Từ Gia Thụy era (1190) was the year *canh tuất* and not *canh thân*, which was the fifteenth year of the Thiên Từ Gia Thụy (1200). It is possible that the word *thập* 十 [ten] might have been inadvertently omitted before the word *ngũ* 五 [five].

285. See Great Master Xiangyan Jideng's verse:

The chick pecks from inside while the mother pecks  
from outside,  
The mother and the chick are both forgotten,  
Responding to the conditions properly.  
They rise in harmony,  
One leg in the wondrous cloud.

See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.452b16–18. See also *Biyan lu*, T 48.156a21–24: "A monk asked Jingqing, 'I spit, will you please peck, Teacher.' Jingqing said, 'Can you be alive again?' The monk said, 'If I can't, I would be derided by people.' Jingqing said, 'There goes another scarecrow.'"

286. *Hóa* 化 [Ch: *hua*] in the original text, literally meaning "to transform," an honorific term for "die."

287. Phúc Châu [Fuzhou] was a prefecture since the Tang dynasty. Formerly called Minzhou, nowadays it belongs to Fujian Province, China. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:477, n. 1; “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 249.

288. Dharma-Eye (*dharma-cakṣu*) is one among the “Five Eyes,” namely, the Physical-Eye (*māṃsa-cakṣus*), Divine-Eye (*divya-cakṣus*), Wisdom-Eye (*prajñā-cakṣus*), Dharma-Eye (*dharma-cakṣus*), and Buddha-Eye (*buddha-cakṣus*). When a practitioner attains the Dharma-eye, he enters the Dharma (truth). See Hajime Nakamura, *Bukkyō jiten*, p. 266r.

289. One day Zen Master Jiashan Shanhui was coming up to the teaching hall when Daowu came with his staff. A monk asked: “What is the Truth Body?” Jiashan said: “The Truth Body is without form.” The monk continued: “What is the Dharma-eye?” Jiashan said: “The dharma-eye is stainless.” He again said: “There is no Dharma in front of the eye. There is only consciousness in front of the eye. The Dharma is not within range of ear and eye.” Daowu laughed. Jiashan became confused and asked him: “What are you laughing about?” Daowu said: “Venerable sir, you’re the type who has left the world to become a monk yet hasn’t met a teacher. You should go to Zhezong, Huating Village, to study with the Venerable Chuanzi.” Jiashan said: “Can I still go see him?” Daowu said: “That teacher, above there’s no single tile to cover his head, below there’s not enough ground for him to stick an awl into.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.323c25–324a7.

290. A monk asked Zen Master Jiashan Shanhui: “Since the old days the intentions of the patriarchs and the teachings have been established, why are you, Venerable Sir, teaching nonbeing?” Jiashan said: “I haven’t been eating rice for three years, there is no puppet in front of my eyes.” See *Chuandeng lu*, 324a20–21.

291. Compare with a verse by Zen Master Jiashan Shanhui:

One who is clear in mind does not attain enlightenment,  
Only the deluded ones attain enlightenment.  
I’m just a guy who lies at leisure with my legs stretched out,  
I’m concerned neither with true nor false.

292. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (28b10) and the *Dại Nam* (25a5) have *khoa* 跨, which should be emended to *khoa* 跨. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:478.

293. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.287b17; 384b28; 397a8–9.

294. “A young novice after serving Zen Master Jiashan Shanhui for many years left him to go search for other Zen adepts all over the country without achieving any spiritual attainment. The novice then heard that people were flocking to Shanhui to study Zen. He himself returned to Shanhui and asked, ‘Teacher, you have something so special, why didn’t you tell me before?’ Shanhui said, ‘You cooked the rice, I blew on the fire; you begged for alms, I carried the bowl. When did I ever let you down?’ The novice became enlightened.” See *Chuandeng lu*, 15:324b2–7.

295. Compare with the passage in Jiashan Shanhui’s biography: “On the seventh day of the eleventh month of the first year, *xinchou*, of the Zhonghua era of the Tang (881), the Master invited his patrons over and said, ‘I have been discussing the Dharma with the monks for many years. Each of you should yourself grasp the profound intention of the Buddha’s teaching. My illusory body has reached its time, I’m going to leave this world. You should

take care of yourselves just as in the days when I was still with you. Don't be like the ordinary people and start grieving.' His instructions finished, at midnight, he silently passed away." See *Chuangdeng lu*, 15:324b22–26.

296. The *tí* hour or hour of the rat is midnight.

297. Jiashan Shanhui's biography is found in the *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.323c20–324b28.

298. I.e., the *Huệ Nhật Liệt Tổ Yếu Nghĩa* [Record of Essential Sayings of the Patriarchs by Master Huệ Nhật]. This work is mentioned twice in our text, once here and another time in Nguyễn Học's biography (36a9). Based on this we can say that some of the dialogues in our text are taken from this work. In these two biographies, although most of the encounter dialogues are similar to those that take place in Shanhui's and Huisi's biographies in the *Chuangdeng lu*, the compiler of our text did not correct them because "they have been recorded in the *Essential Sayings* of Master Huệ Nhật." We know nothing about who Huệ Nhật was and when he lived, although we might have a rough idea about the content of his book.

299. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:11a8, "[in] the sixth year, *kỷ hợi*, of the Long Thụy Thái Bình era (1059) . . . the Sùng Nghiêm Báo Đức Temple was built in Vũ Ninh Province." Thus, its complete name was Sùng Nghiêm Báo Đức.

300. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:33–34) "Bắc Ninh Province" wrote: "Mount Trâu Sơn, also called Mount Vũ Ninh, is located twelve miles east of Quế Đường District-Town." The book also tells us that Mount Vũ Ninh was also the site where the Vietnamese legendary hero Phù Đổng Thiên Vương defeated the Yin army. According to the *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, Mount Vũ Ninh is at Vũ Ninh Châu. See also "Le Bouddhisme," p. 249, *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:512, n. 1.

301. According to Trần Văn Giáp *Đông Tác* was a village situated in Hoàn Long District, Hà Đông Province. See "Le Bouddhisme," p. 249, n. 3.

302. On the *Avatamsaka-Sūtra* see T 10, no 279.

303. Also called *Puxian puta xingyuan zan*, T 10.880a1–882c17. This is the same as the *Tốc Tật Mãn Phổ Hiền Hạnh Nguyên Đà La Ni* but was later made a separate work.

304. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:11a6–8, wrote: "In the spring [of the tenth year, *ất tị*, of the Trinh Phù era (1185)] Lord Kiến Ninh, Long Ích, led twelve thousand troops to fight the tribal Lao of the Linh settlement in revenge for the La Biều's defeat. On his arrival at the Đồ Gia Hamlet, Long Ích sent emissaries to reassure and win over the rebels." Lord Kiến Ninh is thus the title of Lý Long Ích, son of Emperor Lý Anh Tông. The *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 4:304, also recorded the same event, yet has "Kiến Khương Vương" instead of "Kiến Ninh Vương." On Kiến Ninh Vương, see *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:512.

305. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:7b2–3, records as follows about Princess Thiên Cực: "[In] the fifth year, *đinh hợi*, of the Chính Long Bảo Ứng era (1167). . . Princess Thiên Cực was married to the Marquis of Hoài Trung, Chief of Lạng Châu." Among the events of the fifth year of the Trị Bình Ứng Long era (1209), the same text (3:19b4–7) wrote: "The emperor sent Phạm Du to Hồng Lộ to train troops for an eventual fight against the Thuận Lưu. When the Hồng Lộ men came to take him at the appointed time, Du was making love to Princess Thiên Cực and had forgotten all about the appointment and missed it. He



then took a galley and sailed to the Cổ Châu landing stage, went ashore and walked to the A Cao Village at Ma Lăng where he was seized by Nguyễn Nâu and Nguyễn Nãi, natives of Bắc Giang, and handed over to Prince Sảm who killed him.” And again among the events of the first year of the Kiến Gia era (1211) we read (3:22a7–8): “In the sixth month, one night Tô Trung Tự went to Gia Lâm Mansion to make love to Princess Thiên Cực and was killed by her husband Vương Thương, an orderly officer.” See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:512.

306. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:115) “Sơn Tây Province,” section on “Temples and Shrines” mentioned a temple named Hồ Nham under the Mạc. This might have been the temple built by Đại Xả under the Lý.

307. According to the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 4:296, Đỗ Anh Vũ died in the autumn, the eighth month of the nineteenth year of the Đại Định era (1158). If the *Toàn Thư* is correct, Đỗ Anh Vũ would not have been alive during the Thiên Cảm Chí Bảo era (1174–1175).

308. Solitary Buddhas are sages who attain enlightenment through contemplating the doctrine of dependent origination. See Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyō jiten*, 76r–77l.

309. The original text (29b8) has *thuyết* 說 which means to speak or preach. However, it is obvious in this context that “contemplate” would make better sense.

310. Emperor Wu of Liang, a.k.a. Xiaoyan, was the one who overthrew the Qi in South China and founded the Liang dynasty in 502. In 549 Houjing rebelled and forced him to die at Dacheng. Liang Wudi was usually considered one of the most devout Buddhists among the Chinese sovereigns.

311. Zen Master Baozhi (419?–515) interpreted some auguries for Liang Wudi. For his biography, see *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.429c18–430a23.

312. This dialogue is very similar to the one between Emperor Wu of Liang and Baozhi in the *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.430a6–11: “One day, Emperor Wu of Liang asked Baozhi, ‘I have many afflictions, what is the method to deal with them?’ Baozhi said, ‘By means of the twelve [links of dependent origination].’”

313. The four serpents symbolize the four elements. See *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra*, T 12.23:501c24–27.

314. Here the box symbolizes the body.

315. See Zen Master Cuiyan’s “Dialogue about Meritorious Accomplishments”:

The mud ox drinks up the moon in a clear pond,  
The stone horse under heavy whip doesn’t turn his head.

See *Rentian yanmu*, T 48.316b5–6.

316. Probably because of Đỗ Anh Vũ’s pressure. See also n. 307 above.

317. According to *Cương Mục Toàn Biên* 3:15a1–4: “Vũ Bình originally belonged to Phong Khế Vi, established around the beginning of the Ngô, comprising seven districts. Under the Sui its status as a county was abolished and it was changed into Long Bình District. Under the Tang it was again changed into Vũ Bình District, and subsequently Đăng Châu. Under the Đinh and the Lê it became Thái Bình Prefecture. The Trần changed it into Khoái Lộ. . . . It is now the territory of Hưng Yên Province.”



former teacher, who asked him, ‘After you left me, did you achieve anything in particular?’ Shenzan answered, ‘I have achieved absolutely nothing.’ His teacher had him serve as an attendant. One day he asked Shenzan to bathe him. Shenzan rubbed his back saying, ‘A beautiful temple, yet the Buddha in it is not sacred.’”

328. See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.293a22–23.

329. The main idea of this verse is based on the “Leaving Behind Defilements” section in the *Avatamsakasūtra*, T 10.185a23–b1. “A Bodhisattva, as regards his own possessions, knows when they are sufficient. He is compassionate and forgiving toward others and does not want to violate or harm them. If something belongs to others, he generates the thought that it belongs to others, and thus he does not entertain the thought of thief regarding it. He would not take even a blade of grass or a leaf if it were not given to him, much less things that are of use to others. . . . A Bodhisattva should be content with his own wife and should not have desire for others’ wives. A Bodhisattva should not even generate defiled thoughts toward others’ wives, the females under others’ protection. . . .” Dharmika Subhūti remarks, “he who abstains from the wives of others will obtain the wives he desires; and he who stays away from his own wives, when the place and time are not right, will be reborn as a man.” See Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*, p. 31.

330. It should be Lý Cao Tông instead of Lý Anh Tông, because Thiên Tư Gia Thụy was the reign’s style of Lý Cao Tông (1186–1201).

331. Both the *Lĩnh Nam* and *Việt Điện* contain several different versions of the story of Sóc Thiên Vương. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:115, 222; 2.2:39, 214–15.

332. *Bei* (bồi); see *Hanyu dacidian* (Shanghai, 1989), 10:44r.

333. This is an expression borrowed from the *Zhuangzi*. See Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, p. 10.

334. Someone asked Zen Master Shanhui of Jiashan about the Jiashan landscape. He said:

The monkeys carry their little ones back to the green  
mountain ridges,  
The birds carry flowers in their backs and drop them in front  
of the blue cliffs.

See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.324b20–21; 4:230a6–7.

335. Light and dust, *Daodejing*, chap. 4. See Chen, *Tao Tê Ching*, p. 60.

336. *Tự nhiên* 自然 [Ch: *zì rán*], or spontaneity, is a crucial concept in Taoism. See, for instance, Graham, *Chuang-tzu*, pp. 6–8.

337. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (33a5) and the *Đại Nam* (29a6) have *đào thái* 陶汰 [Ch: *taotai*], which should be emended to *đào dã* 陶冶 [Ch: *taoye*].

338. Iron girl (or more frequently stone girl) and wooden boy are metaphors used in Zen literature to illustrate the wondrous function of Zen. Zen Master Tong’an Cha said in his “Ten Discourses on the Arcane”: “At midnight, the wooden boy puts on his shoes and goes away; at dawn, the stone girl returns wearing her hat.” See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.455c6–7. See also “Gusu shizhi tongzhen wenda”: “Though the wooden boy doesn’t speak, the stone girl turns her head to look.” *Rentian yanmu*, T 48.305c5–6; “Baojing sanmei”: “The wooden man sings, the stone girl dances.” *ibid.*, 321b6–7.

339. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, among the many mountains of the two provinces of Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh recorded in the *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, none has the name Bì Linh. Its name might have been changed. See *LMT*, p. 233, n. 1.

340. Trường An Prefecture located in what is now the prefectures of Yên Khánh, Gia Viễn, and Yên Mô in Ninh Bình Province. See *LMT*, p. 233, n. 2.

341. Lãng Sơn was probably what is at present Lập Thạch District, Sơn Tây Province. See *LMT*, p. 234, n. 4.

342. We read in the biography of Viên Thông, who belonged to the eighteenth generation of the Vinītaruci school: “His [Viên Thông’s] father Đức served during the reign of Lý Nhân Tông (1072–1127) and held offices as high as Secretary for the Academy of Monk on the Left and Right, and had the sobriquet Zen Master Bảo Giác” (68b7–8). Could this Bảo Giác of Viên Minh Temple be Viên Thông’s father? However, Viên Thông died in 1151 at the age of seventy-two; it is highly unlikely that Bảo Giác was still alive after 1151. Yet this biography tells us that this Bảo Giác died in 1173. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:484.

343. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.262c5; 8:263a12–13.

344. The event of Tịnh Giới praying for rain was also recorded in the “Story of the Two Ladies Trung” in *Việt Điện*. According to this, the event took place under Lý Anh Tông: “During a drought Emperor Lý Anh Tông sent Zen Master Tịnh Giới to pray for rain and rain fell, fresh if not chilly. Beaming with joy, the emperor proceeded to the temple and, in a sudden daydream, saw two beautiful young ladies dressed in green and pink, red hatted and girdled, mounting on iron horses and rambling past following the rain. He inquired in surprise and was told, ‘We are the two sisters Trung, we have come down to make rain by order of the King of Heaven.’ When he woke up, he was deeply moved and decreed that the temple was to be restored, and sacrifices prepared. Then he attended himself to the ceremony, and afterwards ordered that the statues be transferred to the commemorative temple of Vũ Sư erected west of the main palace. Afterwards, they again appeared in the emperor’s dream and asked him to build them a temple at Cổ Lai Village. The emperor granted their request and conferred on them the title of Ladies Linh Trinh.” See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:124–25.

According to Tịnh Giới’s biography, the praying for rain took place in the second year of the Trinh Phù era (1177). However, neither the *Việt Sử Lược* nor the *Toàn Thư* recorded any drought during that year. For a description of the ritual of praying for rain in popular Chinese Buddhism, see, for instance, Lewis Hodous, *Buddhism and Buddhists in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), pp. 24–28.

345. Note that the character *bữu* 右 (34a3) should be emended to *bữu* 有.

346. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:9b9–10, wrote: “In the fifth month [of the fourth year, *kỷ hợi*, of the Trinh Phù era (1179)] the Chân Giáo Temple was extended and repaired. The emperor decreed it to be the pilgrimage site on Emperor Anh Tông’s anniversary day.” According to the *Tây Hồ Chí*, “Chân Giáo Temple was on Phúc Tượng Peak of Mount Vân Bảo in the Đại La Citadel. The temple was built in the autumn of the fifteenth year of the Thuận Thiên era (1024) as the site for the emperor to come and attend the chanting of *sūtras*. Of the temple, one section remains nowadays, even the old sign is lost. Therefore,

few know about its origin. The temple is traditionally called Tượng Sơn Temple.” Also, according to the *Tây Hồ Chí*, Mount Vân Bảo is in now Vĩnh Thuần Canton. On this mountain there still exist the remains of the foundations of temples and shrines built during the three dynasties of Lý, Trần, and Lê. See *LMT*, p. 237, n. 9.

347. See *Chuandeng lu*, 394a17–18.

348. On the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* in Mahāyāna Buddhism, see, for instance, David Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1969); Takasaki Jikidō, *Nyoraizō shisō I* (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1988).

349. On Zu Zhi and Bo Ya, see *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:536.

350. See *ibid.*

351. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, the *Quốc Sử* here is probably the *Đại Việt Sử Ký* [Recorded History of Đại Việt], composed by Trần Chu Phổ and Lê Văn Hưu. See *LMT*, p. 237, n. 11. This stele has not been found.

352. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:443, n. 1. For a complete biography of Giác Hải from other sources, see appendix II. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (37:54–55), “Ninh Bình Province, section on Temples and Shrines,” in its record on the Nguyễn Giác Hải Shrine, wrote: “The Nguyễn Giác Hải Shrine is located at Yên Vệ Village, Yên Khánh District. His Holiness’ family name was Nguyễn, his personal name Quốc Y, his sobriquet Giác Hải. He hailed from Giao Thủy, Hải Nam, now Nam Định, and was born around the period of Lý Thái Tông’s reign. As a young man he took up fishing, his father’s trade. Afterward, he followed his mother to Yên Vệ, befriended Nguyễn Minh Không, and went to India to search for the Dharma. After attaining it, he returned to Giao Thủy and became the abbot of Nghiêm Quang Temple.”

353. See also appendix II for the story of Không Lộ and Giác Hải in the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái*.

354. The same verse is also recorded in the *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 4:294.

355. Different from *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:443. Someone asked Zen Master Douzi Datong: “Your Venerable, what scene did you have living here?” Datong said: “A little girl’s tuft of hair, which has become white.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.319c13.

356. The *Thiền Uyển* (35a11) has *liêu giác* 了覺 [Ch: *liaojue*], while the *Đại Nam* (31b2) has *liêu dụng* 了用 [Ch: *liaoyong*]. The *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:443, suggests *bất giác* 不覺 [Ch: *bujue*], which seems to make the best sense.

357. Longmen is in Sichuan, China. Legend has it that there was a big pond called Wumen. In the seventh month the water rose and carp everywhere gathered there, vying to jump over that gate. Those who succeeded were transformed into dragons, whereas those who failed would be marked on the forehead and sent back to where they came from. We also find this metaphor in the biography of Zen Master Lingjiu Ren: Venerable Mingrui asked Zen Master Lingjiu Ren: “What does it mean by ‘quickly attain the Truth Body’?” Ren said: “Once you get to the Dragon Gate, look beyond the clouds. Don’t be a fish that is marked on the forehead in the Yellow River.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.278b18–19.

358. The *Thiền Uyển* (35b2) has *ưng tri kỳ* 應知期 [Ch: *ying zhi qi*]; the *Đại Nam* (31b4) has *kỳ ứng kỳ* 期應期 [Ch: *qi ying qi*]. The correct reading should be *tri kỳ* 知期 [Ch: *zhi qi*].

359. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (35b3) and the *Dại Nam* (31b4) have *mạc tu* 莫須 [Ch: *moxu*]. Here I follow the *Linh Nam Chích Quái*, which reads *mạc tương* 莫將 [Ch: *moxiang*]. See *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:174, 233.

360. The *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:210, wrote: “Zen Master Nguyễn Học was a monk originally from Châu Vũ Ninh. He devoted himself to practicing Zen and looked like a withered tree. He forgot both things and self. Birds and beasts lingered around him and became tame like domestic animals. Sui Gaozu had a stupa erected to dedicate to him.” This is obviously taken from Pháp Hiền’s biography. See the *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu* (16b1) for an exactly similar passage. However, in the same book (16a12) right before it was a passage on Nguyễn Học, which reads: “Zen Master Nguyễn Học was a monk originally from Châu Vũ Ninh who devoted himself to purification practices. Whenever he entered *samādhi*, he would get up only after a few days. Subsequently, he died sitting in the Lotus position.” Thus, what is written about Nguyễn Học in the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* was mistakenly taken from Pháp Hiền’s biography. Since both of them came from Châu Vũ Ninh, the compiler might have omitted a few lines when copying. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:102), “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Buddhist Monks,” records a biographical note about Nguyễn Học, according to which he hailed from Vũ Giang District.

361. *Brahmacārya* in this context means pure moral conduct. See Nakamura Hajime et al., *Bukkyō jiten*, 747r.

362. According to both the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:8a1–8, and the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 4:209–300, the Thiên Cảm Chí Bảo era consisted of only two years, 1174 and 1175. Thus it should be corrected to either Thiên Cảm Chí Bảo first or second year.

363. This is based on Huisi’s verse instructing his students, which reads:

The Dharma is essentially not far away,  
The ocean of True Nature is not immense.  
Try to find it within yourself,  
Do not seek for it from others.  
Even if you find it from them,  
It wouldn’t be the true Dharma.

See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.431b2–4.

364. Compare to the following verse by Huisi:

When the mind-source is suddenly realized, the precious  
treasure is opened,  
The mystery hidden and manifest shows all phenomena.  
Walking alone, sitting alone, one is majestic,  
The emanation bodies that appear are countless.  
Although they fill the entire universe,  
When you look you don’t see the characteristic of even a  
speck of dust.  
How laughable that phenomena are of innumerable forms,  
The true reality is like a jewel radiating bright light.  
Always explaining the inconceivable,  
There is no word which can describe it appropriately.

See *ibid.*, 431b5–9.



365. See *ibid.*, 431a14–c8, for Huisi's biography.

366. This Trí Thiền was definitely the same as Minh Trí. It is said in Minh Trí's biography (26b3) that he was formerly called Thiền Trí. Thiền Trí might have been a scribal error for Trí Thiền or the other way around. Here it is recorded that Trí Thiền was teaching at Phúc Thánh Temple, Diển Lành. In his biography, Minh Trí [i.e., Thiền Trí] is said to be a monk of Phúc Thánh Temple, Diển Lành. Besides, Quảng Nghiêm belonged to the eleventh generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông school, while Minh Trí belonged to the tenth generation.

367. *Sayings of Xuedou* or *Sayings of Mingjue* in 6 books, T 47. 669a12–711c22, by Zen Master Chongxian (980–1052) of Mount Xuedou, Mingzhou. He was given the posthumous name Mingjue by the Song emperor.

368. See *Biyan lu*, T 48.198a: Daoyu and Jianyuan went to a funeral. Jianyuan tapped on the coffin and said: "Life or death?" Daoyu said: "Life doesn't talk, death doesn't talk." Jianyuan asked: "Why not?" Daoyu said: "Not talking means not talking." See also *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.321b1–4.

369. See *Vajracchedikā-Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, T 8:750b29.

370. Dazhu Huihai asked a monk who lectured on the *Diamond Sūtra*: "Who speaks this *sūtra*?" The monk said: "Are you kidding? Isn't it the Buddha who speaks it?" Huihai said: "It is said in the *sūtra* that if you say that the Tathāgata preaches the Dharma, you are slandering the Buddha, and do not understand the meaning of my words." See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.247a2–5.

371. Kiến Sơ stands for Vô Ngôn Thông because according to tradition the latter made his abode at Kiến Sơ Temple when he first arrived in Vietnam. Âu means Đào Huệ because his family name was Âu.

372. See Zen Master Tong'an Cha's "Ten Talks on the Arcane": "A man should have sky-high aspirations, do not follow the footsteps of the Tathāgata." *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.455b16–17.

373. According to the *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:72), "Bắc Ninh Province, section on Temples and Shrines," Lục Tổ Temple was identical with Trường Liêu Temple. The *Sử Ký* recorded that Master Vạn Hạnh was the abbot of that temple. When he died Emperor Lý Thái Tổ himself came to pay homage and had an altar erected to pray for his salvation. He also assigned men as temple attendants to look after worship services the whole year." According to this, we have on the one hand Trường Liêu Temple at Tiêu Sơn, Yên Phong District; on the other hand, it is said in this biography that Lục Tổ Temple was at Dịch Bảng Village, Thiên Đức Prefecture, now Đình Bảng Village, Từ Sơn Prefecture. Thus, Lục Tổ Temple and Trường Liêu Temple could not be identical.

374. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, the Phù Ninh Village in Thường Chiếu's biography is the same as the present-day Phù Ninh Village in Từ Sơn Prefecture, Hà Bắc Province, which is located south of Đình Bảng Village and north of Phù Đồng Village. See *LMT*, p. 241, n. 2.

375. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:3b6, wrote: "In the summer, the fourth month [of the fourth year, *quí hợi*, of the Đại Định era (1143)] . . . the Quang Tự Palace was built as the empress dowager's residence."

376. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, it is now Đông Mạc Quarter in the capital of Hà Nội.

377. Note that in Mahāyāna Buddhist literature, the term "mind" sometimes is used in the sense of the conceptualizing mind which, to be specific, is consciousness (*viññāna*) or the impure aspect of mind. "Mind" sometimes is

used to denote the pure mind, or the inherent Buddha wisdom or Buddha nature or, in this context, the *Tathāgatagarbha*. Mind in this connection means consciousness and not *Tathāgatagarbha*.

378. For an interesting investigation of the early Chinese Buddhists' understanding of the "Buddha body" theory, see Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 223–29.

379. The statement that "all phenomena are originally of nirvana" is part of the fundamental ontology enunciated in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature that "all phenomena are without intrinsic nature, nonoriginated, nonannihilated, originally calm, and essentially quiescent" (*niḥsvabhāvāḥ sarvadharma anuṭpannāḥ sarvadharma aniruddhā ādiśāntāḥ prakṛtiparinirvṛtāḥ*). This doctrine was subsequently embraced by all the schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially the Yogācāra. See, for instance, the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, p. 193. The same formula can be found in the *Ratnameghasūtra*, quoted in *Madhyamakavṛtti*, p. 225, 1.9, and *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, *Le Muséon*, 1903, p. 394, 1.13: *ādiśāntā hy anuṭpannāḥ prakṛtyaiva ca nirvṛtāḥ dharmāḥ te vivṛtā nātha dharmacakra-pravartanell*. See also *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, 11, 51, reconstructed from the Tibetan by Sylvain Lévi in his translation, p. 122: *niḥsvabhāvatayā siddhā uttarot-taranīśrayāt! anuṭpannāniruddhbādiśāntaprakṛtinirvṛtāḥ!*

380. *Avatamsakasūtra*, T 10.275b17–276a6.

381. This work is mentioned twice in the *Thiền Uyển*, once in Ma Ha's biography and one in Đạo Huệ's biography. According to the "Nghệ Văn Chí" [Description of Arts and Literature] in Lê Quý Đôn's *Dại Việt Thông Sử* [General History of Đại Việt], it was composed by Thường Chiếu. The "Văn Tịch Chí" [Chapter on Descriptive Bibliography] in the *Lịch Triều Hiến Chương Loại Chí* informs us that the *Diagram* had a preface written by Lương Thế Vinh. See *Les Chapitres*, pp. 96 and 140; "Bibliographie annamite," p. 139. This work is not extant nowadays. According to the records of Lê Quý Đôn and Phan Huy Chú, Thường Chiếu also composed another work entitled *Thích Đạo Khoa Giáo* [Instructions on Buddhism]. The *Thiền Uyển* did not mention this work.

382. The text has *thông sư cư sĩ* 通師居士 [layman Thông Sư], but he was otherwise known as Thông Thiền, who was identical with Thông Thiền mentioned in Túc Lự's biography.

383. *Thỉnh ích* 請益 [Ch: *qǐng yì*] is one among eighteen ways to ask for instruction. See "Eighteen Ways of Inquiry by Fenyang" in *Rentian yanmu*, T 48.307c3–308a25.

384. Xuanzang (604–664), one of the premier figures in Chinese Buddhism, translated many significant Indian Buddhist texts into Chinese and was responsible for the propagation of Yogācāra philosophy in China. For his biography, see T 50.2053. I have not been able to trace this saying.

385. Ngoại Trại was mentioned twice in the *Việt Sử Lược*: "On the day of *mậu ngọ* [in the sixth year, *bính tí*, of the Kiến Gia era (1216)] the emperor went to Ngoại Trại and sent an emissary to TỰ KHÁNH asking for troops to repress Nhuệ" (*Việt Sử Lược*, 3:29b7). And: "In the winter, the twelfth month [of the fourteenth year, *giáp thân*, of the Kiến Gia era (1224)], Mount Phật Tích at Ngoại Trại cracked open crevices thirty yards long" (*ibid.*, 3:32b3–4).

386. According to the Zen tradition, Bodhidharma died on Mount Xionger [Bear Ear]. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.220b4–5.

387. According to the Zen tradition, Bodhidharma passed away on the fifth day of the tenth month of the nineteenth year of the Taihua era under

Hsiaomingdi of the Later Wei and was interred on the twenty-eighth day of the twelfth month of the same year on Mount Xionger. A stupa was erected in Tinglin Temple [to house his remains]. Three years after that, Song Yun of Wei, on his way back from a diplomatic trip to India, saw Bodhidharma walking leisurely on Mount Congling, his hand carrying one of his shoes. Song Yun asked where he was going. Bodhidharma said he was going back to India. Later, Song Yun reported the event to Zhuangdi, who gave an order to open Bodhidharma's coffin. All they saw was an empty coffin with a single shoe in it. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.220a-b.

388. See *ibid.*, 303a28–29; 368a21–23.

389. These works are not extant.

390. Thường Chiếu said there must be a good reason for Thông Biện not to record the two Zen schools of Đại Điền and Bát Nhã. However, in his reply to Empress Dowager Phù Thánh Cẩm Linh Nhân's inquiry about the Zen schools in Vietnam, Thông Biện did not even mention these two names. Lê Mạnh Thát's suggestion that Nguyễn Đại Điền here must be the same as Đại Điền in Từ Đạo Hạnh's biography is totally baseless. Nguyễn Bát Nhã was Zen Master Bát Nhã of Từ Quang Phúc Thánh Temple at Dịch Vương Village, Thường Canh. Tradition has it that he was a disciple of Zen Master Thảo Đường. See Appendix I.

391. My translation is based on Lê Mạnh Thát's suggestion that the words *Đồ Bản* here mean the *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ* and the *Chiếu Đối Bản*.

392. Na Ngạn, see *Toàn Thư*, 1:347, n. 53. Nothing else is known about Ân Không.

393. *Pháp khí* 法器 [Ch: *fa qi*] literally means “vessel of the Dharma.” The term is used to indicate someone who is capable of receiving and transmitting the Dharma.

394. The five sins consist of the unwholesome acts whose retribution is *Avīci* hell. These five sins are: (1) patricide, (2) matricide, (3) murdering an arhat, (4) shedding blood from the body of a Buddha, and (5) causing division among the monk congregation. The seven obscurations are the kind of sins that obstruct one from receiving Bodhisattva's precepts. These seven sins are: (1) shedding blood from the body of a Buddha, (2) patricide, (3) matricide, (4) murdering an elder monk, (5) murdering one's teacher, (6) harming monks who are capable of turning the Wheel of Dharma, and (7) murdering a sage. See *Fanwangjing*, T 24.100bc1; see also *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*, T 15, no. 626.

395. According to the *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí*, Mount Yên Tử was at Nam Mậu Village, Đông Triều. It was also called Mount Tượng Sơn. See *LMT*, p. 247, n. 1.

396. The three teachings in this connection mean the three religions: Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

397. This seems based on a metaphor in the “Chapter on Belief and Understanding” in the *Lotus Sūtra*. See Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, pp. 84–100.

398. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:10a11, wrote: “In the winter [of the fifth year, *canh tí*, of the Trinh Phù era (1180)], Princess Hoa Dương was married to Hà Phu, chief of Vi Long Province.” Princess Hoa Dương is thus the daughter of Emperor Lý Anh Tông.

399. *Kinh hành* 經行 [Ch: *jīng xíng*] is a kind of walking meditation that

has its roots in Indian Buddhist practice. In traditional Vietnamese Buddhism, however, the practice of *kính bân* is associated with the worship of Amitābha Buddha. It can be described briefly as follows: (1) During the summer retreat, after lunchtime, the monks would circumambulate three times in the main hall while doing the recitation of Buddha's name, usually Amitābha Buddha's name. (2) The practice is a little different in some ancient temples: in the morning or evening, after the *sūtra*-chanting, usually the *Śūraṅgama-Sūtra* and *Heart Sūtra*, the monks circumambulate the Buddha statute in the patriarch hall three times. This kind of practice seems to have some root in the ritual of circumambulation (*pradakṣina*) of the stupa in Indian Buddhism. See, for instance, Luis O. Gómez, "Buddhism in India," in Joseph M. Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings, eds., *Buddhism and Asian History* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), p. 63.

400. Venerable Budai, a Zen Master of the Tang who died in 916, used to carry a cloth bag at the top of his walking staff. See *Chuandeng lu*, 27:434a19.

401. Lý Huệ Tông, whose personal name was Hạo Sảm, was the third son of Lý Cao Tông. Lý Huệ Tông was the last emperor of the Lý dynasty (1009–1225). A devout Buddhist but not a very capable sovereign, he lived most of his life in sorrow. In 1224 he abdicated in favor of his daughter Princess Chiêu Thánh to become a monk at Chân Giáo Temple. Later, Huệ Tông was forced to commit suicide by Trần Thủ Độ, a talented but ambitious man who was at that time regent and in charge of the government. Chiêu Thánh was married to Trần Cảnh, Thủ Độ's nephew. In 1225 Chiêu Thánh abdicated in favor of Trần Cảnh, who became the founder of the Trần dynasty (1225–1400). See *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:20b5–33a1. The *Việt Sử Lược* was composed during the Trần dynasty so it did not record Trần Thủ Độ's plot to overthrow the Lý dynasty and to get rid of Lý Huệ Tông, even though the latter had abdicated and at that time was a monk at Chân Giáo Temple. See *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 4:311–17.

402. Xu You was a hermit during the reign of King Yao. Yao offered him the country, but Xu You declined. The compilers of the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần* (1:554) suggest that the word *đi* 以 in the first line should be emended to *tự* 似.

403. The *Tự Ngụ Tập* might have been composed by Ngu Ông, a disciple of Xiaoyao (Tiêu Diêu).

404. It is said in Túc Lự's biography (40b6–41a6) that "a virtuous student called Layman Ứng Thuận was his successor." Here we have Ứng Vương instead of Ứng Thuận. Either *vuông* is a scribal error for *thuận* or it might be an honorific title.

405. Chiêu Lăng denotes the reign of Emperor Trần Thái Tông (1225–1257). His shrine was posthumously called Chiêu Lăng. See *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 5:321–40.

406. Of these monks, we have only some information about Tiêu Diêu. According to the "Lược Dân Thiền Phái Đồ" [Simplified Diagram of the Zen Schools] in *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục*, 7b, Tiêu Diêu (Xiaoyao) was a student of Ứng Thuận (Yingshun) and teacher of Huệ Trung. Besides Tiêu Diêu, the "Diagram" also named Quốc Nhất, Đạo Sư, Quế Thâm, and Chân Giác as other students of Ứng Thuận. Among the students of Tiêu Diêu were also Thạch Đầu, Vĩ Hải, Đạo Tiềm, Thần Tấn, Lai Toàn, Thạch Lâu, Thôn Tăng, Thụ Nhân, Ngu Ông, and Vô Sơ.

It is also said in the *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục*, 38a8–b1: "As a young boy, Huệ Trung had respect for Buddhism and came to study with Zen Master Tiêu

Diêu at Phước Đường. He got the gist of the teaching and unflaggingly served Tiêu Diêu as his teacher." In his preface written in 1763 to the *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục*, Huệ Nguyên said: "The great patriarch Tiêu Diêu, already enlightened when he first came to our country, entered the capital with a fishing rod without a hook." Thus, Tiêu Diêu might not be of Vietnamese provenance. The preface also tells us that the *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục* was part of Tiêu Diêu's work.

407. The name Vinītaruci has been mentioned briefly in the following works in Chinese Buddhist literature: *Lidai sanbao ji*, T 49.102c3–9; *Datang neidian lu*, T 55.275a14–19; *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.433b2–6; *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T 55.547c8–14; *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, T 55.846a8–14. In Vietnamese Buddhist literature, the *Cổ Châu Pháp Vân Phật Bản Hạnh Ngũ Lục* also mentions a certain Vinītaruci. See "Le Bouddhisme," p. 236.

408. The *Cương Mục Chính Biên*, 3, 32a1–3, wrote: "Pháp Vân Temple was located at Văn Giáp Village, Thượng Phúc District, Hà Nội Province. Legend has it that one day during a great thunderstorm, a mangrove tree fell down. People in the village used it to carve statues and erect a temple to worship them. That is how the temple got its name." According to Lê Mạnh Thát, the *Cương Mục Chính Biên* was only following the *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí*, 3, according to which the temples of Pháp Vân, Pháp Vũ, Pháp Lôi, and Pháp Điện were all at Văn Giáp Village, Thượng Phúc District. See *LMT*, p. 250, n. 2; see also *Dạn Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (27:75) "Hanoi Province, Section on Temples and Shrines."

409. The Brahman caste is one among the four castes in the Hindu social order. The main duty of the Brahman is to study and teach the Veda. For this concept, see, inter alia, Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 320–26; Madeleine Biardaeau, *Hinduism: The Anthropology of A Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 58–65.

410. On this particular event, see Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 186–94; Zenryū Tsukamoto, "Hokushū no haibutsu ni tsuite," *Tōhō gakuho* 16 (1948): 29–101; 18 (1950): 78–111; "Hokushū no haibutsu shūkyō haiki seisaku no hōkai," *Bukkyō shigaku* 1 (1949): 3–31; "Le Bouddhisme," p. 235. The *Fozu lidai tongzai*, T 49.557a, wrote: "On the seventeenth day of the fifth month of the third year, *jiawu*, of the Jiande era (574), Zhou Wudi issued a decree to destroy Buddhism."

411. According to the Zen tradition, Sengcan was the thirtieth patriarch reckoning from the Buddha, and the third patriarch in China. It is not known where he hailed from. He first came to inquire about Zen with the second patriarch as a layman. After receiving the Dharma, he lived in seclusion at Mount Wangong, Shuzhou. During the persecution of Buddhism by Zhou Wudi, he wandered around the area of Mount Sikong in Taihu District. For more than ten years no one knew of him. He subsequently transmitted the mind-seal to Daoxin. He died on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of the second year of the Daye era under Sui Yangdi (604–617). See *Chuangdeng lu*, 3:221c14–222b1. For a discussion on some historical issues surrounding Sengcan, see McRae, *The Northern School*, p. 280, n. 80.

412. *Gayāśrīśasūtra*, see T 14, nos. 464, 465, 466, 467; T 1, no. 80. According to Chinese sources, the translator of this *sūtra* is Dharmaprajñā and not Vinītaruci. See *Lidai fabao ji*, T 49.102b17–19.

413. \**Mahāyānavaipulyadhāraṇīsūtra*, T 9, no. 275.

414. The *Thiền uyển* (44b4) has *thường* 常; the *Dại Nam* (39a7) has *đế* 帝. It should be corrected as *sư* 師.

415. See Sengcan's *Xinxinming* [Inscription of the Mind of Faith]:

It is as perfect as space,  
Without lack or surplus.  
It is due to our attachment or indifference,  
That it is not the same.

See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.457a21–22.

416. Both the *Thiền uyển* (45a6) and the *Dại Nam* (39b8) have *bà thời lâm bất kiến* 何時臨不見; should be emended to *bà thời lâm diện kiến* 何時臨面見. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:243–44.

417. The three characters *tặng phong vân* 贈封云 (conferred on him [the title]) after Lý Thái Tông's poem seem to be confusing, since they obviously do not go with the phrase *pháp vân tự tỷ ni da lưu chi pháp tự* [the Dharma lineage of Vinītaruci of Pháp Vân Temple], which introduces what is recorded next—i.e., the Vinītaruci lineage.

418. The *Cương Mục Toàn Biên*, 2, 10b1–2 wrote: “Chu Diên Village was part of Giao Chỉ District. Under the Tang it was changed to Diên Châu, and Tam Đại Prefecture under the Lê. Nowadays it pertains to Vĩnh Tường Prefecture, Sơn Tây Province.” In Đạo Lâm's biography (66b3) he was said to be a native of Cửu Cao, Chu Diên. According to the *Đại Việt Lịch Triều Đăng Khoa Lục*, 2, Cửu Cao was a village in Hạt Gia Lâm. Thus, Pháp Hiền's birthplace must be in Gia Lâm Village, Bắc Ninh Province.

419. Nothing is known about this monk. However, if what is recorded here is reliable, it only shows that before the alleged arrival of Vinītaruci, there already existed some kind of a lineage at Pháp Vân Temple.

420. See the dialogue between Daoxin and Hongren in the *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.222b10–16: “One day when Daoxin was on his way to Huangmei Village he happened to meet a boy with extraordinary looks, different from other children. Daoxin asked, ‘What is your family name?’ The boy said, ‘I do have a name, but it is not a common name.’ Daoxin asked, ‘What kind of name is it then?’ The boy said, ‘My family name is Buddha.’ Daoxin asked, ‘Don't you have a family name?’ The boy said, ‘It is emptiness.’ Daoxin, knowing that the boy was a Dharma vessel, sent his attendant to his house to ask his parents' permission for him to become a monk. They knew that there was some previous karmic affinity, so they happily let the boy become Daoxin's disciple with the sobriquet Hongren.”

421. Note that the Vinītaruci school is also traditionally referred to as “Nam Tông Thiền” [the Southern school of Zen], while the Vô Ngôn Thông school is referred to as “Bích Quán Thiền” [the Wall-Contemplation school].

422. According to Tanqian's biography in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50.573b25–c14, Sui Gaozu (r. 581–604) sent out relics three times in all. The first time he gave them to thirty prefectures in the sixth month of 601, the second time to fifty-one other prefectures in the first month of 602. The third time, in the first month of the fourth year of the Renshu era (604), he ordered them to build more than one hundred stupas to receive relics. According to the *Sheli ganyingji* [Miraculous Effectiveness of Relics] in the *Hongmingji*, T 52.216b10, stupas were built at Thiện Chúng Temple at Giao Châu to receive relics.

423. The *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 5:326, recorded the event of Trần Thủ Độ burying the Lý royal family as follows: “In the winter [of 1232], when the Lý family went to pay respects to their ancestors at Thái Đường, Hoa Lâm, Thủ Độ, who had secretly had a deep hole dug under the house, ordered his men to pull the rope of the trap door to bury them alive, when they were all drunk.” *Cương Mục Chính Biên*, 6:13a2, notes that “Hoa Lâm was the name of a village, Thái Đường, of a hamlet; both pertain to Đông Ngạn District, Bắc Ninh Province.” See *LMT*, p. 254, n. 1.

424. The name Cổ Giao was mentioned in the biographies of Khánh Hỷ and Tịnh Thiền. Both times it was called “Cổ Giao Village, Long Biên.” According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Cổ Giao must be one of the villages located somewhere around Cổ Châu Village of present-day Thuận Thành District. This is because Pháp Vân Temple was at Cổ Châu, Long Biên, and we have been able to locate Cổ Châu Village. See *LMT*, 1:254, n. 2. Some scholars identified Cổ Giao with Cổ Diên of Thanh Trì District, Hà Đông Province. See *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, p. 190, and “Bibliographie Annamite,” p. 215. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:458, n. 1.

425. Nothing is known of this monk. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, this Phổ Quang Temple might be identical to the Phổ Quang Temple at Nghĩa Trú Village, Văn Giàng District, which the *Tam Tổ Thực Lục* (26a4) mentioned as the abode of Trung Chiếu, the monk who presided over the casting of one thousand Buddha statues in 1322. See *LMT*, p. 254, n. 3.

426. See *Vajracchedikā-Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, 74b23.

427. “Zen Master Daizhu Huihai asked a monk who was lecturing about the *Diamond Sūtra*, ‘Who speaks this *sūtra*?’ The monk said, ‘Zen Master, are you kidding, don’t you know that it’s the Buddha who speaks that *sūtra*.’ Huihai said, ‘[It is said in the *sūtra* that] if anyone says that the Tathāgata still preaches the Dharma, he is slandering Buddha; such a person does not understand the meaning of my words. If someone says that this *sūtra* is not spoken by the Buddha, then that person is slandering the *sūtra*.’ The monk had no answer.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.247a2–6.

428. The *Sheli ganyingji* written by Wang Zhao around the end of 610, quoted in the *Guang hongmingji*, 17:216b10, has mentioned Thiện Chứng Temple as a site where stupas were built to house relics in that year. Dịch Bảng Village is Đình Bảng Village, Từ Sơn District, Hà Bắc Province.

429. Cổ Pháp, see “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 237, n. 4. The *Cương Mục Chính Biên*, 2:6b3–6, wrote: “Cổ Pháp was the name of a prefecture, which was called Cổ Lâm Prefecture in the Đinh dynasty and previously. Under the Lê it was changed to Cổ Pháp, under the Lý it was promoted to Thiên Đức Prefecture, and under the Trần it was changed to Đông Ngạn Village. The Later Lê kept it that way. It is now Đông Ngạn Village, Bắc Ninh Province. In this biography, it is said that Định Không changed the name of his native village Diên Uẩn to Cổ Pháp.” See *LMT*, p. 255, n. 2. But if Định Không had changed Diên Uẩn into Cổ Pháp, why was it still called Diên Uẩn under Lý Công Uẩn?

Again, concerning the event of lightning that left marks on a kapok tree prophesying the ascendance of Lý Công Uẩn, the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:202, wrote: “Formerly, the kapok tree at Diên Uẩn Village, Cổ Pháp Province, was struck by lightning.” The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:1a9, wrote: “In his (Lý Công Uẩn’s) native village, a kapok tree was struck by lightning.” It is obvious that Lý Công Uẩn’s native village was called Diên Uẩn Village during his time. In any case,



we know for sure that Cổ Pháp and Diên Uẩn are identical. Regarding the temple of Cổ Pháp Village, the *Cương Mục Chính Biên*, 2.7b2, wrote: “Cổ Pháp Temple was at Đình Bảng Village, Đông Ngạn District, Bắc Ninh Province.” See *LMT*, p. 255, n. 2. Thus, the Cổ Pháp Village in Đình Không’s biography was present-day Đình Bảng Village, Từ Sơn District, Hà Bắc Province.

430. *Khẩu* 口 [Ch: *kou*] also means a classifier for instruments.

431. Both the *Thiên uyển* (47b10) and the *Đại Nam* (42a10) have *kê cư loan nguyệt hậu* 鷄居鸞月後. Lê Mạnh Thát (*LMT*, p. 255, n. 3) is correct in pointing out that *loan nguyệt* 鸞月 is an erroneous form of *thử nguyệt* 鼠月. This reading is attested to by the fact that La Quý also said in his verse that “in the month of the rat, year of the rooster, hour of the rabbit, we’re sure to see the sun come forth in purity” (49a2). We know that this prophetic verse was to refer to Lý Công Uẩn’s ascending the throne in the tenth month, which is the month of the rat, in the year of the rooster (*kỷ dậu*), which is the second year of the Canh Thuy era (1009).

432. On the recorded activities of Gao Pian in Vietnamese history, see *Việt Sử Lược*, 36–38; *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:138–41.

433. Both the *Thiên uyển* (48a7) and the *Đại Nam* (42b8) have *trưởng lão la quý an chân nhân* 長老羅貴安真人, which is usually rendered as “the True Man La Quý An, the Elder.” However, Lê Mạnh Thát suggests a slightly different punctuation and emendation that leads to a reading of the line as “the Elder La Quý, a native of An Chân.” Thát based his interpretation on the fact that the *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí* did enumerate two villages named An Chân that pertained to Sơn Nam Hạ Province. Of these two villages, one was in Đông Hội Canton, Thanh Quan District, Tiên Hưng Prefecture; the other was in Đông Chân Canton, Quỳnh Côi District, Thái Bình Prefecture. Thát also suggests that An Chân might have been a scribal error for An Trinh, because we read in Đình Huệ’s biography that An Trinh District belonged to Thiên Đức Prefecture (53a9), and La Quý’s biography seems to suggest that he was a native of Cổ Pháp. See *LMT*, p. 256, n. 2. I found Thát’s position convincing for many reasons: The use of the term *chân nhân* [Ch: *zhenren*] (True Man) to refer to La Quý is somewhat curious in itself. Besides, “La Quý An” sounds like a full name, and not a sobriquet, with La as the family name. Yet we know that La Quý’s family name was Đinh. Besides, Phúc Điền in his *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu* (15a9) also has “La Quý.”

434. Gao Pian (?–887) began constructing that fortress around the eleventh month of the seventh year of the Jiantong era (866). This is the Đại La Citadel, located in the territory of what is now the capital of Hanoi. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:12b2, and *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 5:14b–15a.

435. According to the *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí*, the Tô Lịch River is to the east of Hanoi. See *LMT*, p. 271, n. 9.

436. This was probably one and the same as the kapok tree at Diên Uẩn Village, which was struck by lightning and a prophetic message was left on its trunk predicting Lý Công Uẩn’s ascending the throne. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:1a–b, and *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:202. See also note 480 to Vạn Hạnh’s biography below.

437. The characters *thập* 十, *bát* 八, and *tử* 子 put together become the character *Lý* 李.

438. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:47), “Sơn Tây Province, section on Mountains and Rivers,” mentioned a mountain named Cổ Sơn located to the

north of Tam Dương Village, six miles from the district town. Pháp Thuận's Temple might be on this mountain.

439. Phù Trì must have been one of the three patriarchs belonging to the ninth generation of the Pháp Vân (i.e., Vinītaruci) school whose biographies are lost.

440. Up to the time of the [Former] Lê dynasty, Vietnam had enjoyed independence for some time.

441. It is regrettable that all of Pháp Thuận's literary works have been lost, except for a letter requesting the investiture of Đinh Tuyên which was submitted to the Song dynasty in 980 by Giang Cự Hoàng and Vương Thiệu Tồ. This letter can be found in the *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:12a8–b2. For a complete record of this event, see *ibid.*, 1:180.

442. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (49a8) and the *Dại Nam* (43b8) have Nguyễn Giác (Ruen Jue). We know that under the Trần, the family name Lý was forced to be changed to Nguyễn. The *Thiền Uyển* was composed during the Trần dynasty, hence the name Lý was changed into Nguyễn. The *Cương Mục* recorded Lý Giác's trip to Vietnam as follows: "In the second year, *bính tuất*, of the Tianfu era (962), the Song court sent Lý Nhược Chuyết (Li Ruozhuo) and Lý Giác (Li Jue) on a diplomatic trip bringing a decree investing the Annam King as Prince of Giao Chỉ." See also *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:190; "Le Bouddhisme," p. 196.

443. *Tân lại* 津吏 [Ch: *jīn lì*] means "river officer."

444. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (49a11) and the *Dại Nam* (43b10) have *thiên gia* 天家 [Ch: *tiānjiā*]; according to the *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:191, it is *thiên nhai* 天涯 [Ch: *tiānyā*].

445. The *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:191–92, wrote: "[In the eighth year of the Thiên Phúc era (987)] the Song again sent Li Jue to Sách Giang Temple. The emperor then asked Dharma Master [Đỗ] Thuận disguised as a 'river officer' to greet Li Jue. Li Jue, who was well versed in literature, happened to notice two geese swimming in the river. He playfully hummed:

Geese, geese, a pair of wild geese,  
Looking upward toward the sky.

"The Dharma Master, still holding on to the oar, completed the poem, chanting:

White feathers spread over blue water,  
Red oars cutting through green waves."

This is nothing but an anecdote, though not an insignificant one. It expresses Vietnamese confidence and asserts its people's identity and dignity less than thirty years after gaining independence. These lines are obviously based on a poem entitled "Ode to the Goose" by Luo Binwang, composed when he was a little over ten years old. The poem reads as follows:

Goose, goose, goose,  
Raising its head toward the sky singing.  
White feathers spread over blue water,  
Red feet cutting through green waves.

See *Quantangshi*, 2, 79:864, quoted in *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:202, n. 2.

446. *Vô vi* 無爲 [Ch: *wu wei*], which means "no [contrived] activity" or "no action," is one of the central teachings in the *Daodejing*. See, for instance, chap. 2.3: "Therefore the sages manage affairs with no action, carry out teaching without speech"; 3.3: "Act by no-action. Then, nothing is not in order"; etc. English translation by Ellen M. Chen in *The Tao Te Ching*, pp. 54 and 58.

447. This work is not extant.

448. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Cổ Miết is in Thanh Hà District, Hải Dương Province, because this province was the territory of Hồng Lô under the Lý and the Trần. See *LMT*, p. 259, n. 1.

449. I.e., he was in charge of Buddhist ritual music.

450. *bộ pháp* 護法 [Ch: *hufa*] (*Dharmapālas* or Dharma protector) means those who support the True Dharma of Buddha. Dharma protectors include all categories of sentient beings, from Heavenly Kings, nonhuman beings, and worldly monarchs to ordinary human beings. For a brief description of different forms of *Dharmapālas*, see, for instance, Frédéric, *Buddhism: Flammarion Iconographic Guides*, pp. 234–40.

451. Chanting is also considered external learning. See *Shisonglu*, T 23.269c6–21.

452. Đông Lâm Viên might have been a contemporary of Pháp Thuận.

453. The *Thiền Uyển* is corrupted here; the *Đại Nam* (44a9–10) has *ngôn hạ hoán nhiên thích hậu hậu* 言下換然釋後後 which should be emended to *ngôn hạ hoán nhiên hữu thích hậu* 言下煥然有釋後.

454. Note that according to the description here Avalokiteśvara was already conceived of as being a female Bodhisattva.

455. Also called Mount Long Triều, located at present-day Trường Yên Hạ Village, Gia Viễn District, Ninh Bình Province. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (37:39), “Ninh Bình Province, section on Mountains and Rivers,” wrote: “Mount Long Triều, another name Đại Viên, is ten miles from Gia Viễn District. At the foot of the mountain were shrines worshipping the emperors of the Đinh and the Lê.”

456. There is probably some anachronism here. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:21a3, Lê Đại Hành died in the eleventh year, *ất tị*, of the Ứng Thiên era (1005), and we learn from Ma Ha’s biography that he did not move to Mount Đại Vân until 1015. The entire episode thus must have happened under Lý Thái Tổ. Moreover, both the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:3a6, and the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:209, tell us that the Vạn Tuế Temple was erected by Lý Thái Tổ in 1011. Thus, the event of Ma Ha being held in custody must have happened after 1011.

457. Ái Châu was what is now Thanh Hóa Province. See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 283, n. 3.

458. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:12a1, mentioned a cavern named Sa Đăng: “[In] the third year, *tân sửu*, of the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh era (1061) . . . Sa Đăng Cavern revolted. The emperor led the campaign and won.” Sa Đăng Cavern and Sa Đăng Province might be identical.

459. This part of Ma Ha’s biography remarkably resembles the activities of a certain Master Xiang in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*: “No one knows where Master Xiang hailed from. He came to Feifu Temple at Mount Qingcheng in Yizhou around the beginning of the Liang dynasty. He was happy [with the scene] and had a mind to spend the rest of his life there.

“At that time people had a custom to go hiking in the mountain on the third day of the third month. Most of them brought along meat and wine to feast and have fun with each other. Xiang kept advising them to break the custom, but without any success. In the third month of the next year, people gathered together [on the mountain] as usual. After everyone took a seat, Xiang asked people to dig a hole about ten square feet nearby.

“No one seemed to understand his intention. Xiang said, ‘You benefactors

of the Dharma always feast with each other without ever inviting me. Today, I would like to join everyone in this party.' People vied with each other to offer him food and wine. Xiang consumed whatever they offered him. It was like filling a big valley. Those who knew him were amazed.

"At the end of the day, Xiang said, 'I'm dead drunk. Please help me to the hole lest I dirty the ground.' When they arrived at the hole, Xiang opened his mouth wide and spat. The chicken that came from his mouth immediately [turned into live poultry that] could fly and crow; the beef spat out from his mouth [turned into cows and] ran off. Wine and food flowed from his mouth profusely, almost filling the hole. Fish, geese, and ducks swam to and fro in throngs. People were flabbergasted. They then vowed to renounce killing. Up to now they have completely given up feasting on the mountain. This is thanks to the virtue of Master Xiang.

"When the Vice Prefectural Governor Luo Yan of Yizhou returned to court, Liang Zhi asked him, 'Is Xiang respected or despised at Yizhou?' [Which can also mean "Is the price of incense at Yizhou high or low?" Yan obviously understood this way]. Yan said, 'Very low.' [Which can also mean "despised," as Zhi understood it]. At first Yan did not think that Zhi was talking about a person. Zhi asked, 'If he is despised by people, why did he stay there that long?' Yan could not understand these words either. Afterward he related the dialogue to people who knew Xiang. Some said, 'He meant Master Xiang of Qingcheng, didn't he?' He then went to the mountain and related the whole story to Xiang. Xiang said, 'You came from afar, I know you're not telling lie.' That night he passed away. His disciples erected a tomb and were about to bury him. They were surprised that the coffin was so light. When they opened it, they only saw his walking staff." See *T* 50.657a21–b10.

460. Ai and Hoan provinces were the sites where Pháp Hiền had stupas built to house Buddha's relics given by Sui Gaozu.

461. There is a footnote at the end of Ma Ha's biography that reads: *nam tông đồ nam dương vân tự nam ngộ dã* 南宗圖南陽云自南誤也. The *Dại Nam* (45a10) also has the same. It seems to be corrupted and should probably be emended to *nam tông đồ vân tự nam dương ngộ dã*, which means "the Diagram of [the Succession of] the Southern School said he was a Dharma heir of Nam Dương. This is incorrect."

462. I.e., La Quí, whose last name was Đinh.

463. An auspicious sign of the Buddha. For a discussion of the thirty-two auspicious marks of Buddha, see Wayman, *Liebenthal Festschrift*, pp. 243–60.

464. This seems to be an error. If Sùng Phạm died in 1087 at the age of eighty-four, he could never have met Lê Đại Hành, who died in 1005. It should be Lý Thái Tông instead of Lê Đại Hành.

465. Layman Pang Yun paid a visit to Mazu and asked: "Who is the one who does not keep company with all phenomena?" Mazu said: "When you swallow all the water of the West River in one gulp, then I'll tell you." Pang Yun was awakened and composed a verse:

People gather from all over,  
Each one of them studies the principle of spontaneity.  
This is the place to select Buddhas,  
I return home with mind empty having passed the test.

See *Biyān lu*, *T* 48.179c3–6. See also *Chuangdeng lu*, *T* 51.310b24–27.

466. See *Baozang lun*, T 45.146a7–15.

467. I.e., precepts (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*).

468. Here the term *bách luận* 百論 [Ch: *bailun*] should be taken as a common noun and means “hundreds of treatises.” It is definitely misleading to take it as the title of a treatise—the *Śatasāstra*, composed by Aryadeva—as did most scholars. See, inter alia, Nguyễn Đăng Thực, *Thiền Của Vạn Hạnh* [The Zen Teaching of Vạn Hạnh] (Saigon: Kinh Thi, 1973), pp. 74, 83–84, 97, etc; *LMT*, p. 262, n. 1. We have no records concerning Madhyamaka studies in Vietnam. Furthermore, too little exists of Vạn Hạnh’s writings for us to point out any specific Madhyamaka influence.

469. See *Da zhidu lun*, T 25.398b24 and 401c27–28.

470. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:19a8–10, wrote: “In the spring, the third month [of the first year, *tân tị*, of the Tianfu era (981)], Hou Renbao’s army arrived at Ngăn Sơn, Chen Qinzuo’s at Tây Kết, Liu Cheng’s at the Bạch Đằng River. The emperor [Lê Đại Hành] himself took command of the armies to oppose the Song. He had stakes planted across the river. The Song troops withdrew to Ninh Giang and held it. The emperor feigned surrender to trick Renbao. The Song troops were defeated. Renbao was captured and killed. At the news of the defeat Qinzuo withdrew.”

471. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:19b1–3, wrote: “[In] the second year, *nhâm ngô*, of the Tianfu era (982)], Từ Mục and others sent by the emperor on a mission to Champa were held as hostages. Infuriated by this, the emperor took personal command of the armies to fight the Champas, killed their King Phế Mi Thuế in the battle, made countless prisoners, together with some hundreds of palace singing girls, and a huge booty of precious things, razed their city, demolished their ancestral shrines, and returned to the capital the same year.”

472. This event cannot be found in any recorded historical documents. We do not know who Đỗ Ngăn was.

473. The character *thổ* 土 [earth] and the character *mộc* 木 [wood] make up the character *dỗ* 杜, which is the family name of Đỗ Ngăn.

474. The compilers of the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần* (1:214) suggest that the character *ngân* 銀 in the first line should be emended to *cân* 艮, which seems to make better sense, since *kim* 金 and *cân* 艮 together become the character *ngân*, which is the first name of Đỗ Ngăn.

475. The character *ngũ* 五 on top of the character *khẩu* 口 becomes *ngô* 吾; the character *thu* 秋 on top of the character *tâm* 心 becomes *sầu* 愁.

476. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:215.

477. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (52a7) and the *Đại Nam* (46b3) have *chân* 眞. The *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:215, suggests that it should be *trực* 直, which is definitely better.

478. Lê Ngoạ Triều, whose personal name was Long Đình, was Lê Đại Hành’s fifth son. He usurped the throne from Crown Prince Lê Trung Tông and became a psychopathic tyrant who loved to torture people for fun. Due to his hemorrhoids, he held audience lying down. Thus, he was called “Ngoạ Triều” [which means “The King Who Held Audiences Lying Down”]. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:198–201.

479. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:2b5–7, wrote: “Once a bitch at Ứng Thiên Temple of Cổ Pháp Village gave birth to a white pup with black hair on his back figuring the two characters *thiên tử* (Son of Heaven). Now the emperor was born in the

year *giáp tuất* (*tuất* is a zodiac sign for dog). See also *Toàn Thư*, 2:207. According to the *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, p. 106, this happened at Thiên Tâm Temple.

480. The *Việt Sử lược*, 2:1a9–b3, wrote: “In his (Lý Công Uẩn’s) native village, a kapok tree was struck by lightning, which left character-like traces reading as follows:

Deep are the roots of the tree,  
Green is its bark.  
The tree, the rice plants and the sword fall,  
Eighteen seeds are formed.  
The sun appears in the east,  
The stars hide behind the west mountains.  
In about six or seven years’ time,  
The country will have peace.

“Monk Vạn Hạnh told Uẩn, ‘Recently, I heard of a strange omen. I know the Lê shall fall and the Lý shall rise. Nobody of Lý name can equal you in compassion and tolerance, and win people’s hearts as you do. I am over seventy now. What I will most regret is not to live long enough to witness a reign of prosperity and peace.’” See also *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:202; *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, pp. 103–104.

481. When Lý Công Uẩn ascended the throne he made his father Great Lord Hiến Khánh. See *Việt Sử lược*, 2:2a1; *Toàn Thư*, 1:203. At the end of Vạn Hạnh’s biography there was a note about the event around the grave of Lord Hiến Khánh as follows: [*Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*, 53a4; *Dại Nam*, 47a8] “As regards the event around the grave of Lord Hiến Khánh, at night when the master (Vạn Hạnh) was sitting in meditation, voices could be heard from the four sides of the grave. The voice from the east said:

Khánh Vân, Tường Nham, and Quế Phương,  
The entrails of the goat and the dragon site follow each other.  
Đông Liệt three hundred positions,  
The six kinds of barbarians (two characters missing) facing  
the sky.\*

[*Dại Nam Thiền Uyển*, 47b] The voice from the south said:

The home protector is Phù Ninh in the south,  
Men and women from Vĩnh Thế are numerous.  
Thiên Đức with its richness and nobility fill its city and houses.  
The emperor met a woman during a ritual at Bát Vãn.†

\* Khánh Vân, Tường Nham, and Quế Phương are names of places still unknown to us.

† Phù Ninh is the name of a village. It is said in Thường Chiếu’s biography that he is native of Phù Ninh Village (37b7). Then in the biographies of La Quý and Thiên Ông we are informed that Phù Ninh Village was at Thiên Đức Prefecture (48a7 and 51a6). The last line of the verse has *bát phương* 八方. However, Lê Mạnh Thát (*LMT*, p. 266, n. 17) suggests an emendation to *bát vạn* 八万. This is based on the fact that at Siêu Loại District, which is now Thuận Thánh District, there is a mountain called Bát Vãn. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:30), “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Mountains and Rivers,” tells us that Mount Bát Vãn is located two miles southeast of Tiên Du District. Tradition has it that Gao Bian of Tang erected the Bát Vãn shrine to cast a spell on it, hence the mountain is thus called.

The voice from the west said:

Looking far to the west toward Mount Thiên Trù,  
Men and women of Cao Thế are at the head of the  
Thượng Tướng Star.  
Thiên Đức is rich and noble as Viên Thế,  
The emperor's lifespan is ninety-nine.\*

The voice from the north said:

Phù Cầm in the north facing Bạch Hổ,  
Men and women are happy and do not suffer.  
Thiên Đức enjoys longevity and is everlastingly happy,  
Generation after generation the emperor searches for Lục Tổ.†

Vạn Hạnh had people note down the words and mark the boundary of the grave. He then visited it and spoke a verse:

In the east there is Vũ Long Quarter,  
In the south there is Vũ Long Wharf.  
In the west there is Hạc Lâm Temple,  
In the north Trần Hải Pond.‡

After a while he continued:

Within three months,  
The Royal Bodyguard will ascend the throne.  
The country will be happy,  
The seal will carry the character "quốc" [country].  
Ten vessels sink down to the water,  
Meeting a sage called Thiên Đức.§

Subsequently, the emperor changed Cổ Pháp to Thiên Đức.\*\* Vạn Hạnh's words turned out to be true. Other events that happened in the temples were recorded in *National History*. We do not record them here.

482. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:2b3, wrote that after ascending the throne Lý Công Uẩn conferred lordships (*vương*) on his father and brothers but did not mention any of his uncles. The *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:204, however, informs us that an uncle of Uẩn was made Lord Vũ Đạo.

\* Thiên Trù is a technical term in geomancy. Thiên Trù is also another name of Mount Tiên Du (see *LMT*, p. 266, n. 18). Cao Thế and Viên Thế are probably names of places still unknown to us today. Thượng Tướng was the first star in the Văn Xương constellation, according to ancient Chinese astrology.

† Phù Cầm is the name of a village. Both Minh Trí and Nguyễn Học are said to be natives of Phù Cầm Village (26b3 and 35b6). Bạch Hổ is either a name of a place or a geomancy term. As we know, Lục Tổ was the name of the temple where Vạn Hạnh lived and where Lý Công Uẩn got his education before he ascended the throne. See *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, 28:72; *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 2:207.

‡ This verse is to determine the site of Great Lord Hiến Khánh's grave. Yet we still are in the dark concerning the location of Vũ Long, Hạc Lâm, and Trần Hải.

§ *Thập khấu thủy thổ khứ* (ten vessels sink down to the water). This refers to the event about Định Không's changing the name of his native village to Cổ Pháp.

\*\* It is recorded in the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:2b10, that in the second year of the Thuận Thiên era (1010) Cổ Pháp was changed to Thiên Đức Prefecture. The *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, p. 107, also gives us the same information.



483. The character *lê* 藜, which means “thorn,” is pronounced the same as “Lê,” the name of the Lê dynasty.

484. *Lý* 李 means plum tree but also means the family name Lý.

485. Our text records that Vạn Hạnh passed away on the fifteenth day of the fifth month of the ninth year of the Ứng Thiên era (1003). But according to the facts in his biography, Vạn Hạnh could not have died before Lý Công Uẩn ascended the throne in 1010. Therefore, some scholars—Trần Văn Giáp, for instance—have suggested the date of Vạn Hạnh’s death as the ninth year of the Thuận Thiên era (1018) instead of the ninth year of the Ứng Thiên era (1003). See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 239, and *Lược Truyện Các Tác Gia Việt Nam*, 1:183. This is also incorrect, because according to both the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:4a7, and the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:215, Vạn Hạnh died in the sixteenth year, *ất Sửu*, of the Thuận Thiên era (1025). *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:124, n. 4; *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:215.

486. The *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, 1:83a7–b1, also recorded the same event together with the verse with some slight differences.

487. The *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 4:294, and the *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, p. 104, also recorded this poem. The expression *tam thế* stands for the past, present, and future. It means that Vạn Hạnh knew clearly about all the events of the past, present, and future.

488. Phong Châu belonged to the territory of present-day Vĩnh Phú Province. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:198, n. 5.

489. See Appendix II for a complete translation of Đạo Hạnh’s biography from the *Việt Điện*.

490. On Mount Phật Tích, see “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 239, n. 4. See also *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:257; *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:42–43), “Sơn Tây Province, section on Mountains and Rivers.” Mount Phật Tích (or Sài Sơn) was considered to be one among twenty-one famous mountains in Vietnam and a sacred site of Vietnamese Buddhism and popular religion. The *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 6:65, wrote: “Mount Sài Sơn, Yên Sơn District, was called Mount Bồ Đà Lạc under the Lý and Mount Tiên Tích under the Trần. On the mountain there were temples and caverns of the immortals everywhere. . . . At the foot of the mountain was located Thiên Phúc Temple. In front of the temple was a big pond, and at its back a bell tower cast by Zen Master Từ Đạo Hạnh.”

491. An Lăng Village is also called Lăng Village. It is not known to which prefecture it belonged under the Lý. Under the Trần it belonged to Từ Liêm Prefecture, Đông Đô District, Đại La Citadel Province, nowadays Từ Liêm Prefecture, a suburb of Hanoi. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:343, n. 1.

492. Note that here only his father’s name and his residence are mentioned, but not his mother’s name and his birthplace. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:113), “Sơn Tây Province, section on Temples and Shrines,” in its record of Zen Master Từ Đạo Hạnh of Mount Sài Sơn, Yên Sơn District, wrote: “Within the shrine, on the left was the statue of Từ Đạo Hạnh, on the right was Lý Thần Tông, and in the middle was the Buddha. One tradition said that Đạo Hạnh was a native of Đồng Bụt Village, Yên Sơn District, his father was Từ Vinh, and his mother Tăng Thị Loan. Legend has it that the old foundation of the Từ residence can still be found at Đồng Bụt. In front of the temple are seventy acres of field belonging to the Từ, now become the temple-field of that village.”

493. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:16a10, wrote: “In the spring, the second month [of the seventh year, *tân mùi*, of the Quảng Hựu era (1091)] *Kiến Quan* Lê Toàn

Nghĩa presented a five-hued tortoise.” The *Toàn Thu*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:252, recorded the same without mentioning Lê Toàn Nghĩa’s rank. We have absolutely no information about Vi Ất.

494. The Marquis of Diên Thành (?–1117) was the son of Lý Thánh Tông and the brother of Lý Nhân Tông. He must have been a very fierce man. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:20a3, recorded an event involving him that happened in the fourth year, *giáp thân*, of the Long Phù Nguyên Hoá era (1104): “In the autumn, the ninth month, on the first day, the Marquis of Diên Thành hit the Marquis of Trung Nghĩa with his blade in the Thiên An Chamber.” The Marquis of Trung Nghĩa was also a son of Lý Thánh Tông and probably Diên Thành’s brother. The Thiên An Chamber was a place where the emperor held audience, yet Diên Thành did not refrain from hitting Trung Nghĩa.

495. Lê Mạnh Thát identified him with Nguyễn Đại Diên who was mentioned in Thần Nghi’s biography as representing another Zen school under the Lý. See *LMT*, p. 270, n. 8. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:126), “Sơn Tây Province, section on Buddhist Monks,” mentioned a monk named Nguyễn Đạo Hạnh and said: “The Master, a native of Tiên Phong, was a descendant of Zen Master Thái Diên, who during his lifetime befriended Nguyễn Minh Không and Từ Đạo Hạnh to study and practice the Dharma. Afterward, he was transformed at Chiêu Nhân Village. The villagers erected a shrine to worship him.” Lê Mạnh Thát was of the opinion that this Thái Diên was the same man as Đại Diên because it is written in the *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*, 1: 108b9: “Đạo Hạnh’s father, Từ Vinh, was killed by Thái Diên through magic.”

496. According to Trần Văn Giáp, this country was in the subprefecture of Yongchang, Yunnan Province. The inhabitants of this country had the habit of adorning their teeth with gold. See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 239, n. 3; P. Pelliot, “Deux itinéraires de la Chine en Inde,” *BEFEO*, 4, 243. The *An Nam Chí Lược*, 1:19, said that “The Đà Giang Lộ was adjacent to Kim Xỉ.” It is probable that Từ Đạo Hạnh went just beyond the border of Vietnam.

497. See *Qishi yinbenjing*, T 1.6:394c.

498. The text has *đạo pháp* 道法 [Ch: *daofa*], which seems to mean “Buddha Dharma.” However, we know from the context of the story as well as from the *Việt Điện* and the *Lĩnh Nam* that Đạo Hạnh was intent upon learning magic to revenge his father’s death. Only after he had accomplished this did he devote himself to studying the Dharma.

499. This Thái Bình Prefecture might have been the same as Thái Bình Prefecture, the site of Khai Thiên Temple, of which Ma Ha was the abbot. Yet according to Lê Mạnh Thát (*LMT*, p. 272, n. 14), we cannot find any village in Hưng Yên that has a temple worshipping Đạo Hạnh. Hưng Yên is the territory belonging to what used to be Thái Bình Prefecture. According to the *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:126), however, Đạo Hạnh was worshipped in a few villages in Nam Chân District, Nam Định Province, such as the villages of Chân Nguyên, Văn Chàng, and Kinh Lũng. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* also glosses that “as a young man Đạo Hạnh liked to travel. He went to Chân Nguyên Village, built the Đại Bi [Great Compassion] Temple, and dwelt there. Subsequently, the people of the village honored him as patriarch.” Thái Bình Prefecture thus might have belonged to Nam Định Province.

500. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (54b6) and the *Đại Nam* (49a5) have *chỉ đích* 指的 [Ch: *zhidi*]. The *Việt Điện* has *chỉ giáo* 指教 [Ch: *zhijiao*]. See Chan Hing-

ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:223. I have decided to follow the *Việt Điện*.

501. The *Việt Điện* and the *Lĩnh Nam* have slightly different readings. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:224; 2.1:77–78. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:346, n. 3.

502. A Vinaya Master named Yuan came to Zen Master Daizhu Huihai and asked: “Teacher, do you make any effort in practicing the Dharma?” Huihai answered: “Yes, I do.” Yuan continued: “What is your effort?” Huihai said: “When I’m hungry I eat, when I’m tired I go to sleep.” See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.247c1–3; 382c28, 283c1.

503. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (55a1) and the *Dại Nam* (49a10) mistakenly have *dà* 陀 for *xà* 蛇. The *Việt Điện* (*Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:223) and the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* (3:209) have *cầm* 禽.

504. For a similar record on Đạo Hạnh, see *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:209; Appendix III.

505. The story of Đạo Hạnh’s reincarnation in the *Việt Điện* does not mention Giác Hoàng but only remarks that at that time Lý Nhân Tông had no heir and all prayers were to no avail. When the Marquis of Sùng Hiền discussed this matter with Đạo Hạnh, “Đạo Hạnh took a vow to reincarnate [in the royal family] in return for a favor the marquis had granted him before.” See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:223; see also *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:53–54).

506. See Marquis of Sùng Hiền was Lý Nhân Tông’s younger brother.

507. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (56a3) and the *Dại Nam* (50a10) seem to be corrupted here. I follow a version of the *Lĩnh Nam* (*Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:79), which seems to be better.

508. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:21a4–b5: “In the second month [of the third year of the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era (1112)], the people of Thanh Hoá reported that there was in the coastal land a strange child of three who understood everything said to him. He claimed to be the emperor’s own child and said Giác Hoàng was his name. He knew in advance everything the emperor was about to do. The emperor sent an emissary to ask him questions, and his answers all proved correct. The emperor then had Giác Hoàng moved to Báo Thiên Temple, and finding him miraculous he grew all the more infatuated with him. As he had no heir by then, he had a mind to make the child crown prince, but the court officials advised him not to, so he desisted. The emperor then organized a vegetarian feast in the prohibited palace with the design to invoke Giác Hoàng to be reincarnated as his own son.

“A monk named Từ Lộ, alias Đạo Hạnh, who lived on Mount Phật Tích heard about it and was concerned. He then sent his sister Từ Thị to the ceremony, secretly handed her some charmed pearls of his, and enjoined her to hang them under the roof of the temple without anyone being the wiser. Từ Thị did as he said. Giác Hoàng suddenly grew feverish and said that iron nets were being spread over the country, and he could not find access into the palace for reincarnation. The emperor ordered a thorough search and the pearls were discovered. He then had Từ Lộ arrested and bound in the Hưng Thánh Corridor awaiting a death penalty. Catching sight of the Marquis of Sùng Hiền, who was on his way to the audience, Lộ appealed to him, saying, ‘Please help me. Should I escape death, I shall reincarnate as your son to pay my debt

of gratitude.' The marquis agreed. At the audience, he pleaded Lỗ's cause with the emperor, telling him, 'If Giác Hoàng does have miraculous powers as he claims, and yet Lỗ can lay him under his spell, it is proof that Lỗ is better than Giác Hoàng. Why not opt for Từ Lỗ's reincarnation!' So the emperor decided to pardon Lỗ." The *Toàn Thư* did not record this event.

509. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:22a5 wrote: "In the sixth month [of the seventh year, *bính thân*, of the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era (1116)], Master Đạo Hạnh reincarnated (Thần Tông was born)."

510. On the *Trayātrimsā* Heaven, see, for instance, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣyam*, trans. Leo M. Pruden (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988), 2:463–69; Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology*, pp. 29–39; "Buddhist Cosmology," in Eliade et al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 4:113–19.

511. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (56a9) and the *Đại Nam* (50b5) have *chân thân* 眞身 [Ch: *zhenshen*], which means "true body."

512. The *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 3:257–58, wrote: "The Master's body was burned by the Ming around the Yongle era of the Ming [1403–1414]. The villagers made a statue of him and worshipped as before. The statue still exists." The *An Nam Chí Lược*, 15:147–48, said: "His body still exists today." The *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:209, wrote: "Now his true form still exists." See also "Le Bouddhisme," p. 239, n. 4; *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, 19:112.

513. Our text is corrupted here. I follow the *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 3:259.

514. It means that the Marquis of Sùng Hiền's son Dương Hoán, who later became emperor Thần Tông was two years old in 1117.

515. According to the *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 3:268, Thần Tông died at the age of twenty-three.

516. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (56b3) and the *Đại Nam* (51a2) have *cửu thập nhất niên* 九十一年 [Ch: *jiushiyi nian*], which is obviously a mistake. I follow the *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 3:268, and correct it to *thập nhất niên* [Ch: *shiyi nian*].

517. The *Việt Sử Tiêu Án* (p. 134) said that Từ Đạo Hạnh was a monk of Mount Thạch Thất. Yet, in Đạo Hạnh's biography, it is said that he lived at Thiên Phúc Temple, Mount Phật Tích. Could it be possible that Mount Phật Tích under the Lý became Mount Thạch Thất in the time of Ngô Thì Sĩ, the author of the *Việt Sử Tiêu Án*. However, according to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:31b4, Mount Phật Tích was at Ngoại Trại, whereas in Trì Bát's biography it was said to be at Tân Trại. Since Ngoại Trại and Tân Trại are not identical, Mount Phật Tích and Mount Thạch Thất cannot be the same. On Mount Thạch Thất see *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:350, n. 4.

518. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (52b5) and the *Đại Nam* (51a4) have Doanh Lâu. It should be corrected as Luy Lâu. See "'Le Bouddhisme," p. 209, n. 2; *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:350, n. 1. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Luy Lâu was part of now the territory of the villages of Khương Tự and Đại Tự, Thuận Thanh District, Hà Bắc Province. See *LMT*, p. 278, n. 2.

519. The text has Nguyễn Thường Kiệt. It should be emended to Lý Thường Kiệt (1019–1105). See *Lý Thường Kiệt*, p. 149.

520. See *LMT*, p. 278, n. 4.

521. According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Tây Kết must be the name of a village located on the bank of the Hồng River, Đông Anh District, Hưng Yên Province, which is now Khoái Châu District, Hải Hưng Province. See *LMT*, p. 279, n. 1.

522. Now Văn Giang District, Hưng Yên Province. Under the Nguyễn Văn Giang District pertained to Bắc Ninh Province. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:14), “Bắc Ninh Province, section Kiến Trí Diên Cách,” wrote: “Before the Trần dynasty Văn Giang District was called Tế Giang.” *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:316, n. 1.

523. Pháp Bảo of Quang Tĩnh Temple could be the same as Pháp Bảo of Phúc Điền Tư Thánh Temple, who had the sobriquet Great Master Hải Chiếu and was the author of the inscription discovered on a stele at Linh Xứng Temple composed in 1126. This Pháp Bảo was also the author of another inscription for the Sùng Nghiêm Diên Thánh Temple composed in 1118, which Lê Quý Đôn had found and recorded in his *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 4:240. Unfortunately, he did not record the entire essay. See also *LMT*, p. 280, n. 3.

524. According to both the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:19b1 and 20a5, and the *Toàn Thư*, 3:255, the first year of the Long Phù era was the year *tân tỵ* and not *ất dậu*, which was the fifth year of the Long Phù era. Thus, Thuần Chân might have died in the fifth year of the Long Phù era (1105).

525. The *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí Lục* (3:12) mentioned a village called Đông Phù Liệt pertaining to Nam Phù Liệt Canton, Thanh Trì District, Sơn Nam Thượng Province. Thus, Đông Phù Liệt Village was located in the present Thanh Trì District, Hà Đông Province. See *LMT*, p. 280, n. 1. See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:257, n. 1; “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 240, n. 2.

526. Hạc Lâm Temple might be the same as the Hạc Lâm Shrine mentioned in Vạn Hạnh’s verse, noting the boundary of Lord Hiễn Khánh in the former’s biography.

527. This idea is borrowed from *Chuangzi*, chapter “Lieh Yu K’ou”: Someone sent gifts to Chuang Tzu with an invitation to office. Chuang Tzu replied to the messenger in these words: “Have you ever seen a sacrificial ox? They deck him out in embroidery and trimmings, gorge him on grass and beanstalks. But when at last they lead him off to the great ancestral temple, then, although he might wish he could become a lonely calf once more, is it possible?” See Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 360–62.

528. On this rank in Chinese Buddhism, see *Dasong seng shilüe*, lower volume, 250a4–10.

529. I.e., Lord Phụng Càn, a title Lý Thái Tông conferred on his son, Lý Nhật Trung, in 1035. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:6a8, and *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:225.

530. Probably Lord Vũ Uy. In 1009, after ascending the throne, Lý Công Uẩn made his brother Lord Vũ Uy. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:2b3 and *Toàn Thư*, 1:204. However, there was also a Marquis of Vũ Uy, son of Lý Thái Tông and brother of Lord Phụng Càn. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:8a4, recorded that in 1048 the Marquis of Vũ Uy was sent together with Grand Commandant Quách Thịnh Ích to fight the rebel Nùng Trí Cao. As regards the title Crown Prince, historical records said that except for the eldest son, other sons of the Lý emperors were granted the title of marquis. Yet according to the *Lĩnh Ngoại Đại Đáp* (see *LMT*, p. 281, n. 9), all the sons of the Lý emperors were made crown princes. These princes might be all sons of Lý Thái Tông.

531. Might be the same as Vương Hành, who was made Advance Guards Right Commander by Lý Thánh Tông in 1054 when he first ascended the throne. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:10a5.

532. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:5a3–5; *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:219.

533. Concerning the relationship between Lâm Huệ Sinh and Lý Thánh Tông, the *Bảo Cục Truyện* recorded as follows: “Formerly, during his expedition against Champa, when he reached the estuary of Hoàn Hải, Emperor Lý Thánh Tông was surprised by a violent storm. The royal galley was dangerously shaken by the billowy waters, which much frightened the emperor.

“In a somewhat drowsy state, he suddenly glimpsed a girl about twenty with a cherry-like face, willow-colored brows, eyes shining like stars, wearing a flowery smile, a white gown, green trousers and girdle, who glided towards him and said, ‘I am the spirit of the land of Nam and have been residing at Thụy Vân Village for a very long time, waiting to make my appearance in due time. Now that Your Majesty is coming, my lifelong vow is fulfilled. I beg Your Majesty to be diligent in this expedition and the victory will be yours. Though a frail and weak girl, I nonetheless pledge myself tacitly to assist you as far as lies within my meager power. On the day of triumph, I will be here to pay you my respect.’ Upon that she vanished.

“The emperor woke up in a fright, but quite delighted. He summoned his entourage and told them the dream. The General Superintendent of Monks Lâm Huệ Sinh said, ‘The spirit said she was embodied in a tree at Thụy Vân Village. Now let’s search among the trees. We may get some clue.’ The emperor agreed. He had the beaches searched and a tree was indeed found with a top shaped like a human head and traces of paint as seen in his dream. The emperor named her Lady Hậu Thổ and had an altar set up right in the royal galley. The wind and waves subsided by themselves, and trees stopped shaking. When he reached Champa and joined battle, the emperor had the feeling of being assisted by an obscure force, and the victory was his. On the triumphal day, the royal galley moored at the same place. The emperor decreed the erection of the temple. Yet, a storm arose all the same. Lâm Huệ Sinh told him, ‘Let me first consult the oracle. The building can wait until our return to the capital.’ The response came at once. The storm subsided. On his return to the capital, the emperor searched for a propitious site, and the temple was erected in An Lăng Village and became famous for its oracle. Profaners and blasphemers would instantly meet with afflictions.” See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.2:33, 201.

However, Lý Thánh Tông undertook only one expedition against the Champa in 1069. According to his biography, Huệ Sinh died in 1063. How could he have accompanied Lý Thánh Tông in that expedition? It is possible that Lý Thánh Tông here might be an error for Lý Thái Tông. The latter himself led an expedition against Champa in 1044, and Huệ Sinh might have accompanied him.

534. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, (2:12a5), the fifth year of the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh was the year *quĩ mão* and not *giáp thìn*, which was the sixth year of the Chương Thánh Gia Khánh (1064).

535. Zen Master Wuzhu spoke with Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai. Wuzhu enquired about the activities of the monks there and their number. Mañjuśrī answered: “Before three and three, after three and three.” See *Biyanlu*, 4:173b29–174a7.

536. Sudhana was on a journey to study the Dharma. Mañjuśrī advised him to go to the south to study with fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras*. See *Avataṃsaka-Sūtra*, 62–80.

537. See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.297a25–27.

538. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:11a1, wrote: “In the twelfth month [of the fourth year, *đinh dậu*, of the Long Thụy Thái Bình (1057)] were the two temples of Thiên Phúc and Thiên Thọ built. Gold was drawn out to cast two statues of Śakra for display there.” See also *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:242.

539. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:11a8, wrote: “In the spring, the third month [of the sixth year, *kỷ hợi*, of the Long Thụy Thái Bình era (1059)], the Sùng Nghiêm Báo Đức Temple was built in Vũ Ninh Province.” Thus, the Diêu Nghiêm Báo Đức in Huệ Sinh’s biography was the same as the Sùng Nghiêm Báo Đức. The latter was usually called in its short form Báo Đức Temple. It was also the abode of Zen Master Đại Xả (29a7).

540. Both the “Nghệ Văn Chí” and the “Văn Tịch Chí” recorded: “*Pháp Sư Trai Nghi*, one volume, composed by Monk Huệ Sinh, a native of Đông Phù Liệt, Thanh Trì District.” These works are definitely lost. The other work, the *Chư Đạo Tràng Khánh Tân Văn*, was not mentioned. See “Les Chapitres,” pp. 97 and 140; “Bibliographie annamite,” p. 138.

541. Trí Quả Temple was located at now Phương Quan Village on the right bank of Dâu River across from Văn Quan Village. It was where Pháp Điện, one among the four Dharma Protectors, was worshipped. See *LMT*, p. 283, n. 1.

542. *phạn bối* 梵唄: *phạn* means Sanskrit; *bối* is the shortened form of *bối nặc* 唄匿, a transliteration of the Sanskrit *pāṭha*, which means to recite and chant. Originally the expression *phạn bối* meant to chant *stotra* (songs of praise) in Sanskrit; nowadays it even includes songs, prayers, and so forth in Chinese. It also means Buddhist ritual music. See Nakamura Hajime et al., *Bukkyō jiten*, p. 753r. The same expression is also found in Không Lộ’s biography in the *Lĩnh Nam*. In this context it simply means to chant the *sūtras* and *dhāraṇīs*. See Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2.1:232.

543. No examination was recorded during the Hội Phong era (1092–1099). However, it is said in Viên Thông’s biography that in the sixth year of the Hội Phong era (1097) he passed the examination on the Three Teachings and was appointed to the office of *Đại Văn* (68b9–10). Thus, Thiền Nham and Viên Thông might have passed the same examination.

544. This Thành Đạo Temple might be the present-day Thành Đạo Temple at Đông Cốc Village, Thuận Thành District, Bắc Ninh Province. This is where Pháp Vũ, one of the four Dharma Protectors, is worshipped. Since Pháp Điện, another among the Four Protectors, was worshipped at Trí Quả Temple, Thiền Nham’s abode, it is reasonable that Thiền Nham had some affinity with temples where one of the Four Protectors was worshipped. However, at Văn Giáp Village, Thượng Phúc District, Hà Đông Province, there is also a temple named Thành Đạo where Pháp Vũ was worshipped. Yet Lê Mạnh Thát was of the opinion that the Thành Đạo Temple where Pháp Y was the abbot was the Thành Đạo Temple at Đông Cốc Village. See *LMT*, p. 283, n. 4.

545. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3.17b8, wrote: “In the sixth month [of the third year, *canh tuất*, of the Đại Thuận era (1130)] there was a drought. The emperor (Lý Thần Tông) ritually prayed for rain and his prayer was instantly answered.” Yet according to the *Toàn Thư*, there was a drought every year during the period 1128–1132. Therefore, the *Việt Sử Tiêu Án* (p. 144), in discussing the tactic against drought under Lý Thần Tông, remarked that “during those ten years there was no year without a drought.”



546. In the *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:102), “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Buddhist Monks,” there is a biographical note on Thiền Nham: “Zen Master Thiền Nham hailed from Siêu Loại District. Strictly following the Buddhist precepts, he only ate fruit and drank stream water. People called him ‘Living Buddha.’” See also *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:210; Appendix III.

547. Present-day Yên Khánh District, Ninh Bình Province. So far nothing is known about Quốc Thanh Temple. See *LMT*, p. 284, n. 1.

548. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (37:55), “Ninh Bình Province, section on Temples and Shrines,” records as follows about the Nguyễn Minh Không Shrine: “[It was] located at Gia Viễn District. Formerly, Minh Không was worshipped by the inhabitants of both districts of Đàm Xá and Diêm Giang. A native of Đàm Xá District, his family name was Nguyễn and his personal name Chí Thành. According to *External History*, Minh Không traveled around to study the Buddhist Path and subsequently received the mind-seal from Từ Đạo Hạnh [who gave him] the sobriquet Zen Master Minh Không. He became the abbot of Quốc Thanh Temple. During the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era under Lý Nhân Tông’s reign (1110–1119), when Đạo Hạnh was about to pass away, he told Minh Không, “In my next life I will be reborn as a king, but it is hard for me to escape sickness. You should save me.” After that Lý Thần Tông suffered a strange disease and was transformed into a tiger. Meanwhile children were heard singing, “To cure the Lý King, send for Nguyễn Minh Không.” The king summoned Nguyễn Minh Không to court. The Master first lectured to the king on the law of causality, and the latter got some spiritual awakening. Nguyễn Minh Không then had a hundred *cân* of oil boiled and washed the king with it. Cured of his sickness, the king made Minh Không National Preceptor and the recipient of duties from a hundred households as a reward. In the second year of the Đại Định era, during Lý Anh Tông’s reign (1141), Minh Không passed away at the age of seventy-six. People in the village erected a shrine to worship him. There was a stone lamp of one *thước* high in front of the shrine. Legend had it that it was built by the abbot Zen master in order to chant his *sūtras*. The shrine was miraculous. Nowadays Minh Không’s statues are worshipped in all temples at Giao Thủy and Phố Lại.

549. The *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:279, records: “The king was seriously ill; all medicines were to no avail. The monk Minh Không cured him. The king made him national preceptor and the recipient of duties from hundreds of households. Legend had it that when Từ Đạo Hạnh was about to leave his mundane body, while feeling indisposed he gave medicine and a mantra to his disciple, Minh Không, saying, ‘Twenty years from now, when you hear that the king suffers from a strange disease, come and cure him.’ It was this event.” See also Appendix II for the story of Nguyễn Minh Không from the *Lĩnh Nam*.

550. According to the *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 4:286, the second year of the Đại Định era was *tân dậu* and not *tân sửu*.

551. Bình Lạc belonged to what is now the districts of Văn Giang and Mỹ Hào, Hưng Yên Province. There is a canal named Nghĩa Trú running through these two districts. The name Bình Lạc came into existence in 621 when Lý Uyên established Long Châu, which consisted of the three districts of Long Biên, Vũ Ninh, and Bình Lạc.

According to Lê Mạnh Thát, Nghĩa Trú Village was the same as the Nghĩa Trang Village, Sài Trang Canton, Dương Hào District, Hải Dương Province, mentioned in *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí Lục* 2, and which is now Mỹ Hào District, Hưng Yên Province. See *LMT*, p. 286, n. 1. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:29a4, referred to it as a hamlet: “[In] the fifth year, *ất bợi*, of the Kiến Gia era (1215) . . . Chu Định, a native of Nghĩa Trú, put his hamlet at [Nguyễn] Nộn’s disposal.”

552. This is the same as Biện Tài, who was a disciple of Thông Biện and editor of the *Chiếu Đối Lục* (Collated Biographies).

553. Dazhu Huihai said: “When you have realized [mind], all phenomena are sufficient [evidence of enlightenment]; when you are not yet enlightened, you are perpetually confused and at odds.” See *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.247a24.

554. Furong Lingxun asked: “How to take care of it?” Xun said: “When there’s an optical illusion in your eyes, you see illusory flowers falling in confusion.” See *ibid.*, 280c26.

555. See *ibid.*, 282b26–27.

556. See Jingcen’s verse:

Although a man who stops at the top of a hundred foot pole,  
Has gained access [to the Dharma], it is still not true  
[realization].

At the top of the hundred foot pole take another step,  
The Truth Body manifests throughout the universe.

See *ibid.*, 274b6–8.

557. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (62a3) and the *Đại Nam* (55a7) have *thiền chương bảo trung tự*, which should be amended to *thiền chương bảo tự trung*.

558. See *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, fasc. middle, 546b25–c18; *Avatamsaka*, 80:440c21–22. See also *Chuangdeng lu*, 7:256b9–18: “Governor of Jiangzhou Li Bo asked Guizun, ‘If the *sūtra* said that Mount Sumeru contains a mustard seed, then I have no doubt about that; but when it says that a mustard seed contains Mount Sumeru, isn’t that silly?’ Guizun said, ‘I heard that you’ve read ten thousand books, haven’t you?’ Li Bo said, ‘Yes.’ Guizun said, ‘From your head to your toe, you’re about the size of a palm tree, where do you have space to hang ten thousand books?’ Li Bo only nodded. On another occasion Li Bo asked, ‘What does the *tripitaka* [Threefold Buddhist Canon] really teach?’ Guizun raised his fist, asking, ‘Do you understand?’ Li Bo said, ‘No, I don’t.’ Guizun said, ‘Holding high office as you do, you can’t even understand a fist?’ Li Bo said, ‘Teacher, please instruct me.’ Guizun said, ‘If you meet the right person on the road, give it to him. If not, leave it alone.’” See also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:459, n. 2.

559. Hoàng Xuân Hãn wrote: “The *Thiền Uyển* recorded that Khánh Hỷ passed away on the twenty-seventh day of the first month of the third year, *nhâm tuất*, of the Đại Định era (1142), at the age of seventy-six. Reckoning on that, he must have been born in 1067 and thus was only ten years old when Đạo Dung came to Thăng Long. How could he be Đạo Dung’s teacher then? The *Toàn Thư* also recorded the fact that the *bầu* (Marquis) of Khánh Hỷ died. The *Toàn Thư* might have mistaken the word *tăng* (monk) for *bầu*. The editor of the *Thiền Uyển*, published during the Vĩnh Thịnh era, also stated that “According to *Sử Ký* [Recorded History], Monk Khánh Hỷ passed away in

1135. If we follow this information, Khánh Hỷ was only seventeen years old then. I believe that the *Thiền Uyển* recorded incorrectly the date of Khánh Hỷ's death and his age when he died. He died probably at the age of ninety-six. The character *cửu* (nine) and the character *thất* (seven) are easily mixed up. If Khánh Hỷ died at the age of ninety-six, then when Đạo Dung came to study with him, Khánh Hỷ was thirty-seven. That is more reasonable." See Hoàng Xuân Hân, *Lý Thường Kiệt* (Saigon: Vạn Hạnh University Press, 1966), p. 474.

560. See *Les Chapitres*, pp. 60 and 112.

561. This work is definitely lost.

562. Both Lê Quý Đôn's "Nghệ Văn Chí" and Phan Huy Chú's "Văn Tịch Chí" mentioned *Ngộ Đạo Thi Tập* in one volume, composed by Master Khánh Hỷ, a native of Cổ Giao, Long Biên. See "Les Chapitres," pp. 60 and 112; *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:458, n.2; "Bibliographie annamite," p. 86.

563. The *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:102), "Bắc Ninh Province, section on Buddhist Monks," notes: "Zen Master Giới Không was a true Buddhist monk who attained enlightenment. Subsequently he passed away sitting upright." See also *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3, 210; Appendix III.

564. Mount Chân Ma has never been mentioned in any historical or geographical records. The *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 4:70, mentioned a mountain named Đán Ma. Lê Mạnh Thát suspected that Mount Chân Ma was identical to Mount Đán Ma, since from Đán Ma to Lịch Sơn is not too far away. Lịch Sơn was the mountain on which Giới Không subsequently erected a temple and moved his abode there. See *LMT*, p. 289, n. 2.

565. According to *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 6:70, Mount Lịch Sơn was located at Yên Lịch Village, Sơn Dương District. See also *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:48), "Sơn Tây Province, section on Mountains and Rivers."

566. Năm Sách was located in the present-day Hải Hưng Province. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:446, n.1.

567. Thánh Chúa Cave was the same as Kính Chúa Cave at Kính Chúa Village, Giáp Sơn District, Hải Dương Province, under the Nguyễn, which is the present-day Mount Thạch Môn, Dương Nham Village, Kinh Môn District, Hải Hưng Province. Nowadays the cave there is still called Thánh Chúa Cave. See *LMT*, p. 289, n. 4.

568. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (62b8) and the *Đại Nam* (56a1) have Đại Thuận, which seems to agree with the *Việt Sử Lược*, whereas the *Toàn Thư* and all other historical documents have Thiên Thuận, the reign's style of Lý Thần Tông (1228–1132). It is impossible to have "the eighth year of the Đại Thuận era." Moreover, during the Đại Thuận era, neither the *Việt Sử Lược* nor the *Toàn Thư* recorded any great plague.

569. Śākyamuni is the Buddha of the present, and Maitreya is the Buddha of the future.

570. *Bàn tinh* 般星 [Ch: *banxing*]: the starlight in the tray. In the old days people used to place a tray in the yard to watch lunar and solar eclipse. The idea is that life and death are as illusory as the starlight in the tray, one should not be attached to them as absolute principle.

571. Lê Kiêm was the grandson of Governor of Phong Châu Lê Thuận Tông and Princess Kim Thành, and the brother of Zen Master Trí Nhân. According to Trí Nhân's biography, Lê Kiêm was the governor of Phong Châu.

572. According to the stele at Hương Nghiêm Temple discovered by Hoàng Xuân Hân and quoted in his *Lý Thường Kiệt*, pp. 453–61, Pháp Dung's name should have been Đạo Dung. However, all extant documents referred to him as Pháp Dung. This is because of a name taboo under the Trần, avoiding Trần Hưng Đạo's personal name. Our text was a work of the Trần dynasty; therefore, Đạo Dung was changed into Pháp Dung.

573. Hương Nghiêm Temple still exists today at Phủ Lý Village, Đông Sơn District, Thanh Hoá Province. It was here that a stele, erected in the fifth year, *giáp thìn*, of the Thiên Phù Duệ Vũ (1124), recorded the stories about the temple and Đạo Dung. According to Hoàng Xuân Hân, Mount Ma Ni was originally called Càn Ni. After 1299 it was changed to Ma Ni due to a name taboo. See *Lý Thường Kiệt*, p. 456; see also *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:116.

574. Which is now Phủ Lý Village, Đông Sơn District, Thanh Hoá Province, because Hương Nghiêm Temple is still found there. Moreover, to the west of this village are the two villages of Viên Quang and Hồ Đàm; the territory of Viên Đàm hamlet was mentioned in the stele at Hương Nghiêm as one of the parties in a land dispute with Bối Lý Hamlet. See *LMT*, p. 291, n. 3.

575. According to the stele at Hương Nghiêm Temple, Lê Lương was the first man to erect this temple at Bối Lý Hamlet in the Later Tang era (923–937). Lê Lương came from a prestigious family at Cửu Chân District, Ái Province, and held some public office. He was also a devout Buddhist. When Đinh Tiên Hoàng ascended the throne, Lê Lương was enfeoffed. According to the stele he also built the temples of Trinh Nghiêm and Minh Nghiêm, which have not been located yet. See *LMT*, p. 291, n. 4.

576. According to the Hương Nghiêm Temple stele, Emperor Lý Thái Tông had visited the temple once. Hoàng Xuân Hân based himself on the *Việt Sử Lược*, and the *Toàn Thư* suggested that Lý Thái Tông visited the temple in 1031. He also had the temple, which was already in bad shape then, repaired, and assigned the Elder Đạo Quang as the abbot and Zen teacher. See *Lý Thường Kiệt*, p. 456. Thus, Đạo Dung (i.e., Pháp Dung's father), according to the stele, was the Elder Đạo Quang, probably another sobriquet of Huyền Ngung, alias Tăng Phán.

577. The Hương Nghiêm Temple stele said: "In the year *bính thìn* (1076), he left his native village to search for [spiritual] companions. Setting sail to the sea, he subsequently arrived at Thăng Long. There he met a monk with the sobriquet Cao Tăng and became his student out of admiration for him." See *Lý Thường Kiệt*, p. 457.

578. The Hương Nghiêm Temple stele said: "Đạo Dung asked, 'What is essential in the Dharma?' Cao Tăng said, 'The Dharma is essentially without rules, how should I instruct you now?' Đạo Dung emptied through and gained enlightenment." See *Lý Thường Kiệt*, p. 457.

579. The Hương Nghiêm Temple stele said: "The Master traveled up the Lô (Nhị Hà) River and went to Mount Thấu Đài. He was pleased with the beautiful landscape and stopped traveling. (He then had the facade planned, assembled stones to build the foundation, and erected a temple, which he called Khai Giác Temple.) Ibid., p. 458.

580. Hoàng Xuân Hân remarked: "The *Thiền Uyển* recorded: 'Subsequently, he returned to his native village, built a temple, and stayed there through his old age. He passed away on the fifth day of the second month of the first year,

*giáp ngọ*, of the Thiên Cảm Chí Bảo era (1174).” There is probably some error in this record, since Pháp Dung arrived in Thăng Long as early as 1076, and if he was still alive by 1174, he must have been at least 120 years old. *Ibid.*, p. 460.

According to Hoàng Xuân Hãn’s report on the Hương Nghiêm Temple stele, there are problems concerning the date of Pháp Dung. The stele tells us that in 1076 Pháp Dung arrived at Thăng Long and met Khánh Hỷ and in 1077 he returned to his native village and requested his cousin Lưu Khánh Đàm to repair the Hương Nghiêm Temple. In the same year Pháp Dung was summoned by Lý Nhân Tông to the capital of Thăng Long to establish Buddhism in the court. In 1122 Pháp Dung returned to his native village and had Hương Nghiêm Temple repaired again. Then he composed the inscription on the stele in 1124. At that time he was already around seventy years old. It is highly unlikely that he could have lived until 1174.

581. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (63b7) and the *Dại Nam* (56b9) have “Trí Thiền Sư” (Zen Master Trí). However, the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:126), “Sơn Tây Province, section on Monks,” recorded a Zen Master named Trí Nhân and described him as follows: “A native of An Lăng who devoted himself to practicing Buddhism. One day he saw a tiger chasing a deer; he said, ‘All sentient beings cherish their lives. You should not harm each other.’ The tiger bowed its head and went away. In the vicinity of the mountain there was a barbarian tribe whose people would band together to raid. The Master guided and taught them. Many were moved by his teaching and returned to virtuous lives.” Phúc Điền, in his *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu* (upper vol., 16a7–8), also refers to him as Trí Nhân and recorded the same story.

The similarities in terms of geography and events in the descriptions of the Zen Master Trí Nhân of the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* and the *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu* lead us to believe that he must be one and the same as Zen Master Trí of our text. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* and the *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu* might have relied on the *An Nam Chí Nguyên* for source material because the section about Trí Nhân found in the *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:210, is identical to that in the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*. Thus, it is only reasonable to correct Trí to Trí Nhân.

582. According to the *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (29:20–21), “Sơn Tây Province, section Kiến Trí Diên Cách,” An Lăng was a district that existed since the Đinh and Lý dynasty. It is now An Lăng District, Vĩnh Phúc Province.

583. Phong Châu includes the territory of the prefectures of Lâm Thao (Phú Thọ), Vĩnh Tường, the districts of Bạch Hạc (Vĩnh Yên) and Sơn Vi (Phú Thọ). See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 241, n.3.

584. Lê Long Đình, the fourth son of Emperor Lê Đại Hành, was conferred the title of Ngự Man Vương (Lord of Ngự Man) in 991. See *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 1:193. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 1:20a, wrote: “In the second year, *tân mao*, of the Hưng Thống era (991), the emperor conferred upon his younger brother’s son the title of Lord of Ngự Man and Commander of Phong Châu.”

585. The *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:226, wrote: “In the third month [of the third year of the Thông Thụy era (1036)], the emperor gave Princess Kim Thành in marriage to Lê Thuận Tông, Chief of Phong Châu.” The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:6b2, had “Princess Khánh Thành” instead of Kim Thành. Lê Thuận Tông was son of Lê Long Đình and grandson of Lê Đại Hành. On Princess Kim Thành, daughter of Lý Thái Tông, see *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 2:213.

586. The *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 7, 40b8, wrote: “In the second year of the Long Khánh era, a National Scholar examination was organized.” Yet according to Trĩ Nhân’s biography, this examination already existed during the reign of Lý Anh Tông. For a gloss on the rank of *cung hầu thư gia* [National Archivist], see *An Nam Chí Lược*, 14:133.

587. See *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, 752b27–28.

588. Our text (64a3) has *như ai ngũ ngũ* 如來五語 [Ch: *rulai wuyu*], whereas the *Đại Nam* (57a5) has *như lai lục ngũ* [Ch: *rulai liuyu*], which is more correct.

589. See appendix III, section on “Immortals and Buddhist Monks in *An Nam Chí Nguyên*.”

590. Tô Hiến Thành (?–1179) was a court minister during the reign of Lý Cao Tông. Nothing is known about Ngô Hoà Nghĩa except that he was Grand Guardian during the reign of Lý Anh Tông.

591. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (64b6) and the *Đại Nam* (57b7) have *đoài* 兌, which should be emended to *duyệt* 悅.

592. *Hì di chi lý* 希夷之理 in the original. *Hì di* [xi yi in Chinese] are terms borrowed from the *Daodejing*. See a definition of the expression *hì di* as follows: “What is looked at but not seen is named the extremely dim (*yi*). What is listened to but not heard is named the extremely faint (*hì*).” See Chen, *The Tao Te Ching*, p. 88.

593. Mount Phổ Lại was located at Phổ Lại Village, Quế Đường District. It was a high rocky mountain overlooking the Lục Đầu River. The landscape here is spacious. On the mountain was Chúc Thánh Temple, where Zen Master practiced the Dharma and cultivated his nature. See *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:32), “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Mountains and Rivers.” It is now Mount Phổ Lại, Quế Đường District, Hà Bắc Province.

594. *Minh tăng* 明僧 [Ch: *mingseng*] in the original text.

595. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:10b3–4, wrote: “[In] the second year, *ất mùi*, of the Long Thụy Thái Bình era (1055) . . . the temples of Đông Lâm and Tinh Lự were built on Mount Đông Cứu.” According to the *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* (28:34), “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Mountains and Rivers,” Mount Thiên Thai, located five miles northwest of Gia Bình District, was also called Mount Đông Cứu. Note that in the first year of the Minh Mạng era Gia Định District was changed into Gia Bình District. As for the monk Thảo Nhất, nothing is known about him.

596. This metaphor originally came from the *Samyutta-Nikāya*, sutta 16: “In the great ocean, there was a blind turtle whose lifetime lasted innumerable *kalpas*. The turtle would raise its head once every one hundred years. In the meantime, there was a floating piece of wood that had only one hole, drifting with the waves, now to the east, now to the west, according to the wind. For a turtle that would raise its head once every hundred years to meet with the hole of that piece of wood, this is difficult indeed.” See also *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra*, 2: “Being born human is difficult. Being born at the right time [when the Dharma still flourishes] is also difficult. It is like for a blind turtle in the great ocean to chance upon the hole in a piece of drifting wood.” Here the metaphor is used to describe the extraordinariness of Chân Không’s insight.

597. I.e., Thân Đạo Nguyên, son of Thân Thiệu Thái and Princess Bình Dương. This is because not only was Nguyên a contemporary of Lý Thường Kiệt, but his wife, Princess Thiên Thành was also a follower of Chân Không. According to the *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:11a7–8 and 15a2, Nguyên was chosen by Lý

Thánh Tông as royal son-in-law in 1059 and was officially married to Princess Thiên Thành in 1066. Note that on p. 11a8 Nguyên was referred to as Thân Cảnh Nguyên, whereas on p. 15a2 he was called Thân Đạo Nguyên.

598. “Sahā-world” in the original text. See n. 2 above.

599. Zen Master Dongshan Liangjie, seeing his reflection in the water while crossing a bridge, attained enlightenment. He then composed a verse:

Don't look for it elsewhere,  
It is always beside me.  
Now I'm coming by myself,  
Yet I'm face to face with it everywhere.  
Now it is me,  
Now I am not it.  
One should understand it this way,  
Then one is agreeable with Thusness.

See *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.321c19–24.

600. See *Abhidharmakośa* for this. In Zen literature the image of the aeon of fire has been used in many koans. See, for instance, *Biyan lu*, T 51.169a17–18, case 29: “When the aeon of fire is rampant, the universe is burned away, what is destroyed. What is not destroyed?” See also *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.286a16–17: A monk asked Zen Master Dasui Fazhen: “When the aeon of fire is rampant, I don't know whether this one is destroyed or not?” Fazhen said: “It is destroyed.”

601. The empress dowager here is Linh Nhân (?–1117), Lý Nhân Tông's mother.

602. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (66a6) and the *Dại Nam* (59a5) have Mậu Nhân. It should be emended as Diệu Nhân, whose biography is on pp. 66b9–67b3.

603. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (66b1) and the *Dại Nam* (59a10) have *tạ 藉*. According to the *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:338, n.4, all other extant versions have *cựu 舊*. Note that in the *Dại Nam* there is a correction at the margin into *cựu*.

604. The *Kiến Văn Tiểu Lục*, 4:297, also recorded this poem with some different readings.

605. The name Long Phúc was mentioned twice in our text, another time in Y Sơn's biography. See *Thiền Uyển*, p. 70b1.

606. Former name of Vĩnh Tường Prefecture, Sơn Tây Province. See “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 242, n.1.

607. The text has *không tông* 空宗 [Ch: *kong zong*], which means the Emptiness school. The term *kong zong* is usually used to denote Buddhism. See, for instance, *Zongjinglu*, T 48.616a6–617a4.

608. It is said in *Tịnh Thiền's* biography that “after Đạo Lâm died, Tịnh Thiền traveled to all the Zen centers, searching for spiritual companions.” *Thiền Uyển*, p. 68a7–8. Tịnh Thiền died in 1193. At least Đạo Lâm must have died a few years before that. Yet, his biography has it that he died in 1203, i.e., ten years after Tịnh Thiền died. In addition, the reign's style Thiên Gia Bảo Hựu is only found in the *Toàn Thư*, 4:307–308, whereas in the *Việt Sử Lược* it is recorded as Thiên Tư Bảo Hựu.

609. I.e., Lord Phụng Càn, title of Lý Nhật Trung conferred upon him by his father Emperor Lý Thái Tông in 1035. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 2:6a8. Due to a name taboo under the Trần, Càn was changed to Yết. See, for instance, *Toàn Thư*, “Bản Kỷ,” 6:30a2–3: “The Càn Gate, formerly called Càn, later was changed to Yết due to a name taboo.” On Phụng Yết, see *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:339.



610. Chân Đăng Province belonged to the area of Tam Nông, Hưng Hóa, nowadays Vĩnh Phú Province. See *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:339, n.2; “Le Bouddhisme,” p. 242, n. 2.

611. The Bodhisattva precepts in Vietnamese Buddhism are fundamentally based on the *Fanwang jing* (T 24, no. 1484). Both monks and laymen can take the Bodhisattva precepts. Those who take these precepts can make a vow to embrace the five precepts first and then ten more afterward. A monk who takes the Bodhisattva precepts needs to have the approval of ten teachers. After the ceremony, a monk usually burns certain part of his body or, more commonly, some incense on his head, as an offering to the Buddhas. The difference between a monk and a layman who take the Bodhisattva precepts is that a monk has to strictly keep the vow of celibacy whereas a layman does not.

612. This shows that in the time of Diệu Nhân, the community of nuns was already well established. It is not reasonable to suggest as some still do that Diệu Nhân was the first nun in Vietnam. Note that the *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:212, records a brief biographical note about a nun called Great Master (*Thái Sư*) Từ Quán. See Appendix III.

613. See *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*, T 14.544b21; Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 43.

614. The original Sanskrit of this verse is *ye mām rūpeṇa cādrakṣur ye mām ghoṣeṇa cānvayuh mithyā-prabhāna-prasrītā na mām drakṣyanti te janāḥ*||. See Conze, *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, p. 56. This verse has been quoted by many other Buddhist scriptures and philosophical treatises. See, for instance, *Yogācāra-Bhūmi*, (Tibetan) D. 4035, tshi. 248a7; *Yogācāra-Bhūmi*, (Chinese) T 30.382b24–25; *Prasannapadā* (Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed.) *Bibliotheca Buddhica*, 4:448; *Anguttara Nikāya*, 2, 65:71. The first half of this verse is identical with *Theragāthā* 469: *ye mām rūpeṇa pāmiṃsu ye ca ghoṣeṇa anvagūl chanda-rāga vasupetā na mam janenti te janāḥ*||.

615. See Vô Ngôn Thông’s instruction to Cảm Thành, *Thiền Uyển*, 6a6–11.

616. Both the *Thiền Uyển* (67b2) and the *Đại Nam* (60a9) have 住, which should be emended to 杜. This verse is very similar to a verse found in *Trần Thái Tông Hoàng Đế Ngự Chế Khoa Hư Lục* [Instructions on Emptiness Composed by Emperor Trần Thái Tông], lower book, 33b1–4, and is said to be a verse instructing disciples by Trần Thái Tông:

Birth, old age, illness, and death,  
Are an eternal truth.  
If you wish to attain liberation,  
By trying to untie your bonds you add to your entanglement.  
It’s only when you are deluded that you search for Buddha,  
It’s only when you are confused that you look for Zen.  
The Zen adept seeks nothing,  
He just closes his mouth and forgets the words.

It is likely that Trần Thái Tông had borrowed the verse from Diệu Nhân. This is not surprising since the concept *nhất hồi niệm xuất nhất hồi tân* — 一回拈出一回新 [each time you bring it to mind, each time it becomes new] was widespread under the Trần. When Trần Nhân Tông was asked why should

one keep repeating the koans of the previous generations, he said: “Each time you bring it to mind, each time it becomes new.” See *Thánh Đăng Lục* [Recorded on the Transmission of the Sacred Lamp], 4b1–2.

617. The *Toàn Thu*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:257, wrote: “In the summer, the sixth month [of the fourth year of the Hội Tường Đại Khánh era (1113)], the wife of the Provincial Governor of Chân Đăng Province, a Princess of the Lý, died. The Lady’s personal name was Ngọc Kiều, and she was the eldest daughter of Lord Phụng Càn. She was brought up in the royal palace by Lý Thánh Tông and subsequently was given in marriage to Provincial Governor Lê of Chân Đăng Province. When Lê died, she vowed to stay a widow and later left home to become a nun. She died at the age of seventy-two. Thần Tông bestowed on her the title of Nun Master.”

618. Which is now Như Nguyệt Village, Yên Phong District, Bắc Ninh Province. On Như Nguyệt, see *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:448, n.1.

619. *Nội điển* 內典 [Ch: *nei dian*] means Buddhist literature. Dao-an wrote in his “Erjiao lun” in *Guang hongmingji*, T 52.136c–11–16: “The teaching that investigates the form is called external, that which examines the spirit is called internal. . . . Buddhist teaching is the internal teaching whereas Confucian teaching is called external.”

620. On the six perfections, see, for instance, Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, pp. 168–71.

621. These consist of vowing to save all sentient beings, innumerable as they are; vowing to cut off all afflictions, endless as they might be; vowing to master all the teachings, immeasurable as they are; and vowing to realize the unexcelled Buddhadharma. See Nakamura, *Bukkyō jiten*, 345r–346l.

622. According to the *Jiu tangshi*, Nam Định was a district first established in 621 and belonged to Tông Châu together with two other districts, namely, Tông Bình and Hoang Giáo. The following year Tông Bình District was divided into two, namely, the districts of Giao Chỉ and Hoài Đức. In 627 the three districts of Giao Chỉ, Hoài Đức, and Hoang Giáo were united to become Tông Bình District, together with Nam Định District, which was adjoined to Giao Châu. See *LMT*, p. 298, n. 1.

The *Bắc Thành Địa Du Chí* (3:9) listed a few villages and cantons bearing the name Cổ Hiền. See also *LMT*, p. 298, n. 1. Trần Văn Giáp wrote in his *Lược Truyện Các Tác Gia Việt Nam*, 1:190 that in the present time there are two villages named Cổ Hiền, one in Thượng Tín Prefecture and one in Phú Xuyên District, both pertaining to Hà Đông Province. On Cổ Hiền, see *Thơ Văn Lý Trần*, 1:460, n. 1.

623. Even though the Văn Miếu (Cultural Temple), where Confucius, the Duke of Zhou, and the seventy-two Confucian sages were worshipped, was built in 1070 under Lý Thánh Tông’s reign; only in 1075 were school and examination systems first established in Vietnam. In the second month of this year, Lý Nhân Tông for the first time by royal decree ordered the organizing of the first examination for the Capital Scholar Degree in the Three Teachings. Lê Văn Thịnh, a Confucian scholar, was the first one to pass this examination. See *Toàn Thu*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:245 and 248.

624. Both the *Thiên Uyển* (69a3–4) and the *Dại Nam* (61b9) have *dại khánh tam niên* 大慶三年 [the third year of the Đại Khánh era]. This might be an error, because according to the *Toàn Thu*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:266, “on the *đinh* ty

day, in the autumn, the seventh month [of the first year of the Thiên Phù Khánh Thọ era (1127)], the Trùng Hưng Diên Thọ was inaugurated.

625. A character *bất* 不 seems to be missing here in the original text. See *Thiên Uyển*, 69a10; *Dại Nam*, 62a5.

626. This is based on the Kun diagram in the Yijing: “When a subject kills his sovereign, a son kills his father, this is not a random event happening in a morning or an afternoon, but must be the outbreak of a longtime cause.” See Wilhelm/Baynes, *The I Ching*, p. 393.

627. Both the *Thiên Uyển* (69b3) and the *Dại Nam* (62a7) have *quân đồn vi hưng vong* 君頓爲興亡, which obviously should be emended to *quân bất năng đồn vi hưng vong* 君不能頓爲興亡.

628. This expression comes from the *Book of Poetry*. See *Hanyu dacidian*, 4:276r.

629. The Tây Dương Shrine here might be the same as the Ladies Trưng Shrine that Lý Anh Tông erected outside Tây Dương Bridge as the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:7b9, has recorded. See *LMT*, p. 300, n. 7.

630. Both the *Thiên Uyển* (69b11) and the *Dại Nam* (62b4) have Thiên Chương Gia Thụy which is wrong.

631. The empress dowager here was Lady Cảm Thánh, whose family name was Lê, mother of Lý Anh Tông. Neither the *Việt Sử Lược* nor the *Toàn Thư* say much about this event.

632. *Luân* 輪 in both the *Thiên Uyển* (70a4) and the *Dại Nam* (62b8), which should be emended as *hàn* 寒.

633. Lê Quý Đôn’s “Nghệ Văn Chí” recorded: “*Chu Phật Tích Duyên Sự* [Selected Stories of Buddha’s Past Lives], 30 books, composed by Master Bảo Giác, following Lý Nhân Tông’s order.” See “Les Chapitres,” pp. 60–61 and 95; “Bibliographie annamite,” p. 139. However, the *Chu Phật Tích Duyên Sự* was a work of Viên Thông and not Bảo Giác, who was Viên Thông’s father. We have no idea what led Lê Quý Đôn to this error. Phan Huy Chú did not mention this work in his “Văn Tịch Chí.”

634. The “Nghệ Văn Chí” recorded: “*Tăng Già Tạp Lục* [Miscellaneous Records of the Sangha], 50 books, composed by Master Bảo Giác.” The “Văn Tịch Chí” also mentioned this work but did not say who was the author. See “Les Chapitres,” pp. 61, 90, and 131; “Bibliographie annamite,” p. 139.

635. Both the “Nghệ Văn Chí” and the “Văn Tịch Chí” recorded: “*Viên Thông Tập* [Collected Works of Viên Thông], 2 vols., composed by Bảo Giác, a native of Cổ Hiên.” It is obvious that *Viên Thông Tập* collected the works of Viên Thông and not Bảo Giác’s. See “Les Chapitres,” pp. 60 and 112; “Bibliographie annamite,” p. 86.

636. The *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* 28:1020, “Bắc Ninh Province, section on Buddhist Monks,” wrote: “Zen Master Y Sơn, a native of Gia Lâm, when a young man was well versed in the classics and history, and especially Buddhist literature. He harbored great aspirations to benefit people. When he was about to die, plants, flowers, birds, and beasts were all moved.” And a note: “[His biography] is recorded in detail in *An Nam Chí Nguyên*. The Master’s date has not been investigated.”

It is true that *Dại Nam Nhất Thống Chí* based itself on *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3, 210. The latter itself said that it collected facts about Y Sơn from the old *Chí* (Records) and government reports as well as from popular legends. Yet *An Nam Chí Lược*, for instance, did not record anything about Y Sơn.

637. This might be the same as An Lăng Village, the birthplace of Từ Đạo Hạnh's mother. This is now Lăng Village, located in the southern suburb of the capital of Hanoi. Nowadays, at this village there is Chiêu Thiên Temple, where Từ Đạo Hạnh and Lý Thần Tông are worshipped. *Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, "Hanoi Province, section on Temples and Shrines," also mentions this temple, which is called An Lăng Temple in *Bắc Thành Địa Dư Chí Lục*, 1:22. Yet no record has ever mentioned a Nam Mô Temple at An Lăng.

638. See *Avatamsaka-Sūtra*, T 10.274c29–275a17.

639. See Shitou's "Centongqi" in *Rentian yanmu*, 5.327a19.

640. According to both the *Việt Sử Lược*, 3.24b9, and the *Toàn Thu*, "Bản Kỷ," 4:313, the third year of the Kiến Gia era (1213) was the year *quí dậu* and not *bính tí*, which was the sixth year of the Kiến Gia era.

641. In both the *Thiền Uyển* and the *Đại Nam*, the section on the Thảo Đường lineage is an integral part of the text. However, since it only consists of a list of names of the monks belonging to the lineage rather than biographies, it seems to be a later interpolation to the text.

642. The legend about Thảo Đường in the Vietnamese Zen tradition is quite remarkable. The *An Nam Chí Lược*, 15:7, wrote: "Thảo Đường followed his teacher to live in Champa. King Thánh Tông of the Lý dynasty, in an expedition against Champa, captured him and gave him to a monk scribe as a servant. One day, the monk scribe was composing his Sayings when he had to go outside. Thảo Đường secretly corrected the text. The monk was surprised about his servant and reported it to Lý Thánh Tông. The latter subsequently made Thảo Đường National Preceptor." The *An Nam Chí Nguyên*, 3:209, wrote: "Zen Master Thảo Đường was a very virtuous man who was well versed in Buddhist literature. Emperor Lý [Thánh Tông] treated him as a teacher. Later Thảo Đường died sitting upright." According to *Việt Sử Lược*, 2.13b3–14a6, during his reign Lý Thánh Tông made only one expedition against Champa in the first year of the Thần Vũ era (1069). Note that both the *Thiền Uyển* (71b1) and the *Đại Nam* (64a4) do not give us any information about Thảo Đường except the fact that he transmitted the lineage of the Xuedou Mingjue school.

If the story about Thảo Đường is accurate, he was captured during that year and was made National Preceptor probably in 1070 or 1071 at the latest, since early in 1072 Lý Thánh Tông fell seriously ill and subsequently died. We have no idea who the monk scribe might be. It could have been Huệ Sinh, since according to the *Việt Điện* he was already General Superintendent of Monks by then, and he accompanied Lý Thánh Tông on an expedition against Champa. The *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu*, upper vol., 15b10, recorded the same as *An Nam Chí Nguyên*. The *Tây Hồ Chí*, section on the temples of Khai Quốc and Vạn Niên, said that Thảo Đường's family name was Lý and was abbot of both of these temples. See *LMT*, p. 303, n. 1. See also "Le Bouddhisme," p. 254, n. 1.

643. Xuedou Mingjue or Chongxian (980–1052), a student of Zhimen Guangzuo of the Yunmen school. For his biography, see *Chuangdeng lu*, T 51.475a9–476a25.

644. Lý Thánh Tông (1023–1072), whose personal name was Nhật Tôn, was the third son of Lý Thái Tông. According to this source, Thánh Tông was a patriarch in the line of Thảo Đường. During his reign, Thánh Tông had many

temples built and *stupas* erected, among which were the famous Sùng Khánh Báo Thiên Temple and the Đại Thắng Tự Thiên Stupa. Yet Thánh Tông also ardently promoted Confucian studies. It was under his reign that for the first time the “Cultural Temple” (*Văn Miếu*) was built and statues of Confucius and other Confucian sages were made to be worshipped there. Thánh Tông also institutionalized some of the court etiquette more or less modeled after Confucianism. See *Toàn Thu*, “Bản Kỷ,” 3:241–46.

645. It is not known whether this Bát Nhã is the same as Nguyễn Bát Nhã, the founder of a Zen school of which we know nothing, but which must have flourished at least before Thông Biện.

646. This might be the same as the Phúc Thánh Temple erected in the sixth year of the Đại Định era (1145), as recorded in the *Toàn Thu*, “Bản Kỷ,” 4:289.

647. Now Đan Phụng district, Hà Đông Province.

648. Nothing is known about this person. This source seems to suggest that Ngô Xá was the teacher of Không Lộ and Giác Hải. However, nothing is mentioned about Ngô Xá in the biographies of Không Lộ and Giác Hải. It is said in the Giác Hải’s biography that the two of them first studied with Hà Trạch.

649. Không Lộ and Giác Hải were recorded above as belonging to the Vô Ngôn Thông school. It is mentioned here that their main biographies are based on the *Diagram of the Southern School* in the section of the Kiến Sơ lineage. Unfortunately, this book is lost otherwise the information therein might shed some light on the historical facts about Không Lộ and Giác Hải.

650. The text has “Định Sơ” but obviously should be emended to “Kiến Sơ.”

651. Could be identical with Đỗ Anh Vũ (?–1159), who was Grand Commandant under Lý Nhân Tông. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:3a4.

652. Might be an error for Hoàng Minh.

653. The *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:24a6, recorded that while escaping from the capital in the event of 1211, Lý Huệ Tông and the empress dowager took refuge “at the residence of High Official Đỗ Thường on their way to Lạng Châu.” We know that the ranks of “High Official” [*dại liêu ban*] and “Grand Tutor” [*thái phó*] are identical, since in 1159 Lý Anh Tông issued a decree that *dại liêu ban* should be referred to as *thái phó*. See *Việt Sử Lược*, 3:6b3.

654. We know that Kiến Sơ means the lineage of Vô Ngôn Thông. However, there is no mention of Đỗ Thường in this lineage in our text.

655. Phúc Điền records in his *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu*, under the section “Xuedou Lineage,” that “Great Master Thảo Đường of Khai Quốc Temple in the Capital of Thăng Long represented the first generation of Xuedou’s disciples here [in Vietnam]. Bát Nhã was the second generation. Hoàng Minh was the third generation. The fourth generation consisted of four patriarchs whose names have been lost. The fifth generation was Chân Huyền. The sixth generation was Hải Tịnh.” See *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu*, 15b5–6.

## Appendix I

1. For brief but useful remarks on this text, see Trần Văn Giáp, *Tìm Hiểu Kho Sách Hán Nôm*, 2:217–18. The original texts used in this study are the *Thiền Uyển*, microfilm A. 1276 from the Social Sciences Library in Hanoi and the *Đại Nam*, microfilm A. 2767. #279 from the École Française d’Extrême-Orient.

2. See Émile Gaspardone, “Bibliographie annamite,” *BEFEO* 34(1935): 140.

3. See Trần Văn Giáp, “Le Bouddhisme en Annam des origines au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *BEFEO* 32 (1932): 191–286; “Les chapitres bibliographiques de Lê Quí Đôn et de Phan Huy Chú,” *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, ns, 3 (1938): 90; Gaspardone, “Bibliographie annamite,” pp. 140–43.

4. See “Les chapitres,” p. 90.

5. See *ibid.*

6. The *Thiền Uyển* (the Lê edition) contains two fascicles, the first recording the Vô Ngôn Thông lineage and the second, the Vinītaruci lineage. The *Đại Nam* (the Nguyễn edition), on the other hand, is counted as one volume within a larger project of Phúc Điền.

7. See Émile Gaspardone, *Ngan-nan tche yuan et son auteur* (Hanoi: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1932). See Appendix III for a complete translation of these short biographies. These twenty Zen masters are Thảo Đường, Tịnh Giới, Tam Mạch, Đạo Hạnh, Viên Chiếu, Nghĩa Tồn, Trí Nhân, Giới Châu, Y Sơn, Giới Không, Thiền Nham, Nguyễn Học, Bảo Tính, Minh Tâm, Không Lộ, Giác Hải, Ma Ni, Thuần Nhất, Vô Châu, and Từ Quán Huệ Thông. Seven among these (namely, Tam Mạch, Nghĩa Tồn, Giới Châu, Ma Ni, Thuần Nhất, Vô Châu, and Từ Quán Huệ Thông) are not included in the *Thiền Uyển*.

8. See Lê Mạnh Thát, *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* (referred to as *LMT*) (Saigon: Vạn Hạnh Buddhist Studies Institute, 1976), p. 7.

9. See *Ngan-nan tche-yuan*, 3: 208.

10. Nguyễn Văn Chất hailed from Vũ Di Village, Bạch Hạc District. He passed the National Scholar Examination in 1448 at the age of twenty-seven and subsequently held several important posts at the Lê court. See “Bibliographie annamite,” p. 127.

11. This is a record on historical and legendary national heroes of Vietnam. The work is believed to have been composed by Lý Tế Xuyên around 1329. For a useful textual and historical analysis of this work, see *Tìm Hiểu Kho Sách Hán Nôm*, 1:180–86. See also “Bibliographie annamite,” pp. 126–28; Ungar, “From Myth to History,” pp. 179–80; Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy,” pp. 156–69; “Notes on the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập*,” *The Birth of Vietnam*, appendix O, esp. pp. 352–59. All editions of the original texts in classical Chinese can be found in Chan Hing-ho, ed., *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, série II, vol. 2. The *Thiền Uyển* is mentioned in the story of Sóc Thiên Vương. See *ibid.*, p. 39, 214. On Lý Tế Xuyên, see Trần Văn Giáp et al., *Lược Truyện Các Tác Gia Việt Nam*, 1:179.

12. See the story of Sóc Thiên Vương in *Việt Điện U Linh Tập* in Chan Hing-ho, *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết*, 2:39.

13. See *Thiền Uyển*, 2b2–3a2.

14. Phúc Điền is the sobriquet of An Thiền, Buddhist author, editor, translator, and activist of the Nguyễn dynasty. See *Tìm Hiểu Kho Sách Hán Nôm*, 2:218–19. Phúc Điền’s most significant work is the *Đạo Giáo Nguyên Lưu* [Sources of the Three Religions]. See *Tìm Hiểu Kho Sách Hán Nôm*, 2:10. Nguyễn Lang takes An Thiền and Phúc Điền as two different persons and provides two different biographical notes without telling us his sources. See Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận*, 2:252–53; 255–56.

The *Kế Đăng Lược Lục* records the following about Phúc Điền: “Venerable Mật Nhân Phúc Điền, the sixth generation at Liên Tôn Temple in Hà Nội, hailed from Bạch Sam, Sơn Minh, Hà Nội. His lay family name was Vũ. He

left home to become a monk at the age of twelve. At first he came to Thịnh Liệt Đại Bi Temple to study with Master Viên Quang Hải Tiềm. After three years Master Viên Quang passed away. Phúc Điền then came to Nam Du Phúc Xuân Temple to pay homage to Venerable Từ Phong and asked to be instructed in the Ten Dharmas. He was given the Dharma name Tịch Tịch. After Từ Phong's death, at the age of twenty, he came to study with Master Từ Quang Tịch Giảng of Pháp Vân Temple at Phú Ninh Village, Bắc Ninh Province. He received full ordination and spent six years studying and practicing Buddhism. When Từ Quang passed away, Phúc Điền had his body cremated and the Hàm Long stupa erected in the temple [to house the relics]. In the twenty-sixth year, *canh tý*, of the Minh Mệnh era,\* the people of Bồ Sơn Village, Bắc Ninh Province, invited him to build Bồ Sơn Temple. In the third year, *quí mão*, of the Thiệu Trị era (1843) he also erected Thiên Ứng Phúc Temple at Gia Thụy, Phúc Nhi Temple in Sơn Tây Province, and Hoàng Vân Temple at Nhuệ Thôn Village.

"He also reprinted Buddhist texts such as the *Huayan Sūtra* in eighty volumes, re-collected scriptures for daily chanting; one collection of diagrams, re-collected Zen *sūtras* and incantations, one volume each; Zen monastic rules for monks and nuns, one volume each; compiled *Dại Nam Thiền Uyển Kế Đăng* [Continuation of the (Transmission of the) Lamp in the Zen Community of Vietnam], one volume; compiled *Tam Giáo Quán Khuy: Nho Thích Đạo* [An Introduction to the Three Religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism], 3 vols.; *Tam Giáo Nguyên Lưu* [Sources of the Three Religions], 3 vols. (. . .); reprinted the *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh* and the old text of the three-volume *Phật Tổ Kế Đăng*, (. . .) edited the *Hufa lun* [Treatise on the Protection of the Dharma] (. . .), the *Chanlin baoxun* [Precious Instructions in the Zen Forest] (. . .). All the above texts are kept at Bồ Sơn Temple and Liên Tôn Temple. . . .

"At that time Phúc Điền was eighty years old. One day he asked his assembly, 'What date is it now?' They said, 'It is the sixteenth day of the eleventh month, the rat hour.' Phúc Điền said, 'It is time for me to return to the Western [Paradise of Amitābha]. He then recited a verse to transmit the Dharma, 'All doctrines reveal the entrance to enlightenment; based on enlightenment, perfection is developed. Outside the [Buddhist] Path there is no path; in Emptiness there is nonemptiness. At the present time I am transmitting the True Dharma, but I have practiced the true school since time immemorial. Because there is nothing to be attained, it is not to be found in words.' His verse finished, he passed away facing the west."

15. See *Việt Nam Phật Điển Tùng San* [Collected Vietnamese Buddhist Texts] (Hanoi: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1943), 3:1a–4a. Như Sơn's name is not mentioned by either Lê Quý Đôn or Phan Huy Chú in their descriptive bibliographies. Phúc Điền informs us that Như Sơn was a monk of the [Later] Lê dynasty who composed the *Kế Đăng Lục* in three volumes by basing himself on the *Wudeng huiyuan* [The Five Lamps Converging at the Source] of Chinese Zen. Phúc Điền apparently shows great respect for Như Sơn, since he complains that the *Thiền Uyển* and *Thánh Đăng Lục* were somewhat nebulous, whereas Như Sơn's *Kế Đăng Lục* was systematic and cohesive and could help

\*This is obviously an error because Minh Mệnh reigned for only twenty-one years (1820–1840).



provide context and perspective for Vietnamese Buddhist history. (This is somewhat odd, since Như Sơn's work is principally a paraphrase of parts of the *Wudeng huiyuan*.) This, however, indicates that even up to the middle of the nineteenth century, Vietnamese Buddhist leaders were still struggling to "Zenify" Vietnamese Buddhism, a process initiated by the compiler(s) of the *Thiền Uyển*. The *Wudeng huiyuan* was composed by Puji of the Song. For a modern critical edition of the text, see Su Yuan, ed., *Wudeng huiyuan*, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989). On the biographies of the three patriarchs of the Trần dynasty, see also Trần Tuấn Khải, trans., *Tam Tổ Hành Trang* [Religious Activities of the Three Patriarchs] (Saigon: Office of the Secretary of State, Board on Cultural Affairs, 1971), pp. 5–38.

16. See *Việt Nam Phật Điển Tùng San*, 8:1b–2a.

17. See Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận*, pp. 117–18; *LMT*, p. 15.

18. It is strange that the current microfilm text of the *Kế Đăng Lục* kept in the library of the Hán-Nôm Institute is part of the *Thiền Uyển* and not of the *Dại Nam*.

19. The *Kế Đăng Lục* is obviously an effort to write a complete history of the transmission of Zen in Vietnam from antiquity to the time of Phúc Điền. It proves to be an informative and thus valuable document for Vietnamese Buddhist history. The book, however, is not very organized in both content and style. For instance, some sections are even written in Nôm (the demotic script).

20. See *Dại Nam*, 20a6–22a9.

21. Pages 14b9–15b8 in the *Thiền Uyển* are missing in the *Dại Nam*.

22. This seems to show that at the time of Phúc Điền at least two different editions of the *Thiền Uyển* were in circulation.

23. Giáp related that on the eve of his departure for Paris on a research mission for the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in 1927, he chanced upon the *Thiền Uyển* in the private library of a retired Vietnamese scholar who lived around Hải Phòng. See Trần Văn Giáp et al., *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam*, 1:193. It is hard to imagine what the scenario of the study of Vietnamese Buddhist history would have been like had Giáp not made this serendipitous discovery.

24. See "Le Bouddhisme," pp. 195–96. We need to note that Giáp failed to point out that Túc Lự, Thông Thiền's disciple, and Ứng Vương, Túc Lự's disciple, must have died much later than 1228, although the *Thiền Uyển* does not record the dates of their death.

25. See *Thiền Uyển*, 9a1–2; *Dại Nam*, 5b6–7. There seems to be some textual confusion in this connection since the phrase "at this time the Dharma Master Đỗ Thuận was also well known" is obviously out of place here. According to the *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:191–92, Lê Đại Hành asked Pháp Thuận, not Khuông Việt, to receive Li Jue.

26. See "Le Bouddhisme," p. 196. The year 962 should be corrected to 982. See also *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 1:191.

27. See "Le Bouddhisme," p. 196; *Thiền Uyển*, 5a7–8; *Dại Nam*, 2a6–7.

28. See *Toàn Thư*, "Bản Kỷ," 6:407; 7:420.

29. See "Bibliographie annamite," pp. 142–43.

30. See *LMT*, p. 41.

31. For a general study of this Zen school, see Nguyễn Hoàng Anh, “Le Bouddhisme Dhyāna Trúc Lâm,” *Vietnam Forum* 5 (1985): 37–65. See also Nguyễn Tài Thư et al., *Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Việt Nam* [History of Vietnamese Buddhism] (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1988), pp. 246–66; Thích Thanh Từ, “Thiền Trúc Lâm qua văn đáp” [Trúc Lâm Zen through Dialogue], in Thích Thanh Từ et al., *Thiền Học Đời Trần* [Zen in the Trần Dynasty] (Institute of Vietnamese Buddhist Studies, 1992), pp. 84–89; “Thiền Trúc Lâm qua văn thơ Hán” [Trúc Lâm Zen through literature in Chinese], pp. 90–96; “Vài nét đặc thù của Thiền Sư Pháp Loa” [A Brief Study on Zen Master Pháp Loa], pp. 129–34; Minh Chi, “Vua Trần Nhân Tông và dòng Thiền Trúc Lâm Yên Tử” [King Trần Nhân Tông and the Trúc Lâm Yên Tử Zen Lineage], pp. 97–103; “Một số vấn đề về Pháp Loa, Tổ thứ hai của phái Thiền Trúc Lâm” [A Few Problems on Pháp Loa, the Second Patriarch of the Trúc Lâm Zen School], pp. 145–51; “Thơ Huyền Quang” [Huyền Quang’s Poetry], pp. 173–80; Thích Phước Sơn, “Trúc Lâm Sơ Tổ” [The First Patriarch Trúc Lâm], pp. 104–16; “Nhị Tổ Pháp Loa” [The Second Patriarch Pháp Loa], pp. 134–44; “Tam Tổ Huyền Quang” [The Third Patriarch Huyền Quang], pp. 167–72; Thích Minh Tuệ, “Những đóng góp cho Phật Giáo Việt Nam của Thiền Sư Pháp Loa (1284–1330)” [The Contributions to Vietnamese Buddhism of Zen Master Pháp Loa (1284–1330)], pp. 152–60; “Thiền Sư Huyền Quang, một nhà thơ lớn” [Zen Master Huyền Quang, A Great Poet], pp. 181–88; Trần Lê Nghĩa, “Trần nhân Tông và dòng Thiền Trúc Lâm Yên Tử” [Trần Nhân Tông and the Trúc Lâm Yên Tử Zen Lineage], pp. 117–28; Nguyễn Duy Hình, “Tìm hiểu ý nghĩa xã hội của phái Trúc Lâm thời Trần” [The Social Significance of the Trúc Lâm Zen School under the Trần Dynasty], in Bùi Văn Cán, ed., *Tìm Hiểu Xã Hội Việt Nam Thời Lý Trần* [Studies on Vietnamese Society under the Lý and Trần Dynasties] (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1983), pp. 639–91. Note that none of these studies is from a critical standpoint.

32. See *Việt Nam Phật Điển Tùng San*, 8:1a–47b.

33. For his biography, see *Thiền Uyển*, 39a2–39b7; *Dại Nam* 34b10–35b3.

34. See Trần Văn Giáp, *Lược Truyện Các Tắc Gia Việt Nam* 1: 166.

35. See *LMT*, p. 41.

36. The *Jingde chuandeng lu*, 30 books, written by Daoyuan in 1004. He finished it in 1007, the fourth year of the Jingde era; therefore, it is called *Jingde chuandeng lu*.

37. The *Quốc Sử* is mentioned in the biographies of Tịnh Giới (*Thiền Uyển*, 34b7; *Dại nam*, 30b8), Vạn Hạnh (*Thiền Uyển*, 53a8; *Dại Nam*, 47b9), and Đạo Hạnh (*Thiền Uyển*, 56b2; *Dại Nam*, 50b8).

38. *LMT*, pp. 48–49. Lê Văn Hưu (1230–1322) hailed from Phủ Lý Village, Đông Sơn District. He composed the *Sử Ký* by royal decree, finishing it in the spring of 1272. The *Sử Ký* was the first history of Vietnam, which recorded historical events from the time of Triệu Vũ Đế (207 B.C.E.) to Lý Chiêu Hoàng (1224 C.E.). The work is not extant nowadays, except for a few fragments quoted by Ngô Sĩ Liên in his *Dại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*. See *Tìm Hiểu Kho Sách Hán Nôm*, 1:38–39. See also “Les chapitres,” p. 87; “Bibliographie annamite,” pp. 49–50; E. S. Ungar, “From Myth to History,” p. 179;

*Lược Truyện Các Tác Gia Việt Nam*, 1:160. That the author of the *Thiền Uyển* quoted Lê Văn Hưu's *Sử Ký* shows that the *Thiền Uyển* must have been composed at least after 1272.

39. See *Thiền Uyển*, 62a11; *Dại Nam*, 55b3.

40. See *LMT*, pp. 48–49.

41. See *LMT*, p. 54.

## APPENDIX II

1. See Ungar, "From Myth to History."

2. Printed in the beginning of the "[Huệ Trung] Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục" (Recorded Sayings of the Eminent [Huệ Trung]), in *Việt Nam Phật Điện Tùng San*, 8:1a–47b.

3. According to the *Dại Nam*, 19b1: "Zen Master Biện Tài of Vạn Tuế Temple in the capital of Thăng Long was a native of Guangzhou who came to our country during the reign of Lý Thánh Tông. He received the Dharma from National Preceptor Thông Biện and, obeying the royal edict, edited the *Chiếu Đối Lục*."

4. See *Thiền Uyển*, 40a7–10; *Dại Nam*, 36a2–5.

5. Lê Quý Đôn stated that the *Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ* was composed by Thường Chiếu. However, in his "Descriptive Bibliographies," Phan Huy Chú made this note: "*Nam Tông Tự Pháp Đồ*, one book, composed by Monk Viên Chiếu, prefaced by the scholar Lương Thế Vinh." Trần Văn Giáp remarks that it was only a scribal error. See "Les chapitres," pp. 96 and 140; *Tìm Hiểu Kho Sách Hán Nôm* 1: 204. This seems to indicate that neither Lê Quý Đôn nor Phan Huy Chú had these works at their disposal at the time.

6. *Thiền Uyển*, 38b10–11, 40b2, 51a4, 53b1, 72a1; *Dại Nam*, 34b7–8, 36a8, 45a–10, 48a–2; 64b5.

7. *Thiền Uyển*, 72a1; *Dại Nam*, 64b4.

8. His dialogue with Thần Nghi gives us the impression that Thường Chiếu showed him Thông Biện's *Chiếu Đối Lục* alongside other works on the transmission of Buddhist lineages. See *Thiền Uyển*, 40a9–b1; *Dại Nam*, 36a4–7.

9. *Thiền Uyển*, 29a5–6, 36a9; *Dại Nam*, 25b1–2; 32a9.

10. Neither Lê Quý Đôn nor Phan Huy Chú mentions Huệ Nhật in their "descriptive bibliographies."

11. Although the *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngũ* is no longer extant, this is indicative of its reliance on the *Chuandeng lu*.

12. It is somewhat puzzling that the compiler of the *Thiền Uyển* points out only these two particular cases while totally ignoring many obvious borrowings from the *Chuandeng lu*. This at least seems to show that he only put together what was recorded in previous works, but did not himself compose the biographies. In fact, he did note that he found some similarities in the biographies of Tịnh Không and Nguyễn Học with those of Jiashan and Huisi in the *Chuandeng lu*, but he only followed the *Liệt Tổ Yếu Ngũ* and did not dare to correct them.

13. *Thiền Uyển*, 28a4–10; *Dại Nam*, 24b1–6.

14. T 31.323c25–324a7. For another similarity, see *Thiền Uyển*, 28b11–29a2; *Dại Nam*, 25a7–8 and *Chuandeng lu*, T 51.324b2–7.

15. *Thiền Uyển*, 36a2–3; *Dại Nam*, 32a3–4.

16. See *T* 51.431b2–4.

17. Huệ Trung (1230–1291), popularly referred to as Huệ Trung Thượng Sĩ, the most eminent lay Zen adept in Vietnam. He was the teacher of Trần Nhân Tông. For his “Recorded Sayings” see *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục*, *Việt Nam Phật Điển Tùng San*, 8:1a–47b.

18. In his “Afterword” to the *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục*, Trần Khắc Chung (?–1330) reported that Trần Nhân Tông—while he was Retired Emperor—solicited high court officials to write a preface to the *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục* and had it printed. Chung also informed us that Trần Anh Tông (r. 1293–1313) instructed him to write an “Afterword.” We know that Trần Nhân Tông died in 1308 and Trần Anh Tông abdicated in 1313. See *Thượng Sĩ Ngũ Lục*, 47a4–6; *LMT*, p. 37. In any case, the change of the last name Nguyễn into Lý in the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* is an indication that it was written in the Trần dynasty.

19. Shenguang is the personal name of Huike, a direct disciple of Bodhidharma and Second Patriarch of the Chinese Zen tradition. For his biography, see *T* 51.220b34–22113.

20. Or Thiền Lão (eleventh century), belonging to the sixth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông lineage, whose biography can be found in *Thiền Uyển*, 10b8–11a7; *Dại Nam*, 7b3–8a1.

21. Here the author of the *Lược Dẫn Thiền Phái Đồ* obviously agreed with the *Thiền Uyển* as regards the relationship between these figures. However, he either did not know of or did not approve of Thông Biện’s works. According to the *Thiền Uyển*, both Thiền Lão and Định Hương studied with Đa Bảo and belonged to the sixth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông School.

22. Thông Thiền (died 1228) belonged to the thirteenth generation of the Vô Ngôn Thông lineage. For his biography, see *Thiền Uyển*, 39a2–39b7; *Dại Nam*, 34b10–35b3.

23. See Nguyễn Duy Hinh’s article, “Three Legends and Early Buddhism in Vietnam.” See note 77 for Chinese sources indicating the flourishing of Buddhism in Jiaozhou (Vietnam) early in the seventh century.

24. It is hard to imagine that this author lived in the Trần dynasty and yet did not know of, for instance, Khuông Việt, whose story was mentioned in the Trần dynasty historical records. This might point to the fact that he did not accept Khuông Việt as belonging to the Vô Ngôn Thông lineage—the existence of which he did not even know—as the author of the *Thiền Uyển* did thirty years later.

25. *Thiền Uyển*, 19b9–21a11; *Dại Nam*, 15a4–16b3.

26. *Kế Đăng Lược Lục*, 40a2–41b10.

27. *Ibid.*, 2a10–2b4.

28. *Ibid.*, 2b8–4b1.

29. Phúc Điền makes mention of texts such as *Báo Cục Truyện*, *Thánh Đăng Lục*, *Cổ Châu Lục*, *Thiền Uyển Tập Anh*, *Cung Điều Ngự Khoa*, *Linh Nam Chích Quái*, and *Chu Tổ Lục*.

30. This is obviously an abridged version of the “Story of Đồng Tử and Tiên Dung.” The *Linh Nam Chích Quái* records different versions of this story. See Chan Hing-ho, ed., *Việt Nam Hán Văn Tiểu Thuyết Tùng San*, série II, vol. 1: “Nhất Dạ Trạch Truyện,” in *Linh Nam Chích Quái Liệt Truyện* (41–44); “Chử Đồng Tử Truyện,” in *Linh Nam Chích Quái Ngoại Truyện* (149–52); “Nhất Dạ Trạch Truyện,” in *Thiền Nam Văn Lục* (202–204).

31. On Hùng Vương, see Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 306–11.
32. *Kế Đăng Lục*, 1b7–2a4.
33. For a complete biography of Hiện Quang, see Part II of this study.
34. *Kế Đăng Lục*, 19b3–8.
35. *Ibid.*, 19b5–20a10.

### APPENDIX III

1. According to the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, the six supernatural powers or the six *abhiññās* consist of (1) *divyaṃ cakṣuḥ* (divine eyes), the knowledge of death and rebirth; (2) *divyaṃ śrotram* (divine hearing), the supernatural power to hear all kinds of human or divine sounds in the whole universe (this is also the power to hear the voices of all the Buddhas who teach in their Buddha-lands); (3) *paracitta-jñāna* (the knowledge of the thoughts of others), the power to discern the contents of the thoughts of others; (4) *pūrvā-nivās-ānasmṛti-jñānam* (recollective knowledge of previous existences), the power to remember one's own previous lives and those of others including all actions that were done in those lives; (5) *ṛddhi-vidhi-jñānam* (the knowledge of all forms of miraculous powers), the power to perform various kinds of miracles; (6) *āsrava-kṣaya-jñānam* (the knowledge of the destruction of impurities), the power to destroy all kinds of desires. In Buddhist philosophy *āsrava-kṣaya-jñāna* is not only the sixth *abhiññās*, but also one of the ten *balas* (powers) and the four *vaiśāradyasm* (ground of confidence). For a detailed description of the six *abhiññās*, see Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 106–34. Note that in Buddhist philosophy, supernatural knowledge is a kind of cognitive power. The relationship between knowledge and powers is an interesting issue in Buddhist philosophy.

2. *Mahākaruṇā-dhāraṇī* (T 20, nos. 1060 and 1066) is one of the most chanted *dhāraṇīs* in Vietnamese Buddhist ritual.

3. According to this biography, the Four Great Vessels of Đại Nam are a huge statue of Amitābha Buddha at Quỳnh Lâm Temple (Đông Triều District, Hải Dương Province), the Báo Thiên stupa in the capital, a big bell in Phổ Lại, and a caldron at Minh Định. These seem to be objects that really exist.

4. Our text (21b2) has *khổng lồ* 孔路, which should be emended to *không lộ* 空路. This is more evidence that Không Lộ's biography in our text draws heavily on the popular tale of Khổng Lồ [the Giant One]. See Chapter One of Part I of this study.

5. Our text (21b10) has *thiên hạ* 天下, which should be emended to *thiên tử* 天子 according to the various versions of the *Việt Điện* and *Linh Nam*.

6. *Toàn Thư* ("Bản Kỷ" 4:286) records that Minh Không died in the year *tân dậu*, 1141.

7. The *Đại Nam* records that Không Lộ was a native of Lại Trì, Chân Định Prefecture, Nam Định Province. I remarked earlier that the editor of this edition of our text inadvertently mixed the biographies of Không Lộ and Minh Không into one and made them one person.

8. This is obviously a scribal error for Hà Trạch. See note 10 below.

9. "Emptiness of Emptiness" (*śūnyatā-śūnyatā*) is one of the sixteen, eighteen, or twenty modes of Emptiness. For a discussion of scriptural sources and philosophical meaning, see, for instance, T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), pp. 351–56.

10. Hà Trạch Temple here probably refers to the temple of a monk named Hà Trạch. According to the *Thiền Uyển*, both Không Lộ and Giác Hải dwelt at Hà Trạch Temple. We do not know whether this Hà Trạch was the same as Lôi Hà Trạch who, according to *Thông Biện*, carried on the scriptural school of Kang Senghui. Hà Trạch might have been a real person and belonged to either the seventh or the eighth generation of the Vinītaruci lineage. Note that in Không Lộ's biography in the *Đại Nam*, there is no mention of his dwelling at Hà Trạch Temple. This only shows that the editor of the *Đại Nam* inadvertently incorporated the story of Nguyễn Minh Không into Không Lộ's biography.

11. All other versions have Vi Ất.





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