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**Practice in the *Platform Sūtra* of the Sixth Patriarch**

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## Abstract

This paper explores the practical teachings found in the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* and considers the possibility of practice within a doctrine of sudden enlightenment. Part One outlines how the doctrine of sudden enlightenment can be understood to undermine the purpose for practicing meditation. Part Two first makes a case for the position that practice is presupposed by the text regardless of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment. Next the paper argues for what type of meditation practice the *Platform Sūtra* teaches is consistent with sudden enlightenment. The practice the *Platform Sūtra* teaches is an intentionless, continuous, non-passive non-attachment while in the midst of *dharmas* that takes as its basis the suchness of things inherent in sentient beings.

Ce travail examine les enseignements contenus dans le texte manuscrit *Sūtra de l'Estrade du Sixième Patriarche*, tel qu'on le trouve dans les documents de Dunhuang, et la considération de la possibilité d'une pratique d'une doctrine de l'éveil subit. La première partie, du travail montre comment la doctrine de l'éveil subit tend à dévaloriser la pratique de la méditation. La deuxième partie fait d'abord l'hypothèse que le texte contient un enseignement pratique, inattentif de la doctrine de l'éveil subit. Finalement, ce travail soutient que le *Sūtra de l'Estrade* est une forme de non-attachement sans passivité, sans intention préconçue et continue, au coeur même des dharmas dont le fondement, inhérent à tous les existants, est constitué par les choses telles qu'elles sont ou par l'ainsité.

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## Abbreviations

### Texts

All references to the text of the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* refer to Philip B. Yampolsky's translation of the text. These are cited simply with the section number of the *Sūtra* in Roman numerals. For example Section Fourteen of the *Platform Sūtra* is indicated as "XIV."

<b>DS</b>	<i>Diamond Sūtra</i>
<b>LZTJ</b>	<i>Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch</i>
<b>RDFM</b>	<i>Fundamental Expedient Teachings for Reposing the Mind That Attains Enlightenment</i>
<b>T</b>	<i>Taishō shinsbū daizō kyō</i>
<b>WSSJ</b>	<i>Mañjuśrī's Discourse on the Pāramitā of Wisdom</i>
<b>XXYL</b>	<i>Treatise on the Essentials of Cultivating the Mind</i>

### Languages

Skt.	Sanskrit
Ch.	Chinese
Jpn.	Japanese
K.	Korean

Note from the author. All romanized terms found in the text are Chinese unless indicated to be otherwise. Also, in the body of the paper, I use Pinyin, not Wade-Giles, for Chinese names, and terms. I have listed all citations and bibliography entries in the same romanization systems used by the respective authors.

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## Part One: The Problem of Meditation in the *Sixth Patriarch Sūtra*

### Section I: 1 Introduction

Popular conceptions of meditation tend to understand meditation practice as something in which, after a lengthy period of sitting and gradually developing meditative skills, one attains enlightenment. One school of Buddhism primarily based upon meditation practice is the East Asian Chan (K. Sōn; Jpn. Zen) school.<sup>1</sup> For instance, modern day Japanese Rinzai Zen monks sit in meditation for five or more hours a day. But in the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Ch. *Liuzu tan jing*. Jpn. *Rokuso dankyō*, hereafter also referred to as the *Sūtra*, the *Sixth Patriarch Sūtra* and the *LZTJ*),<sup>2</sup> one of the central texts of the Chan school and the final achievement of Chinese Tang Dynasty Southern Chan school writings, we find a different scenario. The Sixth Chan Patriarch Huineng (638–713 C.E.) is presented in this text as awakening suddenly, or rapidly, without having first engaged in any form of meditative training. In fact, he awakens to his original

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<sup>1</sup> The term “chan” is Chinese for the Sanskrit *dhyaṇa*, which generally means meditation. “Sōn” and “Zen” are respectively Korean and Japanese for “chan.”

<sup>2</sup> T 48 (no. 2007) 337–345. There are also two Song Dynasty editions, known as the *Kōshōji* and *Daijōji*, and two independently produced Yuan Dynasty editions dated 1290 and 1291 C.E. See Yampolsky’s bibliography in his 1967 translation of the text, page 191, for a list of editions of the *Platform Sūtra*. This paper primarily uses Philip B. Yampolsky’s 1967 translation of the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*. Yanagida Seizan places the *Platform Sūtra*’s compilation date between the *Separate Biography* written in 781 C.E. and the *Baolin zhuàn* written after 801 C.E. See McRae, “Yanagida’s Landmark” 75. Ui Hakaju held that the *Platform Sūtra* was originally compiled shortly after Huineng’s death in 713 C.E. by his disciples and then added to over the years by Shenhui and the Southern School. Hu Shih and D.T. Suzuki held that Shenhui and his school created the original version of the *Sūtra*. See Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 89–90, 98, n. 24; McRae, “Yanagida’s Landmark” 68. On the basis of the variety of errors found in the text of the manuscript Yampolsky concludes that the Dunhuang manuscript is based upon an earlier version of the text, perhaps hurriedly copied down. As a result, the *Kōshōji* edition of the *Sūtra* as well as the editions prepared by Japanese scholars such as D.T. Suzuki and Ui Hakaju are relied upon in order to understand various characters and passages of the Dunhuang text. See Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 89–90, n. 2, p. 98–99. Other English translations include Thomas Cleary’s 1998, Heng Yin’s 1971, Charles Luk’s 1962, and Wong Mou Lam’s 1930 translations of the Ming Canon edition, and also D.T. Suzuki’s 1960 partial translation and Wing-tsit Chan’s 1963 complete translation with Chinese text of the Dunhuang manuscript. Carl Bielefeldt and Lewis Lancaster discuss the various editions of the *Platform Sūtra* as well as these English translations in their article “*Platform Scripture*.” Refer to Bibliography.

nature simply upon hearing the line from the *Diamond Sūtra* (Skt. *Vajracchedikā*, Ch. *Jingang banrou boluomi jing*)<sup>3</sup> “arouse the mind in accord with no place of abode.”<sup>4</sup> John McRae notes that Heze Shenhui (670–762 C.E.), the main disseminator of Southern school teachings, “does not hedge on the issue of immediate inspiration by specifying some preliminary period of religious practice, however brief” (McRae, “Shen-hui” 251).<sup>5</sup>

This teaching in Southern school writings, that enlightenment is sudden, seems to reject the idea that practice is needed in order to experience enlightenment. In fact, the *Platform Sūtra* and Shenhui’s emphasis and understanding of sudden enlightenment (and the identity of meditation and wisdom) indicated to the Chinese scholar Hu Shih that the Southern school “swept aside all meditation, rejected sitting practices, and produced a ‘new Chan, which renounces Chan itself and is therefore no Chan at all’ ” (Hu Shih, “Ch’an” 7).<sup>6</sup> In Hu Shih’s opinion, it seems that for the Southern school there can be no meditation practice within a doctrine of sudden enlightenment.

The problem with respect to meditation practice in the *LZTJ* is primarily the result of the way the doctrine of sudden enlightenment is understood and developed in Chan teachings. To rephrase this problem more generally and as a question that has long been a topic of debate one can ask, “can there be a meditation practice within a doctrine of sudden enlightenment?” Generally,

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<sup>3</sup> T 8 (no. 235): 748–752.

<sup>4</sup> See *DS* X, XIV. Yampolsky’s translation is “you must not be attached [to things], yet must produce a mind which stays in no place.” That this was the line that awakened Huineng is found in later developments of the legend of Huineng. This line itself is not mentioned in the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Sūtra*, although the line is quoted by Shenhui and is found in the Kōshōji edition. See Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 94–95, n. 18, 133, n. 41.

<sup>5</sup> The sections of the *Platform Sūtra* this paper focuses on in its discussions, are also among those that are most similar to Shenhui’s writings. As such, Shenhui’s teachings are considered to have sufficient similarity to the *LZTJ* to be grouped together as representative of Southern school teachings.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Gomez sums up the argument for the Southern school’s rejection of meditation as follows: “Modern scholarship has assumed that [Shenhui] condemned meditation outright: since he advocated direct enlightenment, the argument goes, he could not have accepted the practice of seated meditation.” See Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 79.

scholars do not accept the idea that the *LZTJ* and the Southern school dismissed meditation outright. Louis Gomez notes that the “conclusion that the Southern school was a revolution so radical that it advised its followers to give up meditation has been repeatedly and justly criticized” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 83). But what exactly the Southern school practiced is, for a number of reasons that will become apparent during the course of the paper, not easily discerned and has resulted in a variety of opinions. Some of these opinions will be reviewed when they become relevant to the topic being discussed.<sup>7</sup>

If I may be forgiven for taking pen in hand, I will naively attempt to outline what Carl Bielefeldt, among others, notes is a “practice [that can] not be described” (Bielefeldt, “Secret of Zen” 143). This paper argues that, not only is there a meditation teaching in the *Sixth Patriarch Sūtra*, but that according to the *LZTJ* there is no conflict whatsoever between practice and sudden enlightenment.

In order to demonstrate that this is the case, this paper progresses through three discussions exploring how each relates to the *LZTJ*’s teachings on meditation within the text’s doctrine of sudden enlightenment. In Part One, I treat the teachings that at first glance seem to make practice inconsistent with sudden enlightenment and which undermine the assertion there is a meditation teaching in the *LZTJ*. The reason for this is that in the *LZTJ* enlightenment is outlined or developed as rapid, non-dual, and inherent, each of which seems to undermine the rationale for practicing meditation. When the reasons why these teachings in the *Sūtra* subvert the purpose of meditation practice have been considered, attention is turned in Part Two toward the more practical teachings of the text.

I begin Part II by presenting a case for the position that there is a practical teaching in the text by demonstrating that practice is not abandoned and, in fact, its performance is presumed in the text. This indicates that practice of some sort

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<sup>7</sup> Considerations of length prevent a separate section dedicated to these opinions.

must have been understood as compatible with the *LZTJ*'s (and the Southern school's) teaching about sudden enlightenment. I then turn attention toward outlining what type of practice it was that the Southern school understood as compatible with sudden enlightenment. The practical dimensions of this school's teachings adopts a different model of practice, one that deals with the potential conflict between practice and the doctrine of sudden enlightenment by rejecting practice with the intention of obtaining enlightenment and instead teaches what is perhaps better described as a "practice of enlightenment."<sup>8</sup>

This intentionless practice of enlightenment is outlined in the *LZTJ* as meditation's identity with wisdom. This paper develops this identity as referring to not only a doctrinal teaching, but also as the *pāramitā* of wisdom being reinterpreted as meditation. This same type of practice is further outlined in the text as "*samādhi* of oneness," "non-form" and "no-thought." The practice that all of these teachings outline is an intentionless, continuous, non-passive non-attachment in the midst of all *dharma*s that takes as its basis the "as-it-is-ness" or "suchness" of things (Skt. *tathatā*; Ch. *zhenru*; Jpn. *shinnyo*) that is central in the teaching on the inherent, or original, non-abiding condition of sentient beings.

One way to treat these ideas as they are presented in the *LZTJ* is with the aid of the Buddhist Two Truths doctrine. In the *LZTJ* many doctrines and terms are developed in ways similar to and based upon teachings about ultimate truth and conventional truth, and both their divided nature and identity. In particular I will outline how certain teachings in the *Sūtra* can be understood as ultimate truth and descriptions of the enlightened state, and also as conventional truth and meditation instructions that take the enlightened state as the basis of practice.

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<sup>8</sup> Practice described as being "of enlightenment" as opposed to "for enlightenment" is generally associated in the Zen tradition with the practice of "just sitting" (Jpn. *shikan taza*) taught by the Japanese Zen adept and founder of the Sōtō school Dōgen (1200–1253 C.E.). Carl Bielefeldt has written about this conception of practice and its relationship to sudden awakening as it is found in Chan and Zen teachings in a number of places. The reader is referred to in particular to his *Dōgen's Manuals*, "No-mind" and "Secret of Zen." See Bibliography.

This two tiered development of ideas becomes in turn a window to discerning the meditation teachings present in the text.

## **Section II: Sudden Enlightenment and the Undermining of Meditation**

The *LZTJ* uses the term “sudden” in a variety of ways. It refers to a sudden teaching (*dunjiao*), a sudden enlightenment (*dunwu*) and a sudden practice (*dunxiu*).<sup>9</sup> The sudden teaching, or doctrine, is a term used by the Southern school to refer to its own teaching on sudden enlightenment and practice in a polemical manner so as to draw a contrast between it and the “gradualist” Northern school.<sup>10</sup> In what follows I will outline how the rapid, non-dual and inherent features of sudden enlightenment can be understood to teach the inability of practice to result in enlightenment, thus undermining any need for and purpose in practice, be it by following the precepts, meditation or by doctrinal study. As such, the doctrine of sudden enlightenment itself is the primary factor that weakens the assertion that there is a meditation practice taught in the *LZTJ* and seems to make practice inconsistent with sudden enlightenment.

### **II: 1 Sudden Enlightenment as Rapid**

It was introduced above the *LZTJ* teaches that enlightenment is a sudden or rapid event. In the (auto)biographical sections of the *Sūtra*, Huineng is presented as being a poor, uneducated layman woodcutter from the barbarian South who is enlightened out of the blue, with no prior training, simply upon hearing a verse from the *Diamond Sūtra* (II).<sup>11</sup> Another example from the biographical sections is that the monk Huiming, who “was by nature and conduct coarse and violent,” is

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<sup>9</sup> Although the term “sudden practice” is found in the *Platform Sūtra* (XVI, XLI), it is not a prominent term in the text.

<sup>10</sup> It is no longer generally accepted that the Northern school taught gradual enlightenment. Rather they also subscribed to the doctrine of sudden enlightenment. See McRae’s *Northern School*.

<sup>11</sup> There are a number of other examples in the *Platform Sūtra* in which people are enlightened simply upon hearing the Dharma. See sections IX, XI, XXVIII, XXXI, XL.

enlightened upon hearing the Dharma from Huineng (XI). This monk, who was a general prior to becoming ordained, would probably have had much work to do gradually removing the various karmic impediments no doubt incurred in his former occupation before he would have been able to reach enlightenment. Instead, he was enlightened suddenly, bypassing most of the path.<sup>12</sup> The *LZTJ* refers to this awakening as “seeing into nature” (Ch. *jianxing*; Jpn. *kenshō*) and it is an abrupt event.

These examples, among the many others found in the *LZTJ*, demonstrate that practicing the Buddhist path, and meditation in particular, is not a prerequisite for enlightenment according to the *Sūtra*. Sudden awakening is rapid, not necessarily requiring any prior training, and as such is not the telos of the path. The generally understood gradual conception of the path seems to hold awakening as its end. But this awakening is never guaranteed, as if one had simply to follow along the steps of the path, progressing from one stage to the next, perfecting each in succession, until finally the last step was intentionally reached and awakening was caused to take place. The path in this sense is that which falls between the beginning and the end, all of which is sequential, cumulative, and occluded by ignorance (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 78–79).

As such, rapid sudden enlightenment is a rejection of the idea that enlightenment follows naturally from an ordered and progressive set of stages such as the Buddhist path and the practice of meditation. This also includes seeking the removal of ignorance through practice in an effort to bring about the unfolding of enlightenment.<sup>13</sup> The changes that seem to take place from the moment of initially taking up the path through to awakening itself are a

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<sup>12</sup> This sense of sudden awakening as rapid, a clear cutting through of a rope’s numerous fibers with a single swing of the axe, is a teaching contemporary scholarship understands as common to both the Northern and Southern schools, predating any schism between them. For instance see Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 71–75; Faure, *Immediacy* 33–34.

<sup>13</sup> Shenhui’s *Platform S sermon* contains passages that strongly reject the idea of progressive and lengthy practice. See Liebenthal 141–142.

movement through time. The path involves a temporal transition from present to future, whereas the “leap” from ignorance to enlightenment happens in the instant of a present moment (Suzuki, *First Series* 214–216; Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 70). No ordered sequential path involving lengthy periods of time is a means leading directly and only to instant of enlightenment.

Sudden awakening is characterized as an unexpected abrupt “leap” from delusion to enlightenment. Also, the experience of enlightenment, or “seeing nature” as D.T. Suzuki translates *jianxing*,<sup>14</sup> is itself what dispels ignorance and results in Buddhahood, not progression through the path. As a result, meditation (or the precepts and study for that matter) appears to become a topic about which there is no need to be deeply concerned. Instead Chan teachings (generally) emphasize pointing directly at the student’s original nature as opposed to some intermediary stage on a path (Bielefeldt, “No-mind” 483–484, 498–499, 501).<sup>15</sup>

## II: 2 Sudden Enlightenment as Non-dual

One of the more important notions or psychological features of sudden enlightenment that seems to weaken the rationale for meditation practice is the non-dual and immediate nature of enlightenment. An important example of this in the *LZTJ* is with respect to sudden and gradual methods. The text states that “once enlightened, there is from the outset no distinction between these two methods” (XVI). Rather the distinction refers to the differing abilities of people; it is only because some people are dull that there is a distinction between them.

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<sup>14</sup> See Suzuki, *No-mind* 25–26, 45–46. This phrase is based upon the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* phrase “see the Buddha-nature and achieve the enlightenment of Buddhahood.” For discussion about this terms adoption and use of in early Chan see Suzuki, *First Series* 219; McRae, “Yanagida’s Landmark” 167; McRae, “Shenhui” 234, 244–245, 249, n. 117.

<sup>15</sup> A famous Chan verse attributed to Bodhidharma, the monk who (legendarily) brought Chan from India to China and established the school there states, “A separate transmission outside of scripture, not founded on words or letters, point directly to one’s own mind, see one’s nature and become a Buddha.” For a more down to earth treatment of this popular Chan/Zen ideal as it relates to modern day Japanese Rinzai Zen training, see Hori 285–286, 296–297.

Deluded or ignorant thinking tends to see contradictions, and opposites such as that between sudden and gradual. On the other hand, the realization in enlightenment is one that does not recognize any such distinction, or for that matter contradictions, between methods. Here sudden enlightenment as non-dual can be understood as the non-duality between sudden and gradual.

Another example of the non-dual nature of enlightenment occurs when the *LZTJ* states: “Good friends, the very passions themselves are enlightenment” (XXVI); the *Platform Sūtra* and Shenhui teach that enlightenment is not something found apart, or separate, from the (delusive) passions (McRae, “Shenhui” 256).<sup>16</sup> Sudden enlightenment refers to a directly accessible or unmediated enlightenment amidst the phenomenal world of *dharmas* (*fā*) and that does not require the elimination of dependent co-arising (Skt. *pratītya-samutpāda*)<sup>17</sup> (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 85, 89–91). In this sense enlightenment is not mediated and is itself the realization of the suchness of things, the identity of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*; Ch. *kong*; Jpn. *kū*) and form (Skt. *rūpa*; Ch. *se*; Jpn. *shiki*) as outlined in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*.

The non-dual nature of the sudden teaching in these two examples can be better understood if one remembers that in contrast to the Abhidharma, which teaches there is a great multitude of ultimately existing *dharmas*, the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* teach that “there is no multiplicity because all is one” (Conze, *Literature* 14). Because all *dharmas* and phenomena that arise from *dharmas* lack *svabhāva* (permanent self-essence or being), therefore all *dharmas* in fact are emptiness and are simply referred to as *dharmas*. Also, the emptiness that all *dharmas* share is the same emptiness or lack of *svabhāva*. The lack of *svabhāva* that

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<sup>16</sup> Also see Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 75. Liebenthal 149–150. Other references in the *LZTJ* include XXIII, XXV, XXVII, and XL.

<sup>17</sup> Dependent co-arising is the Buddhist explanation of how the manifest universe exists and changes.

characterizes the movement of the painter's brush is not different from the lack of *svabhāva* that characterizes the Banyan Tree at Bodh-Gaya in India.

The reason it is not different is that emptiness, this lack of *svabhāva*, is not a thing itself among other things. It is simply the true nature of a thing, its essential characteristic. Thus, wherever there are *dharmas*, there is emptiness.

Nonetheless, emptiness is the same in all *dharmas* because it is not a co-dependently arisen thing. As a result all *dharmas* are therefore the same and the duality of *dharmas* is resolved in the identity of emptiness and form, the "as-it-is-ness," or suchness, of things. As Edward Conze points out, "the conditioned is here equated with the unconditioned. And that unconditioned identity of the conditioned and of the unconditioned is the principal message of the *Prajñāpāramitā* " (Conze, *Selected Sayings* 20).

Here we see that emptiness is not separate or apart from co-dependent arising. Also, as emptiness is not a co-dependently arisen thing, it is unable to be changed by or mediated through any conditioned thing in any way. It is direct, immediately present as the ink on this page, as the sensation up your back of the chair you are now sitting in, and as the sound of your voice in your head as you read this. All these are *dharmas*, and being *dharmas* their original nature is unsupported or empty; the *Heart Sūtra* states: "Form itself is emptiness, and emptiness itself if form."<sup>18</sup> Enlightenment and ignorance can be understood to be identical in this way.

In this feature of sudden enlightenment, dualistic conceptualizations such as sudden and gradual, and delusion and enlightenment, are rejected in favor of their identity. As such, the practice of meditation with the purpose of moving from ignorance to enlightenment is undermined by the non-dual and immediate nature

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<sup>18</sup> Also see *DS* II, V, XIV, XIX, XXIII, XXIV, XXXI, XXXII.

of the content of awakening. The radical immediacy of emptiness becomes a chasm between what is realized in enlightenment and any provisionally existing means of achieving this realization.

## II: 3 Sudden Enlightenment as Inherent

Another feature of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment found in the *LZTJ* that undermines the purpose of practicing meditation so as to acquire enlightenment, bases itself upon the inherent enlightenment (*benjue*) teaching of the *tathāgata-garbha* (Buddha-nature) tradition. The *LZTJ* states “Good friends, enlightenment (*bodhi*) and intuitive wisdom (*prajñā*) are from the outset possessed by men of the world themselves” (XII). Although this statement does not explicitly refer to sudden enlightenment, in the context of Chan teachings this is what is being stated.

The Chinese Buddhist monk Daosheng (360–434 C.E.)<sup>19</sup> is an important figure at this point in the discussion because he is credited with first linking the universality of Buddha-nature in all sentient beings with the teaching of sudden enlightenment. Daosheng lived during the period when many Buddhist teachings were being matched or paired with Daoist teachings. One example of such matching of concepts in the teachings of inherent enlightenment is the parallel drawn between the innate sagehood of the Daoist and the innate Buddha-nature of the Buddhist. In enlightenment one realizes this a priori germ of enlightenment, which Daosheng outlined as the universal Buddha-nature teaching of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Daban niepan jing*).<sup>20</sup> It is because of the innate quality of enlightenment that it is understood as sudden. Daosheng also

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<sup>19</sup> He was a disciple of the great Chinese translator of Sanskrit Buddhist texts Kumārajīva, and was a student of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*. Unfortunately his teachings about sudden enlightenment are understood primarily from the second hand accounts of others. See Lai, “Taosheng’s Theory” 172–173.

<sup>20</sup> T 12 no. 374: 365–606.

understood enlightenment as non-dual, as not able to be divided and thus did not allow for there to be any stages or gradations in enlightenment.<sup>21</sup>

Because of this innate aspect of enlightenment the rationale for practice is weakened. For instance, most texts dealing with Buddha-nature essentially claim that all sentient beings have Buddha-nature (*tathāgata-garbha*)<sup>22</sup> inherently within them. Buddha-nature is understood as the potential for Buddhahood, a seed or embryo Buddha within sentient beings that must be developed,<sup>23</sup> and also as that which is realized in enlightenment (Sutton 67–78).<sup>24</sup> With respect to soteriological concerns, because all sentient beings inherently have Buddha-nature it is possible for sentient beings to bring out, discover or realize this inherent Buddha-nature and attain enlightenment (King 29–56).<sup>25</sup>

Buddha-nature is something that sentient beings already possess, and as such, no practices are going to be able to obtain it. The only problem is that the inherently pure Buddha-nature seems obscured or tainted by ignorance, passions and delusion of various sorts like clouds blocking the sun.<sup>26</sup> But as early as the

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<sup>21</sup> Although this appears to be based upon the teaching about the non-dual nature of emptiness as outlined in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*, Whalen Lai argues that they are in fact based upon the one-vehicle teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing*, T 9 no. 262: 1–61) as opposed to the three vehicle teachings of arhat, *pratyekabuddha* and Buddha. In the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* this idea is developed in terms of universal Buddha-nature. For a more detailed discussion of these ideas, see Lai, “Tao-sheng’s Theory” 169–200.

<sup>22</sup> A literal translation of the Sanskrit *tathāgata-garbha* is “embryonic Perfect One or Buddha.” The term Buddha-nature (*foxing*) is actually a Chinese term used to refer to the *tathāgata-garbha* and is not found in any known Sanskrit source. See King 3–5.

<sup>23</sup> It develops this potential in terms of the eight *viññāna* (Skt.) system and the need to purify the seven more mundane *viññānas*. See Sutton 62–66.

<sup>24</sup> It is worth noting that the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* is careful to avoid identifying Buddha-nature with some type of “self” as the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* does. It does not attribute permanent essence to a self, and instead explains the use of this term as an expedient means used in order to teach or instruct sentient beings.

<sup>25</sup> Also, if not for Buddha-nature, there is no common quality that bridges the gap between ignorant sentient beings and Buddhas making it possible for sentient beings to become enlightened. See Williams 110–105.

<sup>26</sup> The *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* and later Yogācāra teaches that due to pollution and taint from delusions or ignorance, the originally pure *ālaya-viññāna* dichotomizes itself into subject and object, self and other, *manas* and the external world. See Dutt 245–247.

Indian *Tathāgata-garbha Sūtra*, which is believed to be the earliest text outlining teachings concerning Buddha-nature, there appeared a tension between the idea of all beings already possessing Buddha-nature and thereby already being innately already enlightened, and the need for practice to overcome ignorance and realize Buddhahood. The innate aspect of Buddha-nature further weakens any purpose in meditation practice because Buddha-nature is understood to be originally pure, and thus unaffected by, the provisionally existing delusions; it precedes false notions such as ignorance and impurity, and thus also the need for a way to remove ignorance. Enlightenment as inherent seems to have undermined the rationale for practice almost since its inception.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, to appeal to a wider audience many Chinese Buddhist schools adopted the *tathāgata-garbha* teachings, and inherent enlightenment as recognition of the individual's innate Buddha-nature. Chan's association with inherent enlightenment teachings is via Bodhidharma and his connection to the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*,<sup>28</sup> at least according to the *Records of the Masters and Disciples of the Lankā* [*vatāra Sūtra*] (*Lengjia shizi ji*).<sup>29</sup> But the earlier East Mountain Chan of the Fourth and Fifth Patriarchs on the other hand always had a tradition of interpreting the teachings of Buddha-nature from the perspective of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* tradition and the teachings on the absence of inherent existence (Chappell, "Hermeneutical Phases" 195).

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<sup>27</sup> This tension and the various resolutions of it form the basis of much of the later developments of the doctrine. See Williams 96–115.

<sup>28</sup> This sūtra's association with early Chan is recorded in epitaphs of the Northern school masters Fa-ju (638–689 C.E.) and Shenxiu. The increasing prominence of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* can be seen in developments beginning with the *Lives of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan*) of Daoxuan (559–667 C.E.) through to the Northern Chan school *Lengjia shizi ji*. See McRae, "Yanagida's Landmark" 60–64.

<sup>29</sup> T 85 (no. 2837) 1283–1291. This Chan text recovered at Dunhuang was probably compiled between 712–716 C.E. See McRae, "Yanagida's Landmark" 62–63.

The Huayan school understands the concept of an innate Buddha-nature as the “unimpeded interpenetration between all phenomena” and develops this as the individual’s interconnection with all things in the universe. Due to the radical co-extensiveness of enlightenment with mundane existence, there was no need for a regime or set of sequential practices that had to be progressed through to achieve Buddhahood. The Huayan teaching of the interpenetration of all things meant that even in the first instance of the development of *bodhi-citta*,<sup>30</sup> full enlightenment or Buddhahood is already present. One is both bodhisattva and Buddha on every stage of the path. Sudden in this sense implies a direct enlightenment as opposed to the gradual, traditional Buddhist or Indian way of conceiving the relationship between practice and enlightenment. Mazu’s Hongzhou school and its teachings about sudden enlightenment are based upon this Huayan teaching (Buswell, “Short-cut” 325–327; Cleary, *Inconceivable* 17–18).

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<sup>30</sup> *Bodhi-citta* refers to the mind’s motivation to seek awakening for the benefit of all sentient beings.

In summary, sudden as inherent enlightenment undermines the seeming reality of delusion with assertions of innate or original enlightenment. What is realized in enlightenment is not obtained, it is one's original natural condition. Thus there is no permanent reality to delusion, which, like the changing clouds covering the sun, are not actually affecting the always shining and intrinsically pure Buddha-nature. It undermines striving for awakening through provisional constructs such as Buddhist meditation by asserting that this striving itself, and the means to diffuse ignorance by way of the path and meditation, is itself delusion. Thus there is no need for practice as a healthy person does not need medicine. The only real cure is not to fall sick, and as this is the original nature of things, this is really already the situation (Faure, *Immediacy* 41–47).<sup>31</sup> Here, awakening is understood to be sudden and the rationale for practicing meditation in order to acquire enlightenment is undermined because sentient beings already are innately enlightened.

## II: 4 Self-nature and *Prajñā* in the *Sixth Patriarch Sūtra*

Although the *Platform Sūtra* does not develop the concept of Buddha-nature specifically, it does outline this teaching in more detail when speaking of self-nature, and in some instances as “intuitive wisdom” (*prajñā*), which the *Sūtra* identifies with self-nature. In particular, self-nature is understood to be the inherent non-abiding nature of all things, including sentient beings.

*Prajñā*, or “intuitive wisdom,” are the terms most often used by Yampolsky in his translation of the *LZTJ* when identifying the Chinese transliteration of the same Sanskrit term *prajñā* (Ch. *banruo zhi zhi*).<sup>32</sup> It refers to something sentient beings already have, and thus is *prajñā* identified with the immanence of Buddha-

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<sup>31</sup> As such it is not like Confucian ideas about the perfectibility of human nature.

<sup>32</sup> He also translates this as “*prajñā* wisdom” (XXVIII, XXIX) and the “wisdom of *prajñā*” (XXI, XXVIII).

nature in humanity (XII). For example, the *Sūtra* states, “in the original nature itself, the ‘wisdom of *prajñā*’ exists” (XXVIII).

Self-nature (*zixing*), also referred to as “original nature,” “one’s own nature,” etc., is a common term appearing in most sections of the *Sūtra*, and as mentioned above, is also used to refer to the true nature of sentient beings.<sup>33</sup> In one example Huineng is portrayed as saying he “saw suddenly that true reality was my own original nature” (XXXI). Again, sentient beings already have this true nature, and as such the idea is similar to the *tathāgata-garbha* teachings in so far as Buddha-nature is already within sentient beings, and they are thus inherently enlightened.

But the *LZTJ*’s teachings about self-nature do not indicate that it is some form of permanent essence, such as an *atman*, soul, or any other such permanent independent spiritual essence found separate from any aspect of oneself or the experienced universe. With respect to the physical body for instance, the text states that “in your own physical bodies you have in yourselves the attributes of inherent enlightenment” (XXI).<sup>34</sup> With respect to mental phenomena the text states: “do not depart from deceptions and errors; for they of themselves are the nature of true reality” (XXVII). Here we see that it is not sensual experience, deception, error (ignorance), and the *dharma*s that these consist of that must be removed or eliminated. Rather, because these are originally empty, they are only provisionally existing, and therefore it is the way deceptions and errors are understood and experienced that is in need of adaptation.

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<sup>33</sup> Suzuki and Dumoulin note the many uses of the term “nature” (*xing*) in the *Sūtra* are all essentially synonymous with Buddha-nature. These include “seeing into nature”, “one’s own nature”, “Self-nature”, original nature”, “wisdom nature”, “Dharma nature”, and Buddha-nature.” See Suzuki, *No-mind* 39–40; Dumoulin, *History* Vol.1: 144. This free use of synonyms originates with Yogācāra texts such as the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* and the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. See Suzuki, *Studies* 353–354. Other examples include “one’s own nature is the *Dharmakāya*” (XIX, XX), it “is originally pure” (XVIII, XVII, XIX, XX, XXIV, XXVI), and also that “non-abiding is the original nature of man” (XVII).

<sup>34</sup> Also see Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 143, n. 97, and sections XX, XXX, XXXV, and LII of the *LZTJ*.

It is also important to note that the *LZTJ*'s teachings on self-nature emphasize that it is not separate from not only oneself, but all other parts of dependent co-arising as well. The *Platform Sūtra* teaches in section XXIV that emptiness includes all things that we would generally refer to as the universe, and ends stating that "the emptiness of human nature is also like this." The line that immediately follows and opens section XXV continues this teaching of the sentient being's true nature by stating: "self-nature contains the ten thousand things (i.e., all experience of phenomena mediated through the senses and the mind). The ten thousand things are all in self-nature" (XXV). The *Sūtra* makes this statement in explanation of the meaning of "*maha*" in *Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā*. The *LZTJ*, like the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*, identifies this conception of the true nature of things as the Buddha's true body, the *dharmakāya*.<sup>35</sup>

Here we see that self-nature, being the true nature of things, is universal and not found apart from *dharmas*. At the same time its original purity is undiminished, and awakening to this original purity occurs among *dharmas*, and does not involve withdrawing from or eliminating awareness of *dharmas* (Gomez, "Purifying Gold" 75). Also, self-nature is not outlined simply in terms of one thing encompassing or being encompassed by another, nor that one thing permeates or is permeated by another. In fact it is outlined as the identity of emptiness and co-dependent arising.

Since self-nature in the *LZTJ* includes and is both emptiness and *dharmas* (co-dependent arising), self-nature must also be understood as changing due its emptiness. Thus the *LZTJ* teaches that "non-abiding is the original nature of

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<sup>35</sup> Another example states "all *dharmas* are within your own natures, yet your own natures are always pure. [This is called the] pure *Dharmakāya* Buddha"(XX). Other references include: XXIII, XXX, XLV. It is worth noting that the *LZTJ*'s teaching of self-nature somewhat extends Shenhui's teachings. Shenhui outlines that Buddha-nature has reality but not substantiality. But Shenhui taught that Buddha-nature was not present in lifeless things because these had nothing of the *dharmakāya* or *prajñā* in them. In the *Platform Sūtra* Buddha-nature is conceived of so as to be among all *dharmas*. This does not mean Buddha-nature or self-nature has substantiality in the *Sūtra*, but it does have universality. See Dumoulin, *History* Vol.1. 144–146.

man" (XVII). The identification of non-abiding with original nature again can be credited to the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* teaching on the emptiness of all things.

No *dharmā* ever leans on another. Form etc. is empty in its essential original nature. It is not inwardly supported, not outwardly supported, and it cannot be apprehended anywhere between both. In this manner all *dharmās* do not lean on anything, on account of the emptiness of their original nature. (Conze, *Large* 193)

Nothing permanently exists or abides and therefore there is nowhere to abide, nor any part of a sentient being that abides. We will see later that this particular doctrinal teaching influences the teachings on meditation practice in the *Sūtra*, giving the practice its unique character.

In the above discussion we saw that according to the *LZTJ*, sentient beings are inherently enlightened (*benjue*). But the *Sūtra* also places a lot of emphasis on the actualization of enlightenment, or initial enlightenment (*shijue*).<sup>36</sup> This initial enlightenment is understood to happen rapidly, abruptly, or suddenly.

In the realization or experience of initial enlightenment one awakens to what is inherently the true condition of oneself. Also, because it is inherent enlightenment that makes it possible for sentient beings to become enlightened, or to experience the initial actualization of enlightenment, the two separate terms that are used to refer to enlightenment (i.e., initial and inherent) are revealed as referring to the same experience (Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 143, n. 97). Initial

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<sup>36</sup> See Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 143, n. 97. The idea of initial enlightenment in the context of inherent enlightenment derives from the *Awakening of Faith*. With respect to enlightenment, the *Awakening of Faith* divides what ultimately is a single thing into two. One is consciousness as enlightenment, and the other is consciousness as non-enlightenment (i.e. ignorant conventional consciousness). Consciousness as enlightenment is further divided in two; original or inherent enlightenment and the actualization of, initial or incipient enlightenment experience. Inherent enlightenment refers to the pure and undefiled mind or Buddha-nature that is sentient beings, whereas actualizing enlightenment is the realization of this Buddha-nature when one becomes free of the ignorance and delusion resulting from mental activity or the stirring up of the originally still and calm pure mind. This text teaches that to become free of mental activity one cuts off, or calms, discursive thought so that the mind can return to its original calm pure state, thereby discovering within oneself the true nature of the cosmos. See Hakeda 31–46. This idea is similar to East Mountain Chan school teachings, which include calming meditations that seek to uncover this innate Buddha-nature obscured by thoughts. See Bielefeldt, "Secret of Zen" 139–143.

enlightenment is no less complete an insight than the experience of complete enlightenment and Buddhahood. The difference is simply a distinction made between the understanding of a Chan Buddhist prior to and after sudden enlightenment.

In summary, the rapid, non-dual and inherent features of sudden awakening seem to undermine any need for, or value in, practicing meditation for the purpose of gaining or acquiring enlightenment. The path can be understood to be fundamentally unable to bridge the divide because all its attempts to do so are considered to be merely provisionally existing human constructs (i.e., ignorance). The radical non-dualism of the sudden teaching undermines the rationale for engaging in practice, especially as the rhetoric focused more and more on the one-vehicle, the radiant, pure and inherent Buddha-nature, and the empty nature of the clouds obscuring Buddha-nature. As these teachings developed, the contradiction between innate enlightenment and the purpose in practice became an issue (Bielefeldt, "Secret of Zen" 142–143; *Dōgen's Manuals* 89).

The Southern school's teachings developed with such problems in mind, and they chose to treat them primarily from the perspective of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*. Bielefeldt notes the Southern school tended to focus on and "delight in pointing out the folly of methods to overcome what was, after all, not really real" (Bielefeldt, "Secret of Zen" 143). This is seen in the numerous criticisms of meditation found in Southern school texts, the *LZTJ* included, and also in the fact that its practice is based upon an understanding of the mind as inherently calm, pure, and without any delusion or ignorance due to immediate nature of emptiness. *Prajñā*, as the innate non-abiding true nature of things in sentient beings in fact becomes the cornerstone of the *LZTJ*'s teachings. Since it is this doctrine of sudden awakening to the non-dual and inherently enlightened condition that Huineng is known for introducing into Chan, any meditation teachings associated with the *LZTJ* have been overshadowed.

The unspoken assumption in this undermining of meditation is that meditation is practiced only with the intention of gaining the goal of enlightenment. A different model of practice, one that does not involve willfully sought after goals, is needed. If the goal of attaining enlightenment and the self-conscious striving for it are removed from the concept of meditation, sudden awakening is no longer inconsistent with meditation practice. Southern school practice, in seeing through the unreal, abandons practices that can be described in terms of a path, involving intentions, and a place for one to stand upon in order to climb up higher (Bielefeldt, "Secret of Zen" 142–144).

### Section III: The Two Truths Doctrine

The Two Truths doctrine (Skt. *satyadvaya*. Ch. *erdi*. Jpn. *ni-tai*) appears often in Mahāyāna thought and teaches what its name implies, that there are two truths or categories by which what we would commonly refer to as the world or universe of human experience can be characterized, or understood, and experienced. These two truths, which Nagao Gadjin characterizes as having "centrifugal and centripetal" modes, are both divided and identified (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 73). The teachings in the *LZTJ* display both aspects, or modes, of the two truths. As such, the Two Truths doctrine forms a useful hermeneutical tool in the analysis of the text's teachings and illustrates both why sudden enlightenment seems inconsistent with practice, and also how sudden enlightenment is consistent with meditation practice.

### III: 1 The Divided Aspect of the Two Truths

Let us first look at how these two truths can be understood as divided, and how this parallels the apparent incompatibility of practice and sudden enlightenment as it is presented in the *LZTJ*. The “conventional truth” (Skt. *saṃvṛiti satya*;<sup>37</sup> Ch. *shidi*),<sup>38</sup> is the truth of dependent co-origination as *samsāra*, in which the multiplicity of phenomena seem to have independent inherent existence. The conventional truth perspective includes the common-sense everyday nature of our experience and acceptance of the phenomenal world, cultural and societal values and obligations as experienced and interpreted through the senses and in the reasoning, categorizing and conceptualizing tendencies of language and the mind. Here opposites seem to exist in contrast to each other; blue is not red and red is not yellow, sentient beings are not Buddhas and Buddhas are not sentient beings. In the conventional realm, a sentient being’s experience is occluded or marked by primal ignorance, delusion, craving or attachment (abiding), and is conceived of in terms of dichotomies such as the duality between subject and object (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 23, 57).

When “ultimate truth” (Skt. *paramārtha satya*; Ch. *zhendi*)<sup>39</sup> is understood as unrelated to conventional truth, this refers to a truth that is radically other than anything conventional and is generally associated with “emptiness.” It is a realm without attributes, and as such, there is no possibility of becoming attached to phenomena, or of desiring anything. Also, this truth cannot be expressed through any of the mediums of expression that appear as conventional truth. Looking strictly at language for example, ultimate truth in itself is not that which any

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<sup>37</sup> Candrakīrti gives three meanings for *saṃvṛiti*, referring firstly to the occlusion of truth, secondly to the mutual dependency of dependent co-arising, and thirdly to the symbolic system of language. See Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 40, 51–55; Swanson 2.

<sup>38</sup> This can also be translated as the “truth of worldly convention,” “relative truth” or “worldly truth.”

<sup>39</sup> Also translated as “ultimate meaning,” “unconventional truth” or “transcendent truth” by writers.

words signify.<sup>40</sup> It is entirely beyond conceptualizations and can be likened to Vimalakīrti's silence when asked about entering the gate of non-duality (Thurman 77; Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 65, 87). Although we can use language to point to emptiness as the finger points to the moon, language and words themselves are merely provisional and as such do not really signify emptiness, as the pointing is not the moon (Sprung, "Mādhyamika" 46–47). Ultimate truth on the other hand is ineffable, and resolves any and all points of view and dualities such as subject and object into the non-duality of opposites and contradictions.<sup>41</sup> Here blue is red, and red is yellow. The non-dual nature of the ultimate equalizes, or can be understood to identify, what to the conventional understanding are seeming opposites. It is in this sense that ultimate truth is understood as incomprehensible to, separate from, and wholly unapproachable and unreachable for the conventional dualistic realm.<sup>42</sup>

An example is the two verses of the *LZTJ* wall verse competition (IV–X). These verses can be understood as representing the polarity between the two truths. Huineng's verse is based upon ultimate truth, while Shenxiu's is based upon a conventional, or gradualist, teaching. This episode in Huineng's biography portrays the Northern school as teaching meditation for the purpose or goal of attaining enlightenment, a gradual polishing of the "mirror mind" until, after long training and practice, all dust is removed and the mirror shines brightly. Huineng's verse (and the Southern school), on the other hand, emphasizes the original purity of the innately enlightened condition, and as such rejects the idea that practice is necessary in order to see into self-nature. The fact that the

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<sup>40</sup> In *Mādhyamika* teachings, language is a provisional construct that, because of its provisionality, cannot refer to anything outside of the provisional as the meaning of any term or concept is entirely dependent upon the meaning of other terms or concepts. See Murti 21.

<sup>41</sup> These ideas are outlined in a variety of sources, see Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 23–24, 57, 71–74, 97–99; Sprung, "Mādhyamika" 42–45; Kalupahana 68–71; Dutt 266–271.

<sup>42</sup> This divide between the two truths is a conventional distinction; it is only in the conventional realm that these two truths are separated, and that concepts such as non-duality are not able to be understood in the conventional dualistic realm. See the next section (III: 2) for a fuller discussion of this point.

untrained Hui-neng is able to intellectually compose a better verse simply because of seeing into his true nature, indicates that anyone can experience a sudden, instantaneous and thorough enlightenment (McRae, "Shenhui" 256–257).<sup>43</sup>

The teaching of gradual enlightenment can be generally considered a conventional truth perspective because it understands enlightenment as unfolding progressively through ordered stages of development, and being achieved in parts. Gradualism understands Buddhahood as a goal to be methodically worked toward and obtained at the end of a long period (lifetimes) of practice involving development in, and movement through, all three grouping of the Buddhist Triple Discipline (*sanzue*) of morality (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and doctrinal study (wisdom, *prajñā*). Section XLI of the *LZTJ* presents Shenxiu of the Northern school as understanding the Triple discipline in this way.

The practices associated with the Triple Discipline involve sequences of stages and achievements that precede and lead to the next and assume that the path must precede enlightenment. Nagao outlines that conceptions of the path, such as the Triple Discipline, indicate that conventional truth demonstrates a tendency toward transcending itself. This can be seen in the fact that the path prior to awakening is conventional, and that the attempts to express ultimate truth are all conventional. The ascending drive toward the transcendent is awakening from an ignorant understanding of dependent co-arising to one in which it is ultimately meaningful and is identified with emptiness (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 70–71, 75).

But even in conventional truth's reaching for ultimate truth, the drive toward transcendence is still only conventional. The concept of moving from ignorance to awakening, or Buddhahood, is all dependent co-arising, a verbal and conceptual model, a provisional human construct. Thus, in contrast to the actual

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<sup>43</sup> The *Sūtra* itself presents Hongran as praising Shenxiu's verse and thus does not seem to reject the conventional outright. For discussions about the origins and meanings of the two verses, see Lai, "Mind Verse" 13–24; Gomez, "Purifying Gold" 72–73, 79; McRae, *Northern School* 1–6, 235–238; Faure, *Immediacy* 55–56.

event of awakening and an emphasis on ineffable ultimate truth, the path remains conventional.

Sudden enlightenment can be understood in terms of ultimate truth as ineffable, non-dual, beyond any conventional means of mediation, representation or descriptions originating in language, conceptualization, and the dichotomies within these. The doctrine of sudden enlightenment is radically different in that it can be understood to teach that enlightenment is not the result of following an ordered path, nor that enlightenment unfolds progressively in parts or stages, nor that enlightenment is something that is not innate and in need of being obtained. It denies, or is the antidote, to structure and the map of the path, and as such criticizes a “naïve perception of the world, [a] kind of ‘juvenile ontology’ that advocates striving for a remote perfection because it fails to see or believe that everything is already perfect” (Faure, *Immediacy* 46). Since dependent co-arising is empty, from the perspective of ultimate truth there is no path and no cessation attainable. Nagao notes that “the true cessation of awakening transcends the world of co-arisen discourse, it is without cause and result” (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 26, 24–26, 45–49).

### **III: 2 The Identity of the Two Truths**

Although these two truths are divided, they are also identified with each other. For instance, the conventional truth perspective maintains that there seem to be two truths. One is that the everyday world is experienced ignorantly in the duality between self and other, and the other is the more radical understanding and experience of emptiness identified with form, of non-duality and enlightenment. But even the teaching of non-duality itself is found only in the terms of conventional realm thinking; non-duality is posited in relation to duality. Both of these, the conventional, dualistic and ignorant way of being and conceiving on one side, and the ultimate non-dual enlightened realm and experience on the other, form a dichotomy. This is because all notions of ultimate truth, such as the

concept of non-duality here expressed in language, are conventional notions arising in contrast to an opposite. There is a duality between duality and non-duality in the conventional realm understanding of non-duality (Hori 298–301). In this sense the true nature of dependent co-arising, its suchness or identity with emptiness, is clouded over or occluded by primal ignorance and ultimate meaning remains hidden (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 51–53).

This seeming duality, between the conventional truth and its attendant dualistic conceptions on the one side and ultimate truth and non-duality on the other side, is resolved in sudden enlightenment and the leap from the duality of conventional and ultimate to the non-duality of conventional and ultimate. This is a realization that the conventional and ultimate truths do not contradict each other as there originally, or fundamentally, is no difference between them.

It must be remembered that were it not for the conventional differentiation of the two truths, their conventionally understood separateness, their otherness, it would not be possible to transcend this difference, and realize and speak of their identity (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 74–75). If one considers what is realized in enlightenment, the identity or non-duality of the conventional dualistic realm and a non-dual transcendent realm, we can see how the obstacles to realizing this knowledge, the “blunted” or universally spread out conventional truth, can be pierced or severed by the immediate and “sharp” sword of ultimate meaning. This severing refers to a complete absence of any mediation or obstacle to awakening, a clean cutting through of the occlusion of ignorance, which is anything that is not the gnosis that is the identity of dependent co-origination and emptiness, and the identity of conventional truth and the ultimate truth.

Also, it is important to note that in the severing of primal ignorance, dependent co-origination is not abandoned. Rather it is understood as ultimately meaningful just the way it is. The conventional realm is a truth within its own defining context and there seems to be a difference between it and the ultimate

realm. But when known in the context of wisdom, as *prajñā*, understood in the realization of ultimate truth, the same dualistic ideas and assumptions about reality are known or seen as merely conventional. This resurrection of duality is different from the way dualism was understood before enlightenment.

Enlightenment makes it quite apparent that the dualistic conventional realm with its distinctions must be understood as fundamentally the same as the ultimate, and not in contrast with it, as was conceived before enlightenment (Hori 299–301).

This is how the same reality, dependent co-arising, can be experienced both as ignorance and as enlightenment. It is both that which clouds over and that which is clouded over (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 52–55). Nagao states that “...emptiness is not simply the silence of ultimate meaning, but also the actual functioning of worldly convention; dependent co-arising is not simply conventional, but is the dependent co-arising of the awakening to ultimate meaning” (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 31). In this way emptiness involves a more positive quality, dependent co-arising becomes the content of emptiness, the provisional realm re-emerges from negativity as existing but empty of essence, and Vimalakīrti’s silence is not merely an absence or lack of sound, but “resounds like thunder” (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 87–90). Thus the truth of ultimate meaning, emptiness, is present at the beginning, middle, and end of the conventional path. Because of the identity of emptiness with the path, there is no part of the path or the conventional realm that is not already emptiness. How can something that already is that which it seeks to become, willfully change and become what it is?

The identity of the two truths, the non-duality of conventional duality and non-duality, is also very prominent in the *Sixth Patriarch Sūtra* and will be explored in more detail below. A few quick examples include the teachings that although there are both sudden and gradual methods, both sentient beings and Buddhas, both emptiness and form, both ignorance and enlightenment, these sets of seeming opposites and the distinctions between them are resolved (but not eliminated) in enlightenment, or “seeing into self-nature.”<sup>44</sup> Also, in this way we can see how all conventional concerns, such as meditation practice, are not in conflict with enlightenment, but rather are originally, or fundamentally, identified in ultimate truth as the content of awakening.

## **Part Two: Southern School Meditation Practice**

### **Section IV: Meditation is Not Rejected Completely**

In Part One of this paper I explored some of the reasons why there is a problem with respect to meditation and enlightenment in the *LZTJ*. All of these reasons revolve around an emphasis on the doctrine of sudden awakening, which has tended to overshadow any practical meditation teachings in the *LZTJ*. This problem parallels the divided relationship between conventional and ultimate truths and seemed to make practice inconsistent with sudden enlightenment. In Part Two attention is turned toward arguing for a meditation teaching in the *Sūtra*, regardless of the implications of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment, and this is developed in terms of the identity of the two truths.

I will first outline a case for the idea that there is a practical teaching in the text by demonstrating that practice, or conventional realm teachings, are not abandoned. In fact the performance of practice seems to be presumed by the *LZTJ*'s editors. I demonstrate this by showing that in the *LZTJ* the criticism of meditation refers only to the particular types of practice being criticized, and that

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<sup>44</sup> See *LZTJ* sections XVI, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXV, XXXVI, XLII.

in Southern school thought, concessions to the sudden doctrine are made for practice. As such, practice is not completely denied. I will further argue that in fact there is a strong emphasis on practice in the *Sixth Patriarch Sūtra*.

#### IV: 1 Criticism of Meditation

Nowhere in the *LZTJ* is the practice of meditation completely denied. In fact, the *LZTJ* mentions a variety of meditation practices, and the majority of such references criticize specific types of practice. For instance, in section XIV where the *LZTJ* introduces the *samādhi* of oneness (*yixing sanmei*), the *Sūtra* criticizes “sitting viewing the mind and viewing purity.” These meditation techniques are types of practice that require the practitioner to regard the mind and purity as objects, single-mindedly fixing one’s attention upon them, thus keeping the mind still, calm, not moving. These seem to refer to *śamatha* styles of meditation, to calming the mind of all mental activity except concentration upon an object (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 81–82). According to the *Sūtra* there is a duality assumed in this type of practice that is based upon incorrect views about the true nature of things and of purity, which makes these into objects which can and should be viewed. The view that one’s own self–nature is somehow separate from *samsāra* or the conventional world, and thus has an inherent independent existence, directly opposes the *Sūtra*’s teaching.

The *Sūtra* also criticizes practice that assumes that one’s own nature is not originally pure (XVIII). Here ignorant thinking tends to see “purity” as something that is not the present state of one’s original nature. Thus the goal of purity that needs cultivation is another dualistic conception of practice, something the Southern school rejects.

The *LZTJ*’s criticism continues in section XXIV where the *Sūtra* warns against “sitting with a mind fixed on emptiness. If you do, you will fall into a neutral kind of emptiness.” The passage goes on to claim emptiness includes all types of

phenomena and *dharmas*. In this example the *Sūtra* teaches that emptiness separate from form is a neutral, passive, static emptiness. Thus, any practice that conceives of emptiness as being separate from co-dependent arising is based upon a false view. It is a practice that sets up a duality between form and emptiness and does not take into account the non-dual nature of sudden enlightenment (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 81–82).

These practices, with characteristics common to many forms of *śamatha* meditation, are presented by the *Sūtra* as harmful and are likened to “insentientcy.” They are not doctrinally in line with the *Platform Sūtra*’s teachings that the mind should not be calmed of mental activity, but instead should be kept active, that things should be allowed to arise in the mind. The *Sūtra* claims such practices are “the cause of an obstruction to the Dao. Dao must be something that circulates freely; why should he impede it” (XIV).<sup>45</sup> All of these examples are simply criticizing certain types of meditation practice. They are not criticizing the practice of meditation outright.

Shenhui also points out incorrect positions with respect to meditation practice. His “four pronouncements” or criticisms of Northern school meditation practices established a basic Chan position on meditation. In each of these four, it is meditation typical of *śamatha* that is being criticized.<sup>46</sup> Also, as noted above, sudden enlightenment does not acknowledge grades or stages in enlightenment, nor any conceptualization, nor conscious intentional efforts that mediate between enlightenment and sentient beings. As a result, Shenhui is also critical of any practices that involve any form of conceptual distinctions or dualities such as enlightenment and delusion, as these practices are not in line with the sudden teaching of enlightenment as non-dual and innate. The implication of these

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<sup>45</sup> In another example the *Sūtra* states “if you do not think of the myriad things, but always cause your thoughts to be cut off” you will have a problem (XXXI).

<sup>46</sup> These four were against “freezing the mind to enter *samādhi*, stopping the mind to view purity, activating the mind for outward illumination, and concentrating the mind for inner realization.” See Liebenenthal 146.

gradualist teachings is that enlightenment becomes something that is constructed or conditioned, worked towards, and is separate from the present, and thus not direct or immediate. McRae states:

Shenhui's Southern school disdained [gradualist] practices because it was interested in a realm that was beyond all notions of duality (i.e., of imperfection and perfection, etc.) and in an approach to religious training that yielded attainment of the ultimate goal instantaneously, rather than gradually. (McRae, *Northern School* 3–4)

One last aspect of practice that both Shenhui and the *LZTJ* are explicitly critical of is meditating only while sitting or in a seated position. But as Gomez notes, at the same time nowhere is the practice of seated meditation completely ruled out either (Gomez, "Purifying Gold" 80–83).<sup>47</sup> In fact the *LZTJ* contains passages where Huineng explicitly encourages his students to continue sitting (LIII). Bielefeldt points out that in all probability Chan monks never actually gave up the practice of sitting meditation, even though the practice was ridiculed verbally during the middle Chan period (Bielefeldt, "Secret of Zen" 146–147).

In summary, both the *LZTJ*'s and Shenhui's criticisms of meditation such as the four pronouncements, viewing purity, viewing the mind, conceptions of practice involving great lengths of time, graded stages, maps of the path and goals striven for, etc., all merely outline what meditation is not. The approach is polemical and critical, rather than constructive or an attempt to teach a coherent system. They simply tear down all other claims and assert little themselves, for to say anything is to fall into gradualist positions and assertions (Gomez, "Purifying Gold" 86–87).<sup>48</sup> With respect to meditation, Shenhui is recorded to have recommended not to undertake any "preconceived style of meditative

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<sup>47</sup> McRae notes certain of Shenhui's teachings are "cast in the 'contemplative analysis' style [which is a technique used in Northern school texts such as Shenxiu's *Guanxin lun*], in which normally unacceptable correlations are made in order to jar the reader or listener to a new religious perspective." See McRae, "Shenhui" 249. Shenhui's redefinition of "seated meditation" (*zuochan*) being the example cited by McRae.

contemplation” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 89–90, 92). Direct insight, sudden awakening was what Shenhui taught, the sudden rhetoric attempted to refrain from using language that implied a duality, and as we shall see below, practice attempts to take into account the non–dual and inherent nature of enlightenment (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 80–81, 83, 85–86).

#### IV: 2 Concessions in the Sudden Doctrine

Both Shenhui and the *LZTJ* are critical of many types of meditation and there are many references in Southern school literature which in isolation teach that meditation techniques involving conscious effort are to be rejected.<sup>49</sup> This criticism must be understood as being simply criticism of specific types of meditation, and not a rejection of meditation practice. This is so because in both the *LZTJ* and in Shenhui’s writings concessions are made to the sudden doctrine for practice, and as such, practice does not appear to be completely denied.

With respect to Shenhui for instance, he admits that in the non–dual nature of enlightenment, it is not possible to change the conventional into the ultimate, nor is any effort to bring about their union possible. But he also recognizes that on a practical level, there is ignorance in the form of the seemingly separate conventional and ultimate realms in the minds of deluded people. Gomez notes that in another of Shenhui’s inconsistencies or gradualist concessions he “concedes that certain causes and conditions are necessary for the manifestation of sudden enlightenment, only to flatly reject causes and conditions elsewhere in the *Sayings*” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 83–86). The *LZTJ* itself often refers to delusion, and attachment or clinging, as that which keeps sentient beings in ignorance.

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<sup>48</sup> In some ways, these teachings are expounded in a style similar to the Prasangika Mādhyamika dialectic with its repeated denials of other practices and views.

<sup>49</sup> Gomez outlines a number of these. See Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 79–81.

Also, Shenhui acknowledges that there is an initial awakening from this dualistic ignorance, and thus also a distinction between the mind before and after enlightenment. It also appears that for Shenhui “some form of spiritual discipline is necessary either as the embodiment of enlightenment, or as a means to strengthen an initial, direct breakthrough into the state of non-mind [or enlightenment]” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 86). Shenhui himself is recorded to have spoken of a way or method to remove ignorance, and even of “polishing” and “smelting” in his metaphors about practice (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 75–79). In this sense Shenhui’s contradictions can be understood the way Zongmi understands them, as teaching sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 85–86, 88–89). But Zongmi’s practical teachings are very different from Shenhui’s in that they outline a very ordered and systematic way of cultivation.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, Shenhui does not reject *upāya* for those of dull capabilities, and this probably reflects his acknowledgement of a Buddhist institutional structure and its associated practices within which he was functioning. In other words he contradicts his own stance on sudden awakening as his writings also contain what Gomez calls “gradualist slips.” These inconsistencies in rhetoric probably reflect his own acknowledgement of the need for mental cultivation regardless of the implications of inherent or sudden enlightenment (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 75–79).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> This is almost certainly reflective of Zongmi’s attempt to curb what he saw a dangerous trend toward the rejection of all practice in Chan. For a more detailed discussion of Zongmi’s teachings about cultivation, see Gregory 279–320.

<sup>51</sup> Also see Liebenthal 135–136.

But these are concessions made only to meet the needs of the unenlightened. Shenhui teaches that enlightenment “is nothing at all. This is why it is ineffable. If one talks about it, it is only in order to reply to the questions [of others]. If one did not respond to questions, then one would have nothing to say about it” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 84, 83–87). He acknowledges the need to say something so that he is not accused of whichever doctrine his opponent chooses. Gomez relates this to the Two Truths doctrine, outlining the concessions as issues dealing with and speaking from the perspective of the conventional truth, while the sudden rhetoric expresses and speaks of ultimate truth (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 112–118).

In fact, Shenhui, in keeping with his predilection for preaching the apophatic sudden teaching, rarely spells out any specific meditation procedures as these would imply stages on a path and the gradual cultivation of awakening (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 87). In Shenhui’s *Definition of Truth* for instance the only practical instruction is to “enjoin the congregation to recite the *Diamond Sūtra* in order to achieve their first moment of insight” (McRae, “Shenhui” 251). But even the *Definition of Truth*’s exhortation is a recommendation to practice a skilful means or *upāya*, and as such, reveals that Shenhui’s sudden rhetoric was essentially that. Faure states “his subitism (sudden doctrine) remains in many respects gradual” (Faure, *Immediacy* 36).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Shenhui’s *Platform S sermon* on the other hand provides a more detailed account of practice. See Liebenenthal 132–155.

The attempt to express or teach a sudden teaching is itself a conventional expression, a compromise that cannot be avoided in any such attempts at expression. As such the two “isms” or polarities of sudden and gradual are in varying degrees included in each other. Faure states, “Chan theory gives an inverted image of reality, to the point where one could speak of a ‘linguistic taboo’ concerning gradualism: it is never discussed, although it remains unchallenged in actual practice” (Faure, *Immediacy* 49). As a result, sudden and gradual are in this sense complementary, two parts of a whole, and are not two separate positions that outright and systematically contradict each other. Rather Faure notes that the two terms refer to “a cluster of polarities, among which we can include essence/function, one practice/joint practice, absolute truth/conventional truth, that do not always overlap” (Faure, *Immediacy* 42–43, 41–52).

Thus Shenhui’s concessions to gradualism are an acknowledged recourse to conventional and provisional means which arises in the larger context of his teaching style or vocation as a preacher and his particular attempt at rhetorical purity or sudden dialectic. His choice of simply raising objections to practices implying dualism and involving calming is polemical and not an organized teaching. He simply criticizes others, and tries not to assert a position of his own. But in the end I feel that in the broader context of his teachings, Shenhui teaches that in enlightenment there is no distinction between delusion and enlightenment, or fast and slow realization, because initial awakening is awakening to the innate or originally enlightened condition (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 83–84). Thus in Shenhui we have a sudden teaching that is willing to (occasionally) re-enter the conventional realm in a provisional manner and in recognition of duality, as concessions made toward those who as of yet have not suddenly awakened. In this sense his actions are similar to that of a bodhisattva, who, after having attained enlightenment, becomes actively involved in and re-engaged with the world for the benefit of ignorant sentient beings.

#### IV: 3 An Emphasis on Practice

Although the *Platform Sūtra* teaches that awakening is “sudden,” it also contains conventional realm teachings that must be considered concessions in the sudden doctrine. I will now argue that the *LZTJ* also places great emphasis on the need for and the importance of practice. Yampolsky also notes this saying that “sudden should not be conceived of as easily obtainable, without the benefit of meditation practice” (Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 116).

In section XII, the first section after the autobiographical sections and where Huineng begins to teach the Dharma, practice itself is presented as a means toward helping sentient beings overcome what the *Sūtra* outlines as the problem, a deluded and attached mind. Students are advised “they must seek a good teacher to show them how to see into their own natures” (XII). An important point to be noted about this passage is that it introduces practice very early on in the text’s Dharma teaching. “How to” refers to some method, practice or way for “seeing into their own natures.” The character translated as “how to” is *dao*, meaning the way, path, or method. Also, this “way” can be learned through instruction in the practice from a teacher.<sup>53</sup>

In fact, the *Sūtra*’s emphasis on the performance of practice exemplifies the text’s concessions in the sudden doctrine and the employment of conventional truth language in regard to practice.<sup>54</sup> For instance, Huineng is portrayed as recommending practice. When speaking about the *Maha-prajñā-pāramitā* he

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<sup>53</sup> Other references to similar teachings include XXII, XXXI, and XLIV.

<sup>54</sup> For instance, the *Platform Sūtra*’s numerous references to Buddhist practices other than meditation that would have been performed in any Buddhist temple community of the day demonstrates practice is performed. The majority of these practices are performed in a ritualized context, and most of these references are found in the narrative sections of the text, the biography and the question and answer dialogues. These practices include: seeking a good teacher (XII, XX), taking refuge (XXIII), taking precepts (I, XX), recitation of sūtra (and/or a verse) (II, VII), making obeisance (II, VIII), making offerings (IV), burning incense (VII), the teacher lecturing on the Dharma and/or a sūtra (I, IX, XII), the disciple hearing the lecture, studying the Dharma (VIII, XIV), asking a teacher questions (XXXIV, XXXV, L–LIV, LVIII) and converting people (X).

states that “this Dharma [teaching] must be practiced. It has nothing to do with recitations (XXIV). The deluded man merely recites; the wise man practices with his mind” (XXV).<sup>55</sup> Also, the *Sūtra* claims that simply going to a teacher and asking questions is not enough (XLIV), that learning doctrinal points or a particular sūtra in depth is not enough (XLII), and that philosophizing and arguing about doctrinal points (XIII) and conversing about practice is not enough (XLIII);<sup>56</sup> one must practice.<sup>57</sup>

Another example of the *Platform Sūtra*’s emphasis upon practice is its teaching that one must rely on oneself for enlightenment. “You must awaken with your own mind and see for yourself, and you must practice with the Dharma (teachings)... I cannot take the place of your delusion... Why don’t you practice for yourself” (XLIV).<sup>58</sup>

It therefore seems rash to say that the “sudden awakening” teachings in the *Sūtra* are so extreme that there is no consideration for the performance of meditation practices, as Hu Shih argued. Nor can we understand the teachings of the *Sutra* to be as extreme as the sudden teachings of Wuzhu in the *Lidai fabao ji* of the Baotang school in Szechwan where there was a near complete disregard for Buddhist practices (Yanagida, “Sudden”18–20). Nor do the teachings seem similar to the ridiculing and trivializing of practice seen in the recorded sayings of Chan masters such as Mazu Daoyi and later generations.

All of this suggests to me that the manuscript places more importance on practice than is generally credited it, and that the conventional realm and its concerns do not seem to be entirely discarded. In fact without the phenomenal world, or co-dependent origination, there would be no context or venue in which Buddhist practice and the realization of emptiness can occur. Chapter XXIV,

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<sup>55</sup> Reciting the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* was, and still is, an important practice associated with these texts.

<sup>56</sup> Also see sections XLIV, XLVIII.

<sup>57</sup> Similar teachings are found in sections VII, VIII, XIX, XXXIII and XXXV.

<sup>58</sup> Also see sections XIX, XX, XXI, and XLIII.

verse 10 of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is Nāgārjuna's famous summation of this point: "Without relying upon convention, the ultimate fruit is not taught. Without understanding the ultimate fruit, freedom/nirvana is not attained." What is being expressed here is that the conventional realm and its attendant phenomena such as language, are needed to point out and teach sentient beings about the true nature of things and ultimate truth (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 89–90).<sup>59</sup> Also, as there is no duality between conventional and ultimate, and the line between them merely a conventional designation, language and teaching should not be abandoned. In fact, the non-duality of duality and non-duality itself involves in its realization a recognition of provisionally existing duality.<sup>60</sup>

## Section V: Practice I

Part One tried to outline how the need for engaging in any type of practice was undermined by the teachings associated with the Southern school sudden doctrine. I illustrated how the divided nature of the relationship between conventional and ultimate truths is developed in the rapid, non-dual and immediate, and inherent features of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment. As such, it appeared that according to the Southern school practice was incompatible with sudden enlightenment. I opened Part Two with a case for the fact that some form of practice was performed regardless of the sudden enlightenment doctrine. These teachings reflect the fact that the conventional realm is acknowledged and used, or needed, to instruct deluded people. It therefore seems likely that the *LZTJ*, and the Southern school generally, considered some form of practice as consistent with sudden enlightenment. I will now turn attention toward what type of practice the Southern school understood as consistent with sudden enlightenment. The following sections argue that the *LZTJ* practice is a form of

<sup>59</sup> Also see Kalupahana 69; Sprung, *Prasannapadā* 17; Dutt 271.

<sup>60</sup> G. Victor Hori points out that this is the criticism the "goddess" makes of Śāriputra in chapter 7 of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. See Hori 298–299.

intentionless, continuous, non-passive detachment in the midst of all *dharmas* that takes as its basis the “as-it-is-ness” or “suchness” of things that is the inherent or original condition of sentient beings.

In line with the sudden rhetoric and the underlying implications of sudden enlightenment, the teachings of the Southern school found represented in their writings contain few instructions on how to meditate.<sup>61</sup> Bielefeldt points out that this school’s “radical non-dualism undermines the rationale for its cultivation and renders philosophically embarrassing any concrete discussion of its techniques” (Bielefeldt, *Dogen’s Manuals* 89).<sup>62</sup> In the *LZTJ* for instance there are no directions about correct sitting posture,<sup>63</sup> breathing techniques, images visualized, words or phrases repeated, or topics to be contemplated as we find in East Mountain Chan texts that also teach sudden enlightenment. The *Fundamental Expedient Teachings for Reposing the Mind That Attains Enlightenment* (hereafter *RDFM*) for instance teaches the repetition of a Buddha’s name (*nianfo*)<sup>64</sup> and the *Treatise on the Essentials of Cultivating the Mind* (hereafter *XXYL*) teaches visualization of an image of the sun.<sup>65</sup> The sudden doctrinal stance of the *LZTJ* is critical of such practices.

This lack of typical instruction is itself another reason there seems to be confusion surrounding meditation in the *LZTJ*. There is simply not much in the way of typical instructions about how to practice in the *Sūtra*. Often, when it does make concessions to the sudden doctrine and speaks of specific types of meditation practices, it is in criticism of meditation practices such as viewing meditation objects and the resulting calming of mental activity. For these reasons

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<sup>61</sup> Nor is there is mention of any ongoing, established or regimented training in any of the sources relating to Shenhui and his disciples. See McRae, “Shenhui” 250–251, 254–255; Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 79.

<sup>62</sup> This standpoint of the sudden doctrine would of course be applicable to such enterprises as this paper.

<sup>63</sup> But references are made to sitting meditation in the *Sūtra*. See sections XVIII, XIX and LIII.

<sup>64</sup> See Chappell’s translation of the *RDFM* in “Tao-shin” 107–109, 110, 111, 119.

the text itself can be understood to provide little for speculation as to what is the meditation practice.

### **V: 1 Intentionless Meditation Without a Goal**

We have seen that there is reason to believe that practice was performed in the Southern school regardless of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment, which seems undermine any purpose in practicing meditation with the intent to obtain enlightenment. Here the question of whether a meditation practice can be compatible with the doctrine of sudden enlightenment is brought into sharpest focus. The Southern school deals with this issue by adopting a different model of practice. In this school, meditation is no longer practiced with the expressed intention of gaining enlightenment, but rather, is itself a spontaneous expression of the inherent non-abiding nature of sentient beings. The intentionless aspect of the Southern school practice is based upon both the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* and the teachings of Daoism.

Shenhui teaches that there should be no intention (*wuzuoyi*) in the performance of meditation because any form of intention may impede the breakthrough to self-nature (Faure, “One-practice” 108). We saw above that non-abiding as the inherent condition supercedes any conventional (and thus ultimately false) notions like ignorance, awakening, and the expedient value of practices to induce such an awakening (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 74–75, 87–88, 94–95). As a result, clinging to the false notion of a goal to be obtained and of the assumption that awakening actually exists somewhere, and also the attempts seeking to obtain it, are all understood by Shenhui as a form of subtle self deception (Liebenthal 144–145; Faure, *Immediacy* 54–55).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See McRae’s translation of the *XXYL* in his *Northern School* 127–128.

<sup>66</sup> The reader is also directed to Carl Bielefeldt’s work on the Zen soteriology and a Japanese Kamakura Zen text called the *Treatise on Seated Meditation (Zazen ron)*. He treats many of the issues being dealt with here, and in this paper generally, with a great deal of clarity. See Bielefeldt, “No-mind” 475–505.

But this rejection of intention is not a rejection of practice.<sup>67</sup> Rather this is only a rejection of the assumption that the practice of following a gradual path with the intention of attaining enlightenment will itself bring about enlightenment.

Meditation performed with the intention of gaining some object or goal can be referred to as doing something, progressing toward something, changing something, and it assumes there is something to attain. This goal oriented mentality, an integral part of the gradual teaching, and the whole concept of seeking something, creates an object separate from oneself; it posits or creates a something that you are not, and as such sets up a duality. This dualistic or conventional realm perspective is rejected in Southern school practice.

The *LZTJ* meditation practice, which takes into account the non-dual and innate emphasis in the sudden doctrine, performs meditation without a goal, or an objective, to work toward or be acquired. This can be referred to as non-action (*wuwei*),<sup>68</sup> or “not doing” because it lacks the conventional realm’s intention driven, goal oriented, and dualistic mentality. Faure states “the crux of sudden Chan is precisely its refusal to hold up an end against a means or process, for this dualism is seen as the very source of delusion and gradualism” (Faure, *Insights* 60). Since there is nothing that permanently exists, including delusion, enlightenment, and any distinction between them, there is nothing to do, nothing that can really be done to change the way things are, and no goals or objectives (including enlightenment) to attain. Rather, ontologically speaking, things are perfect and as they should be in that they are already identical with emptiness.

The undercutting of progressive stages for realizing enlightenment, evidenced in the rapid feature of sudden enlightenment, indicates that the destination is not certain to be there just because one intentionally sought it by following the map. Rather, according to the *LZTJ*, it is only after awakening that the individual paths

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<sup>67</sup> Dumoulin for instance notes that the Southern school had an “intense atmosphere of practice” Dumoulin, *History* Vol.1. 141.

<sup>68</sup> This is a Daoist term and is explained in more detail below.

taken by various (Chan) Buddhists are found to be the same, no matter how different they seemed to the occluded conventional awareness (XVI). In fact, it may be said that it is because the goal is not a sure thing upon reaching a certain stage on a path, that the individual paths traversed may truly become a journey whose beginning, middle and end are unknown. This is a conception of the path as not being a path, and as such it does not involve a prescribed sequence of steps that, with the correct intention, will assuredly lead sentient beings to awakening.

Nagao states:

The true path is the path that is originally not a path. The path that is a path is not the true path, since ultimate meaning is truly and ultimately meaningful only because all verbal, conditioned methods remain closed to it. Whatever is shown cannot be the true path; the true path cannot be described or appreciated as a path at all. (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 78–79)

As a result, all references to a path, such as the practicing of the six *pāramitās* so as to attain enlightenment, are a conventional abstraction because they do not truly lead to or bring about ultimate truth. Nagao argues that this way of approaching the path (and by extenuation the conventional) affects a harmony between the two truths and constitutes their ever revitalized division. “One is able to contact absolutely ultimate meaning precisely because its otherness negates all stages” (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 79–80).

Also, because of the lack of *svabhāva* found in all conventionality, including any stage of the path, awakening can happen at any stage. This does not negate or remove practice and the path. Rather “no exact sequence of cause and result can be determined in terms of a progress from the path’s beginning to its end, because, as essenceless and empty, it is ‘only a path’ ” (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 80). Thus the path, and in particular meditation practice, if it were to be compatible with sudden enlightenment, must be established on the basis of the identity of

emptiness and form, and the understanding that the conventional dualistic realm is real but provisionally existing.

This rejection of intention to attain the goal of enlightenment is in part based upon the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* teachings.<sup>69</sup> Edward Conze sums up the main teachings of these texts this way:

One should become a bodhisattva (i.e., someone content with nothing less than all knowledge attained through the perfection of wisdom for the sake of all living beings). There is no such thing as a bodhisattva, or all knowledge, or a being, or the perfection of wisdom, or attainment. The solution of this dilemma lies in nothing less than the fearless acceptance of both contradictory facts (Conze, *Large* xix).<sup>70</sup>

These sūtras teach that the bodhisattva must practice the perfections and also must practice with the understanding that there is no bodhisattva to practice or perfection to be practiced. Again, the bodhisattva must practice with the goal of attaining enlightenment in mind,<sup>71</sup> but also realize that there is no goal or attainment to be had, nor any way of using the provisional to reach it. Thus the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* teach a kind of intentionless way. The lack of intention is based upon the negation of the ability to change the identity of emptiness and form, and in the same vein, the non-duality between path, practitioner, and attainment.

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<sup>69</sup> See Bielefeldt, “No-mind” 490–492.

<sup>70</sup> These ideas are discussed in a number of authors’ works, from Conze to Nagao. See Conze, *Large* xix. Nagao, *Yogācāra* 210–211. Also see *DS* XVII.

<sup>71</sup> The first of the bodhisattva vows states this as the intention of the path.

But the problem, or paradox, that arises in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* is that if everything from form to the Buddha-dharmas is identified with non-production, then everybody from an ignorant disciple, through stream-winners and *pratyekabuddhas*, through to bodhisattvas have already attained their respective enlightenment. And if this is so, then what need is there to seek and strive for enlightenment any longer? Or with respect to the Buddha, “for what reason has the Tathagata known full enlightenment, and turned the wheel of the Dharma?” (Conze, *Large* 190).

The solution is not to wish for, desire, or seek enlightenment. “I do not wish for the production, which is empty of own being, of the unproduced *dharma* of form etc. I do not even wish for the production of enlightenment, which is unproduced and empty of own being” (Conze, *Large* 192). This is because the bodhisattva does not see any, or entertain the notion of, difficulties or make distinctions between *dharmas* because of their non-production. A bodhisattva does not produce any *dharma*, nor perceive one, nor look for Buddha, nor for his teaching. Subhuti states:

Nor do I look for an unproduced attainment which is being attained by an unproduced *dharma*. ...I do not look for an unproduced attainment which is being attained through an unproduced *dharma*, nor for a produced attainment which is being attained through an unproduced *dharma*, ...nor do [I] look for an attainment by [either] an unproduced or by a produced *dharma*. [Śāriputra then asks] Is there no attainment? Is there no reunion? [Subhuti states] There is attainment, there is reunion, but not in ultimate reality. It is through worldly conventional expressions that attainment and reunion is conceived. But in ultimate reality there is none of this. (Conze, *Large* 191)

But, as noted above, the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* emphasize that the bodhisattva must practice with the intention to achieve enlightenment for the good of all sentient beings. As selfless and provisional as this intention may be, it

is still an intention. Shenhui taught that any form of intention was an impediment to seeing into one's own nature.

## **V: 2 Intentionless Meditation as Spontaneous Expression**

We have seen how the intentionless aspect of the *LZTJ*'s teaching involves the rejection of an intention to achieve a goal, and that this can be understood to some degree as being based upon the Southern school's emphasis on the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* teaching on the non-dual nature of the path and its fundamental identity with emptiness. But the non-intentional nature of the *LZTJ*'s meditation teachings involves a second important component. This component is the Chinese Daoist concept of "non-action" (*wuwei*), which is a central current running through much of Chinese thought, including Chan. One of the first places the concept appears in the *Daode jing* and is the native Chinese and Daoist practical attempt to live in harmony with the Dao.

Living in harmony or accord with the Dao is the "way," which is also referred to with the term *dao*. Edward Slingerland notes that in Chinese thought it is knowledge that has practical value that holds the highest place as opposed to a knowledge about something contemplated from a safe intellectual distance. It is assumed that one is already "engaged" and living in the world by the very fact of one's actions, and as such it is knowledge appropriate to such a context that is emphasized. Thus, the ideal of perfection here is not one of "perfected theoretical knowledge" but of "perfect actions." Slingerland states:

The culmination of knowledge is represented by an ability to move through the world and human society in a manner that is completely spontaneous and yet still fully in harmony with the normative order of the natural and human worlds—the Dao or "Way." (295)

The normative order of Daoism is outlined as the Dao, which is understood as including all dichotomies, including both existence and non-existence, both yin

and yang. As such the Dao is ineffable, formless, and has no opposite. Since the Dao includes all opposites, both black and white, yes and no, it is not possible for either pole of a contrast, and the relationship between them, to be any thing other than the Dao. This quality on the other hand does not imply that it is an existing thing. It is “that which is,” and is explained as a metaphysical and cosmological description and understanding of the universe and the way it creatively, or perhaps “fluidly,” functions. This functioning is understood as the natural, spontaneous, and creative nature (*ziran*) of the Dao as the interrelationship of existence and non-existence.<sup>72</sup>

Human beings are considered a microcosm of the absolute Dao, having within them the same source and creative principle that the Dao exhibits as the interplay between existence and non-existence. Thus, in the practice of *wuwei* (non-action), by following the course of no resistance, one is to behave in a way that naturally, effortlessly and spontaneously responds in harmony with the spontaneous, ever changing nature and functioning of Dao. It should be noted though, that this physical behavior is actually secondary to, and representative of, the mental state of the doer in the moment of action. The actions must flow freely as a spontaneous expression of the personal harmony of the doer with the Dao (Slingerland 299–300).

This natural and harmonious responsiveness is done without intention, self-conscious exertion or objectifying of oneself in any way relative to the Dao. As the Dao is understood to already be all interplay between existence and non-existence, self-conscious effort to achieve harmony with the “way” is considered to be a self-constructed obstacle impeding the spontaneous expression, or functioning, of the Dao. One must not try to do this, for the very trying is what

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<sup>72</sup> These ideas are discussed at greater length in several places. See Creell 1–13, 25–36; Finazzo 13–31. A. Chan 105–108; Xiaogan 212–217.

obstructs spontaneous functioning. There arises here a tension or “paradox of *wuwei*.” How is it possible to try not to try in the practice of *wuwei*?<sup>73</sup>

Chapter Four of the Zhuangzi teaches that one must lose the sense of “self” in relation to the multitude of other things that appear as not ourselves. This is done by “fasting the mind,” which involves paying less attention to the senses and thought process of the mind, and instead recommends “listening” with the *qi*, the vital or subtle energy that animates everything. In this way the mind becomes “tenuous” (*xu*) and receptive, creating a space or openness where the natural functioning of the Dao can manifest. Any expectation and any elaborate self-consciously exerted effort to achieve the way (i.e., any intent-filled progression through an ordered path) will bend out of shape the Dao’s spontaneous expression through, or as, the individual. When one does this, all expressions in action simply flow unimpeded and perfectly meet the needs of any situation (i.e., the Dao at that moment in time manifested as that particular situation) because they are themselves the Dao’s own spontaneous functioning (Slingerland 308–310).<sup>74</sup>

As such, the term “*wu*” of “*wuwei*” (non-action) refers to the Dao as the source of all action. This is not a negation of action, but rather indicates that this action is performed in harmony with, or as, the natural functioning or spontaneity of the Dao. In other words, self-conscious effort is surrendered, thereby allowing the Dao to function unimpeded as it will through the individual— “Dao-action” if you will.<sup>75</sup>

The *LZTJ*’s teaching about practice has much in common with the Daoist teaching of *wuwei*, and that practice is done so as to live in harmony with, or be a spontaneous expression of, the Dao. *Wuwei* is a simple practice compared to the

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<sup>73</sup> See Slingerland 298, n. 14.

<sup>74</sup> Shenhui even acknowledges that “non-doing” is itself a consciously undertaken activity and as such is still a form of karmic construction. See Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 83.

<sup>75</sup> T. P. Kasulis phrases the idea this way: “the Daoist acts as the Dao itself functions” Kasulis 37, 28–38. In the *Daode jing*, and often in Daoism in general, *wuwei* is developed in terms of its political applications. Also see Creel 48–78; Ames, 28–64; Finazzo 158–171; A. Chan 103–104, 109–114; Xiaogan 217–222.

elaborate set of rites that served as the training in, and expression of, perfection, or virtue, in Confucian circles. In fact, Daoists were critical of such an extensive range of practices, seeing them as being the very reason the “way” of true virtue was originally lost. The emphasis on practices confines, imposes structure upon, and bends out of shape the original uncarved virtue of the Dao’s spontaneous functioning (Slingerland 305–309).

Also, in *wuwei* there is no goal to work toward, nor any willful effort applied to gain it. In “holding up something in high regard,” as enlightenment is often held, one moves away from the “way” by positing there is something to be sought. One moves even further from the way when the set of practices that are prescribed so as to achieve this enlightenment are self-consciously and intently engaged in (Slingerland 306–309). We saw that the *LZTJ* is critical of a number of practices characteristic of *śamūtha*, claiming these to be “an obstruction to the Dao” (XIV). This impedes, or “enslaves,” the natural functioning of the Dao manifested as the non-abiding original nature of all things, including oneself. Suzuki states that “as long as there is something to be gained from meditation it is not *prajñā*. *Prajñā* is to attain non-attainment” (Suzuki, “Zen Meditation” 93).<sup>76</sup>

Rather, practice acknowledges the Dao in sentient beings. Earlier we saw this idea in Daosheng’s thought with respect to the matching of the innate sageness in Daoist teachings with Buddhism’s Buddha-nature. The *LZTJ* states: “enlightenment is originally pure, creating the mind that seeks it is then delusion. All living things of themselves possess the way. If you part from the way and seek it elsewhere, seek it you may, but find it you will not” (XXXVI). Section XLVIII states: “Nowhere is there anything true: Don’t try and see the true in any way. If you try to see the true, your seeing will be in no way true.” Thus, no self-conscious effort can change the suchness of things that is the inherent condition

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<sup>76</sup> Suzuki outlines how in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* the transition from the seventh to the eighth stage of the Bodhisattva path involves a dissolving of self-conscious effort in the practice of the path. See Suzuki, *Studies* 221–228.

of man. Rather one effortlessly allows this original nature to express itself in any action one performs, including practicing meditation. In this sense, meditation can be understood as not the “practice for” obtaining a goal, but rather the “practice of” the originally enlightened condition.

The intentionless aspect of the *LZTJ* meditation practice indicates that in some sense, practice is consistent with sudden enlightenment. In practice, with the concept of a goal and any self-conscious intention of attaining it discarded (as being an inaccurate way of practicing meditation), sudden enlightenment as rapid, non-dual, and inherent can be understood as compatible with practice. The originally enlightened state is fundamentally not different from meditation as the expression of being in accord with the natural, or spontaneous, function of the Dao. If this is the case, that with the adoption of a different model of practice sudden enlightenment is compatible with practice, what exactly is this intentionless Southern school practice that is consistent with sudden enlightenment?

## Section VI: Practice II

### VI: 1 The Identity of Meditation and Wisdom

Generally, meditation (*samādhi*, *ding*) is thought to precede, and either aid or accomplish, the higher insight of wisdom (*prajñā*, *hui*). D.T. Suzuki and Robert Buswell argue that Chan sought its own meditation style or practice and did so by moving away from such Indian styles of *dhyaṇa*, and toward a direct approach (Suzuki, *First Series* 36–37, 108, 205; Suzuki, *Second Series* 48; Buswell, “Short-cut” 321). This section discusses the *LZTJ*’s identification of meditation and wisdom as a stage in the Chan attempt to develop a meditation consistent with sudden enlightenment.

We have seen that Chan’s sudden enlightenment doctrine rejects the idea that practice moves through stages such as *śīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā*. In the *LZTJ*, due

to the non-dual and inherent nature of sudden enlightenment, any distinctions in the Triple Discipline are resolved or identified in the “mind ground” (XLI).<sup>77</sup> Also, in section XIII of the *Sūtra*, meditation and wisdom in particular are identified. This association is first found in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* and later in the writings of Shenhui.<sup>78</sup> The *Platform Sūtra* warns against thinking that meditation and wisdom are different from each other, that they are two things, a duality, that one leads to the other, that one gives rise to the other, and that one precedes the other. Instead the passage stresses that they “are a unity,” “they are alike,” that “at the very moment when there is wisdom, then meditation exists in wisdom; at the very moment when there is meditation, then wisdom exists in meditation” and that “meditation itself is the substance of wisdom; wisdom itself is the function of meditation (XIII).<sup>79</sup> Here meditation does not lead to wisdom.

But with the Chan claim that meditation and wisdom are identical, and their non-dual nature realized in direct insight, it became difficult to express and teach about conventional or provisional ideas such as *samādhi* and *prajñā*, *śamatha* (Ch. *zhi*) and *vipaśyanā* (Ch. *guan*). In fact, this identification in the *LZTJ* can be understood to further undermine the rationale for practice because the idea of sequence involved in meditation leading to wisdom is rejected. Buswell notes, that in the end, both the terms and the problematic ideas they inherently imply, such as steps in practice, were discarded in Chan discourse (Buswell, “Short-cut” 328–330).

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<sup>77</sup> Meditation and wisdom are also identified in sections XV, XXVI, and XXXI. Also see Buswell, “Short-cut” 328.

<sup>78</sup> There are Northern school texts that reveal Shenhui’s influence on the doctrinal community of the “Northern school” as late as 730 C.E. One example is the equation of meditation and wisdom in a Northern school text revealing that Shenhui was active teaching in the Northern school to some extent. For a more extensive discussion see McRae, “Shenhui” 239–246; Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 33, 115, 135, n. 54; Dumoulin, *History* Vol. 1. 140–141; Faure, “One-practice” 101.

<sup>79</sup> Also see Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 115, 135.

The *LZTJ*'s identification of meditation and wisdom can be understood in a number of ways.<sup>80</sup> One important way is that the understanding of their identity is based upon the Mahāyāna understanding of the non-dual original nature of things. The *LZTJ* states that to think of meditation and wisdom as different "implies that things have duality" (XIII). Thus, meditation is not different from wisdom in the same way that the passions are not different from enlightenment. Heinrich Dumoulin outlines the identity of meditation and wisdom in this way. But he seems to explain it as being a purely doctrinal claim, as if the editors of the *Platform Sūtra* included the teaching simply as an example illustrating enlightenment. Since meditation is fundamentally not different from wisdom, it "enjoys the freedom and spontaneity of the Dao, which is the Chinese equivalent of the Buddhist *prajñā*" (Dumoulin, *History* Vol. 1. 141). In this case, the non-dual nature of enlightenment does not conflict with practice in any way as they are fundamentally not different, in the same way that emptiness is not found to be different from form.

For D.T. Suzuki, the doctrine of the identity of meditation and wisdom is intimately connected with the teaching of sudden enlightenment.<sup>81</sup> In contrast to

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<sup>80</sup> It was introduced earlier that Hu Shih held the identity of the meditation and wisdom indicated that the Southern school rejected meditation. See Hu Shih, "Ch'an" 7. Although the *Platform Sūtra* teaches that awakening is "sudden," Hu Shih's dismissing of practice outright seems somewhat rash, especially in light of the fact that there is an emphasis on practice, not to mention the references to other types of Buddhist practice that seem to be performed in the setting of the *LZTJ*. Huineng is even portrayed as encouraging his disciples to continue "sitting" after he is gone (LIII). Faure adds a more conventional and socio-political based interpretation, which is that meditation and wisdom are identified because of the contemporary Chinese Buddhist emphasis on a unity between the two. He argues that the gap in popularity and emphasis on *prajñā* (the translation of written texts, study of the dharma or wisdom) to the detriment of *samādhi* (practice) that arose between 300–600 C.E. was being re-addressed. See Faure, "One-practice" 101. Yampolsky also notes that the identity of meditation and wisdom is probably a reaction to "a basic disagreement with those sects of Buddhism that stressed one of these concepts to the exclusion of the other, or gave priority to one over the other." See Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 115.

<sup>81</sup> Suzuki claims the identity of "meditation and wisdom" was new and revolutionary with Huineng as Chan seems to have emphasized *dhyaṇa* over *prajñā* prior to the Sixth Patriarch, whereas Huineng emphasized *prajñā*. In fact, Suzuki notes that it was Shenhui who emphasized sudden enlightenment, and he suggests that sudden awakening follows from the identity of meditation and wisdom. See Suzuki, "Reply" 27–28, 45–46.

*dhyāna*, Suzuki emphasized *prajñā* as awakening (Ch. *wu*; Jpn. *satori*) which he identifies with a variety of Buddhist, Chinese and Western terms and conceptions of reality.<sup>82</sup> For Suzuki the “wisdom” outlined in the *Sūtra* is strictly self-nature itself. Essentially, he outlines *prajñā* as the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* understand it, as being the wisdom that is enlightenment, as ultimate *prajñā*.<sup>83</sup> He states: “understanding can only come from experiencing *prajñā*, and this *prajñā* is not something that arises from another something. *Prajñā* comes out of nothingness; this is *śūnyatā*, the void, which has nothing to do with relativity.”<sup>84</sup> Thus, the only matter of importance is suddenly awakening to the *prajñā* or self-nature already within oneself.

In fact, in the end, because the *LZTJ* teaches the identity of meditation and wisdom, and Suzuki’s writings tended to focus on *satori*, real meditation occurs only when one sees self-nature, experiences initial direct insight.<sup>85</sup> Meditation in Chan is no longer sitting in quiet meditation gradually cultivating awakening, but rather, with the identity of meditation and wisdom, meditation only occurs in the moment(s) of awakening. Any other form of meditation is not wisdom because it is not awakening.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> See Suzuki, “Reply” 32–34; Suzuki, *No-mind* 38–39.

<sup>83</sup> With respect to what sudden awakening means for Chan and practice, Suzuki’s outline, which he bases on the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* and appears in a variety of his works, is masterful.

<sup>84</sup> See Suzuki, “Zen Meditation” 93.

<sup>85</sup> This is reflected in Suzuki’s earlier work, and in particular the *Essays* series, which exhibits an emphasis on anti-intellectualism, Oriental intuition, spontaneity in practice, antinomianism, and iconoclastic tendencies in Zen in reaction to Western logic and what he saw as the institutionalizing tendencies and intellectualism of Northern Chan and Soto Zen teachings. It was only in his later years, as a reaction to “Beat Zen” and the elitist nature of the sudden teaching, that he started to emphasize the need for some form of self-discipline and skillful means, which for him was Rinzai monastic training and the *kōan* practice that first arose in the Song Dynasty. See Faure, *Insights* 57–60, 77.

<sup>86</sup> Although Suzuki does outline something like the *pāramitā* of wisdom as the practice Huineng teaches, Suzuki’s emphasis remains on awakening, and *prajñā* as self-nature’s becoming aware of itself. See Suzuki, *No-mind* 31–66, 121–127. He continues by outlining that the Hongzhou school of Mazu Daoyi and later Chan schools taught the same doctrines and practices as those taught by Huineng. As a result he quotes numerous anecdotes from later Chan teachers, teachings and sources to illustrate his points about Huineng. For typical examples see Suzuki, “Reply” 27–31, 36, 45; Suzuki, *No-mind* 22–30, 40–46.

Suzuki seems to focus on and emphasize inherent *prajñā*, ultimate truth, and sudden awakening over meditation, while the *LZTJ* portrays Huineng as teaching that the identity of meditation and wisdom forms the basis of the teaching. This is not to deny that there is an extreme emphasis on *prajñā* and awakening in the *Platform Sūtra*. But in the text's characterization of meditation and wisdom's identity, neither meditation nor wisdom are negated by the other. Rather they are spoken of in positive terms and as being the same, their identification being based upon the identity of emptiness and form.

Also, according to the Two Truths doctrine, the conventional truth is in no way undermined or lessened by the realization of ultimate truth, and is considered equally real and important as ultimate truth. Kalupahana notes that "there is no indication whatsoever that these are two truths with different standings as higher and lower" (Kalupahana, *Kārikā* 69).<sup>87</sup> In the realization of ultimate truth, the dualistic realm still exists, it is just that duality is no longer a delusive factor seemingly tarnishing the non-dual self-nature. The only qualifying element is that the conventional truth be understood and accepted for what it is. It is the conventional world, empty of independent inherent existence, but existing as co-dependently arisen "collective being" in constant flux (Nagao, *Mādhyamika* 33–34, 73–74).

Thus, to deny the conventional its voice is to see only one side of the picture. If applying these ideas to Suzuki's work, it seems that he privileges ultimate truth over conventional truth. Suzuki emphasizes the importance of *prajñā* as awakening at the expense of meditation, whereas meditation is just as important as *prajñā*.

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<sup>87</sup> Verses 8–10 of chapter XXIV of the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* are a reply by Nāgārjuna to an accusation that his teachings about emptiness have undermined Buddhism by teaching nihilism. Williams notes that one point made by Nāgārjuna is that it is a mistake to believe that what is the true or ultimate condition of things from the perspective of ultimate truth (i.e., there is no permanent thing found) is actually the case or condition of things from a conventional truth perspective. See Williams 70–71.

Neither is denied; the conventional, duality and meditation do not disappear in the light of ultimate truth, non-duality and wisdom.

## VI: 2 The Southern School

Although the Southern school's own views boxed the school into a corner, and as such, they were no longer able to teach meditation in an open, disclosed manner, the identity of meditation and wisdom can be understood as a practice. The longest passage on the identity of meditation and wisdom in the *LZTJ* (XIII) does not seem to provide any specific details about meditation practice. But this passage, as well as others about the identity of meditation and wisdom, is extremely similar to passages found in Shenhui's teachings. Also, the teaching on the identity of meditation and wisdom is developed in more detail by Shenhui in his *Platform Sermon* (*Nanyang heshang dunjiao jietuo chanmen zhibiaoxing tanyu*) than in the rather short paragraph(s) dedicated to them found in the *LZTJ*.

Carl Bielefeldt notes that Shenhui seems to be attempting to provide a unified version of *samādhi* and *prajñā*, and an account of practice that is a description of the inherently enlightened state. Also, since meditation is understood to be no different from the true nature of things, a rather simple practice must be used as any complicated practices simply move in the wrong direction, setting up constructs and conceptualizations that do not reflect the non-dual true nature of things (Bielefeldt, "Secret of Zen" 144–145).<sup>88</sup> In fact, any assertion of a self, such as the effort to calm the mind, are understood as self-willed constructions, a setting up of something that really just impedes the natural functioning of the Dao. As such, Shenhui appears to teach a form of simple mindfulness.

The East Mountain Chan school teachings of Daoxin and Hongran, the fourth and fifth Chan Patriarchs respectively, are very practical in that they teach sitting,

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<sup>88</sup> Buswell also outlines how *samādhi* and *prajñā* as non-dual can be understood as states of mind present in all moments of thought, and present at all levels of practice. See Buswell, "Short-cut" 328.

and a variety of calming meditation techniques that seek to uncover the innate Buddha–nature obscured by thoughts. Most of these techniques are both simple and seek to move directly to enlightenment. They are a single practice, and no other stages or practices are needed, and thus are understood as sudden (Bielefeldt, “Secret of Zen”139–143). Generally, in early Chan, inherent *prajñā* is manifest or revealed when the fluctuations of the mind that obscure innate wisdom are calmed. But here meditation still leads to wisdom. It does not prepare the mind to practice *prajñā*, but rather it uncovers the innate wisdom in sentient beings (Bielefeldt, “Secret of Zen”138–139).

Shenhui’s method rejected stages of progress and instead involved a change in view with respect to phenomena, and a change that leads to non–attachment amidst things. One was not to have preference for, or attachments toward, one thing as opposed to another, such as enlightenment as opposed to one’s present, apparent ignorant state. Instead, one is not to cling to either preference for or against something. The object does not disappear, rather one does not abide in any desire for or against something. One can still make decisions about what would seem to be the best course of action for solving a problem for instance, but there is no attachment to the particular decision made. Shenhui refers to this as non–intentionality or “living without a purpose” (*buzuoyi*) (Liebenthal 136).

In the following example from the *Platform Sūtra*, not clinging or abiding is expanded further to include form and emptiness.

If on the outside you are deluded, then you cling to form; if on the inside you are deluded you cling to emptiness. If within form you are separated from form and within emptiness you are separated from emptiness, then within and without you are not deluded.  
(*LZTJ XLII*)<sup>89</sup>

The student must not become attached even to emptiness, a teaching which is phrased in Mahāyāna thought as the “emptiness of emptiness” (Skt. *śūnyatā*–

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*śūnyatā*). Shenhui refers to this type of practice (i.e. non-abiding) as “*samādhi*.”<sup>90</sup>

We saw above that *prajñā* is the innate and non-abiding nature of sentient beings. Meditation as wisdom can thus be understood as adopting a non-attachment that reflects the inherent nature of things. Wisdom is meditation in the sense that the non-abiding nature of things is lived, or forms the basis of all one’s actions. Non-abiding as meditation is the conventional reflection of ultimate non-abiding which is *prajñā*, or the understanding of all things in identity with emptiness. Shenhui states: “When in this manner all the organs distinguish well, that is original *prajñā*; when no desire arises, that is original *samādhi*” (Liebenthal 148–149). This single practice of non-attachment, non-abiding, of not clinging as evidenced in non-arousal of like or dislikes, accomplishes the Triple Discipline in a single act, *samādhi* and *prajñā* being practiced in balance with each other (Liebenthal 146–149).

Therefore wisdom is not produced by meditation, or vice versa. Rather, when meditating, one is aware in a way that spontaneously accords with wisdom, which is one’s own nature as inherently non-abiding, and something that cannot be given rise to because it is already human beings’ state of existence. Thus, meditation is wisdom.

## Section VII: Practice III

### VII:1 The *Pāramitā* of Wisdom (*prajñā*)

I will now outline that the *pāramitā* of wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā*, perfection of wisdom)<sup>91</sup> is the practice of being in a state of non-abiding. The *LZTJ* seems to refer to, or reinterpret, this *pāramitā* as being the same as meditation (*samādhi*).

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<sup>89</sup> A similar reference is “cling neither to emptiness nor form” (XLVI).

<sup>90</sup> See Liebenthal’s translation of Shenhui’s “Sermon,” pages 146–149.

If the student practices non-abiding, the *Sūtra* claims that the student's own nature is in resonance with the *pāramitā* of wisdom. A person with great capacity:

Does not abide either inside or outside; he is free to come and go.  
Readily he casts aside the mind that clings [to things], and there is  
no obstruction to his passage. If in the mind this practice is carried  
out, then your own nature is no different from the *prajñā-pāramitā*.  
(XXIX)<sup>92</sup>

*Mañjuśrī's Discourse on the Pāramitā of Wisdom* (Ch. *Wenshubili suoshuo banruo boluomi jing*; Skt. *Saptasatika-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*, hereafter referred to as the *WSSJ*)<sup>93</sup> contains a section wherein the Buddha drills Mañjuśrī on how to practice the *pāramitā* of wisdom. The passage is a clear teaching about the relationship between non-abiding and the practice of the *pāramitā* of wisdom.

Mañjuśrī (M) answered: Sentient beings abide nowhere, just like space.

The Buddha (B) asked: "If so, how should one abide in the *pāramitā* of wisdom when cultivating it?"

M: Abiding in no *dharma* is the *pāramitā* of wisdom.

B: Why is abiding in no *dharma* called the *pāramitā* of wisdom?

M: Because to have no notion of abiding is to abide in the *pāramitā* of wisdom. One who cultivates the *pāramitā* of wisdom in this way will not delight in *nirvāṇa* or detest *samsāra*. Why? Because he realizes there is no *samsāra*, let alone rejection of it; and no *nirvāṇa*, let alone attachment to it. ...[to] see that no *dharma* arises or ceases, increases or decreases, to aspire to nothing and to see that nothing can be grasped, to see neither superiority nor inferiority, is to cultivate the *pāramitā* of wisdom. Why? Because all *dharma*s are devoid of characteristics; no *dharma* is superior or inferior, for all *dharma*s are equal in nature. (Chang, *Mañjuśrī's Discourse* 102–103)<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> An important teaching of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* is the six (or more) perfections or *pāramitās* a bodhisattva is to practice after the initial rising of the aspiration to achieve enlightenment (*bodhi-citta*). The fifth of these *pāramitās* is meditation or the mastering of various *samādhi*, and the most important of these is the sixth *pāramitā*, the *pāramitā* of wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā*, perfection of wisdom), hence the name of these texts. See Conze, *Large* xvi–xvii, 23–27; Suzuki, *Studies* 218–236.

<sup>92</sup> Other references include XLII.

<sup>93</sup> T 8 (no. 232) 726–732.

<sup>94</sup> See *DS* IV, VI, X, XIV.

Non-abiding is central to practicing the *pāramitā* of wisdom, and involves not conceptualizing dualistically, or discriminating between, *dharmas* as either superior or inferior. The practice is based upon the true nature of things and illustrates the lack of places or things to abide in, or as, and therefore the centrality of the doctrine of emptiness in the practice of the *pāramitā* of wisdom.

More importantly, this is the same practice that the Southern school outlines when it refers to meditation, or *samādhi*, as introduced above. It would appear that meditation is actually the *pāramitā* of wisdom reinterpreted as meditation. At this point I would like to look closer at what it means to take one's original nature as the "basis of practice."

## VII: 2 Inherent *Prajñā* as the Basis of Practice

The *LZTJ*'s meditation practice takes as its "basis" of cultivation an abstract and high level Buddhist teaching, and in particular the identity of ultimate and conventional truth and a description of the enlightened state, which is *prajñā* as the inherent non-abiding condition of sentient beings. This is not to suggest there is some sort of object contemplated such as visualizing a sun, observing one's thoughts, or contemplating non-abiding as if it was something one is not. Rather, by *being* intentionless non-abiding one accords with the originally non-abiding condition of oneself. This is so because the description the *LZTJ* provides about true nature of sentient beings can also be understood as a description of practice: non-abiding refers to both that which is realized and the way to be(have).

Here we see a "two tiered" usage of the same term (non-abiding) to refer to both the insight that is enlightenment and to the method of practice. Taking this one step further and in terms of the identity of the two truths, the idea presented in the above paragraph outlines two conventional uses or meanings of the same term. One is a conventional realm concern (i.e., practice) and the other referring

to ultimate truth and the suchness of things. Practice still exists, but in enlightenment it is found to be fundamentally the same as the true nature of things. In fact, the practice of non-abiding is simply an expression in harmony with inherent *prajñā* or the original non-abiding nature. In this way inherent *prajñā* can be understood as the “basis” of practice; it is both practice and the content of realization.

This understanding of the identity of meditation and wisdom as a practice is further developed in the *LZTJ* as “non-form,” and “no-thought” and the “*samādhi* of oneness.”<sup>95</sup> These terms can also be understood in terms of a two tiered framework. Let us first look at how these terms can be understood to refer to, what is realized in enlightenment. Yampolsky notes that non-form, and in particular no-thought, can be understood as negatively phrased terms or expressions of the suchness of things (Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 116–117). McRae notes that for Shenhui no-thought meant a “level of consciousness ontologically prior to the discrimination of thoughts, or the source of liberation already immanent in sentient beings” (McRae, “Shenhui” 256). Also, Suzuki notes that because seeing into one’s self-nature has “no reference to a specific state of consciousness, which can be logically or relatively defined as a something,” it is labeled “no-thought” and “no-mind” (*wuxin*) (Suzuki, *No-mind* 29).<sup>96</sup>

Section XIV of the *LZTJ*, which falls between two sections outlining the identity of meditation and wisdom, introduces the “*samādhi* of oneness” (one-practice *samādhi*, *yixing sanmei*).<sup>97</sup> As a means of understanding how this term can

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<sup>95</sup> It is also outlined as the *prajñā-samādhi* in sections XXVIII and XXXI.

<sup>96</sup> Suzuki translates the nearly synonymous Chinese term *wuxin* (no-mind) as “Unconscious” in his *Zen Doctrine of No-mind* in an attempt to use early twentieth century Western psychological categories to convey Zen teaching. Faure notes how this both served as a basis for misunderstanding Zen teaching on the part of the West, and also how it attracted a number of prominent psychologists and psychoanalysts to Zen, among them Carl G. Jung and Erich Fromm. See Faure, *Insights* 65–64.

<sup>97</sup> “*Yixing sanmei*” is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit “*ekānāra-samādhi*” (“single-mode *samādhi*”) and “*ekavyūha-samādhi*” (“single magnificence *samādhi*”). Mochizuki’s *Bukkyō daijiten* lists the translation as such. See Faure, “One-practice” 100, n.1.

refer to the ultimate truth, we can look to the teachings in *Mañjuśrī's Discourse on the Pāramitā of Wisdom* (WSSJ), which is the original Chan (and Tiantai) source for this *samādhi*. The WSSJ defines it as taking the *dharmadhātu*, which has only one mark (Ch. *yixiang*; Skt. *ekalakṣaṇa*), as an object (Faure, "One-practice" 100).<sup>98</sup> The two methods the WSSJ gives for entering this *samādhi* are first, reading the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* and practicing the *prajñā-pāramitā*, and second, visualizing a Buddha while repeating its name (*nianfo*), being careful not to become attached to the appearance of that particular Buddha. Because there are two methods or techniques taught for entering this *samādhi*, Faure notes that in the early Indian definition *samādhi* of oneness "refers to the metaphysical or ontological unity of truth rather than to the methodological singleness of practice" (Faure, "One-practice" 101), which is a development found in Chinese Tiantai teachings. The emphasis in the WSSJ passage is on a description of the *dharmadhātu*, which is non-dual as it has only "one mark."<sup>99</sup> However, in Chinese

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<sup>98</sup> Other translations include Wing-tsit Chan's translation "calmness in which one realizes that all *dharma*s are the same" (Chan, *Platform Scripture* 47), Japanese scholar Kobayashi Enshō's translation is "concentration on the oneness of the universe" (Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 136, n. 60), and Wong Mou-Lam translation is "*samādhi* of specific mode" (Wong Mou-Lam *Huineng* 43). The more literal translation as "one-practice *samādhi*" is popular with Tiantai scholars such as Donner and Stevenson. See McRae, "Yanagida's Landmark" 64, n. 14, for still more English translations of *yixing sanmei*.

<sup>99</sup> According to the *Lengqia shizuo ji* (712–716 C.E.), the Fourth Patriarch of Chan Daoxin (580–651 C.E.), introduced the teaching of the *samādhi* of oneness into Chan. This is the earliest Chan reference to *yixing sanmei*, and dates to before Shenhui's debate and campaigning, which did not begin until around 730 C.E. Tao-hsin quotes at length the same passage about the *samādhi* of oneness from the WSSJ as Tiantai Zhiyi does. In fact, the *samādhi* of oneness was a term used by a variety of Tang Dynasty Buddhist schools and each interpreted the *samādhi* of oneness so as to support its own teachings and/or to criticize other school's teachings. One example would be the Pure Land schools' focus on *nianfo*. It would seem the term's definition, although based upon the WSSJ, was flexible and did not refer to a single type of meditation practice. Rather each school's definition and usage of the term indicates that it was easily adapted to fit the needs of the user. For a more detailed discussion see Faure, "One-practice" 105–112.

thought, *samā dhi* of oneness was understood in a more complex way, denoting both the non-dual content of realization and a method of practice.<sup>100</sup>

### VII: 3 Conventional *Samā dhi* of Oneness, Non-form and No-thought

Bernard Faure notes that Shenhui (and the *Platform Sūtra*) used the *samā dhi* of oneness as one of the “main instruments” of criticism of the Northern school meditation (Faure, “One-practice” 107–108).<sup>101</sup> But this is not a rejection of meditation, nor of the teachings of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*. We have seen that the *Platform Sūtra* recommends practicing the *prajñā-pāramitā*, which Shenhui equates with no-thought (*wunian*) and the *samā dhi* of oneness (Faure, “One-practice” 107–108). Therefore it would seem likely that any more positive assertions about the *samā dhi* of oneness may indicate some type of instruction about practicing meditation.<sup>102</sup>

The *samā dhi* of oneness outlined in the *Platform Sūtra* is very similar to the practice I outlined as the identity of meditation and wisdom. In particular, non-abiding, not clinging, not having any attachments, is a key element in the definition of “*samā dhi* of oneness.” The text states: “only practicing straightforward mind, and in all things having no attachments whatsoever is called the *samā dhi* of oneness” (XIV). This includes not being attached to doctrines or practices, not even to the *samā dhi* of oneness.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the practice of *samā dhi* of

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<sup>100</sup> Tiantai Zhiyi’s practice of this *samā dhi* demonstrates this. In the *Mohe zhiguan* Zhiyi outlines four practices he calls *samā dbis*. One of these is called *samā dhi* of oneness. Zhiyi’s *samā dhi* of oneness is a single practice performed continuously that attempts to identify the mind with the non-dual *dharmadhātu*.

<sup>101</sup> Also see Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 136, n. 60; Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 81–82.

<sup>102</sup> Of note is that the *LZTJ* does not teach *nianfó* practice as included in the *RDFM*. But it does recommend practicing the *prajñā-pāramitā* (sections XXIV–XXIX), which is the other method for practicing the *samā dhi* of oneness as recommended in the *WSSJ*.

<sup>103</sup> “The deluded man clings to the characteristics of things,” to doctrines and practices, usually of the wrong type (XIV). Other references include XLI, XLVIII, and XLIX. Also see Yampolsky, *Platform Sūtra* 115, 136.

oneness is very much related to the *pāramitā* of wisdom, non-abiding being the primary component.

Gomez argues that the *samādhi* of oneness in the *LZTJ* “defines the object of meditation polemically, as neither a vision of Buddhas and Buddha fields (against the East Mountain Doctrine) nor the contemplation of an empty mind (against Northern Chan)” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 82). He continues noting that the oneness of the practice refers to “single-mindedness” as opposed to a single technique practiced, or a single simple object focussed upon to calm the mind of mental activity. Rather, “the *samādhi* (meditation practice) and its content are defined in an apophatic manner, as single-minded detachment from all objects and practices” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 82).

Yampolsky’s translation of *yixing sanmei* as “*samādhi* of oneness” is a good one because it effectively communicates a number of nuances. It is a single practice (combining *samādhi* and *prajñā*), and is based upon the inherent original nature of things, which has only one-mark (i.e., non-dual). In the *samādhi* of oneness we see the two tiered usage, or development, of the same term. It refers to practice and to enlightenment. Not only is practice an expression that accords with the non-abiding nature of things, but in enlightenment one discovers they are the same. The two seemingly different teachings are not different in ultimate truth.

The *LZTJ*’s teaching about this practice provides further instruction about practice and how its performance is consistent with the doctrine of sudden enlightenment. First of all, the practice seems to be one that is performed continuously. In section XIV the *Sūtra* instructs that “*samādhi* of oneness is straightforward mind at all times (*shizhong*), walking, staying, sitting, and lying.” The *Sūtra*’s explanation of *samādhi* of oneness is not only defined in terms of criticism of other types of meditation, and apophatic descriptions, but rather the *Sūtra* specifies meditation is to be performed “at all times.” Above, we saw that the *Sūtra* teaches that the mind is not to be calmed. Rather, because the mind and

its functioning are identical with emptiness, it can remain active because the mind's activity does not affect the its identity with emptiness.

The phrase “walking, staying, sitting, lying” (*xing zhu zuo wo*) expands upon the phrase “at all times” and indicates that the practice involves both static and dynamic modes of physical activity.<sup>104</sup> In the same section the *Sūtra* later states that “the deluded man [thinks] that straightforward mind is sitting without moving. If sitting meditation without moving is good, why did Vimalakīrti scold Śāriputra for sitting in meditation in the forest?”<sup>105</sup> As in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, *samādhi* is understood as movement in the *LZTJ*, not sitting or concentration. This teaching again seems to indicate that Shenhui and the Southern school's meditation technique does not seek to eliminate *dharmas*. Rather it works with them, assuming their identity with emptiness.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> The autobiographical section of the *Sūtra* for instance portrays Huineng working in the mill as opposed to being a monk, and informs us that he had not been to any other parts of the temple complex. The inference is that he did not practice any sitting meditation during this time, nor was he becoming learned in Buddhist doctrine. Rather he was practicing some form of meditation while in action during his stay at the mill. In fact, if one grants unity to the autobiographical sections, it seems as if Huineng was suddenly awakened without prior training and then began to practice, maturing his initial insight while travelling to meet Hongran and then working in the mill. As such, the story may be an attempt to explain through narrative the teaching of sudden enlightenment followed by slow maturation.

<sup>105</sup> Later in the same section the text continues: “some people teach men to sit viewing the mind, not moving. Deluded people do not realize this is wrong” (XIV).

<sup>106</sup> Huineng's portrayal as physically active working in the mill may be another illustration of how non-abiding is practiced in the *LZTJ*. His body is giving a physical example of non-abiding. If only sitting in meditation were performed, this might be seen as physically abiding or staying, but physical activity is a bodily demonstration of non-abiding. Also, being a practice, it is of the conventional realm, and thus is a conventional expression of the true nature of things.

Section XVII introduces the terms “no–thought” (*wunian*) and “non–form” (*wuxiang*).<sup>107</sup> It was introduced above that these can be understood as referring to the ultimate truth. I will now outline how these can also be understood as practices that are closely linked with non–abiding. In Section XVII the *LZTJ* states: “All have set up no–thought as the main doctrine, non–form as the substance, and non–abiding as the basis.” There is a definite “freedom in the midst of *samsara* or *dharma*s” element in the *Sūtra*’s explanation of these two concepts and non–abiding is the essential component of their explanations.

As non–form Gomez understands non–abiding as not clinging to “conceptual signs” (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 82–83). But the reference to these signs as also being on the outside, or external to, the subjective self is not fully expressed. Non–form is “be[ing] separated from form even when associated with form,” and to be “outwardly separated from all forms” (XVII).<sup>108</sup> Non–form in the *LZTJ* is explained in relation to internal and external phenomena. Because of the identity of emptiness and form, form is in no way eliminated. Rather, one is not to be attached to forms.

Shenhui stressed “no–thought” (*wunian*) over the Northern school’s use of “transcending thoughts” (*linian*). McRae notes that Shenhui felt that transcending thoughts “implied a purposive or intentional effort to achieve a state of liberation” (McRae, “Shenhui” 256), which hints of a goal as well as a conventional dualism. Shenhui used *wunian* because it appeared less dualistic, and thus sudden. Also transcending thoughts implies the need for the removal of thoughts and mental activity in the effort to transcend them, while no–thought does not require the removal or elimination of *dharma*s, again reflecting or taking into account the non–dual and immediate teaching of the sudden doctrine (Gomez, “Purifying Gold” 94).

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<sup>107</sup> Wing–tsit Chan translates these terms as “absence of characters” and “absence of thought” respectively. See W.T. Chan, *Platform Scripture* 51–52.

<sup>108</sup> This is almost the same definition given for *zuochan* (sitting meditation). See XIX.

No-thought is not to be understood as the absence of thought, as the “no” might seem to suggest. In section XVII the *LZTJ* states that “if there were no thinking, then no-thought would have no place to exist.”<sup>109</sup> Rather, the same section teaches that “no-thought is not to think even when involved in thought” and to “be unstained in all environments” (XVII).<sup>110</sup> In the *LZTJ* thought is not the problem, it is attachment to this thought that is the problem. Thus, no-thought as a practice is outlined as being similar to non-abiding. Thought is not to be suppressed, and one is to be free of any attachment to thoughts while also fully aware of them. Instead, one is not to consider thoughts, or any other form of sensory experience, in dualistic ways such as good or evil, interesting or boring. It is this conceptualizing tendency of the mind that seems to make one thing more desirable than another, and does not take into account the radical non-dual and immediate nature of enlightenment.

Such definitions in the *Sūtra* convey that no-thought is some form of practice. “No” in this sense can be understood as referring to non-attachment to both thought and the absence of thought. Here, the negation is not simply a negation or absence of thought for instance, but rather refers to the non-duality of, or the middle path between, thought and the absence of thought.

Furthermore, as in the term *wuwei*, the use of the term *wu* or “non” in these terms is not a negation of form or thought as such (Kasulis 43–44). In fact we have seen how the *LZTJ* teaches that form and thought (i.e., *dharmas*) are in no way removed from non-form and no-thought. Section XVII defines the “no” of no-thought as “separation from the dualism that produces the passions.” In the teaching of no-thought then, the “no” refers to the original suchness; it is that from which, and as which, thought naturally and spontaneously arises. If one allows thoughts to come and go, not abiding in them but rather responding to

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<sup>109</sup> See also section XXXI.

<sup>110</sup> Also see section XXXI where no-thought is again discussed as non-abiding amongst all *dharmas* and is the *prajñā-samā dhi*.

their presence without preference and self-conscious effort, one is in harmony or accord with the natural functioning of the Dao. For example, in section XVII the *Platform Sūtra* states “if you give rise to thoughts from your self-nature, then although you see, hear, perceive and know, you are not stained by the manifold environments, and are always free. The *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* says: ‘Externally, while distinguishing well all the forms of the various *dharmas*, internally he stands firm within the first principle.’ ”

### Section VIII: Conclusion

This paper has explored the more practical teachings found in the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* and has considered the possibility of a meditation teaching within the context of the *Sūtra*’s teachings on sudden enlightenment. It has argued that there is no conflict between the text’s teachings of practice and the sudden doctrine, and that there is a meditation teaching in the text.

From the outset there was a strong argument that suggested there was no meditation teaching in the text. I outlined how the doctrine of sudden enlightenment can be understood to undermine the rationale for engaging in meditation, and explored in the process some of the reasons why the assertion that there is a meditation teaching in the *LZTJ* may be considered a weak position (Section II). These are primarily based upon the development of sudden enlightenment as rapid, non-dual, and inherent, and as a result, sudden enlightenment itself seems to subvert the need for meditation.

Part Two made a case for the position that there is a practical teaching present in the text. I outlined that in the *LZTJ* and Shenhui’s writings, criticism of meditation was only a criticism of certain forms of meditation, and not a rejection of meditation itself. In fact, the *LZTJ* makes concessions to the doctrine of sudden

enlightenment in favor of practice and, in fact places a great amount of emphasis on practice regardless of the sudden rhetoric.

Next I outlined that the meditation teaching in the *LZTJ* is a form of intentionless, continuous, non-passive non-attachment in the midst of all *dharmas* and that it can generally be referred to as “non-abiding.” This was demonstrated by first exploring the intentionless aspects of the *LZTJ*’s practical teachings which are based upon both the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*, and the Daoist concept of *wuwei* (non-action). Here we saw that the potential conflict between sudden enlightenment and practicing meditation so as to acquire enlightenment is resolved in the adoption of a different model of practice. This alternative model abandoned practicing with an intention to achieve a goal by willfully following a path, and instead proposed a practice of allowing oneself to conform or be to one’s inherent original condition.

The identity of meditation and wisdom was demonstrated to refer to not only the doctrinal teaching of the identity of emptiness and form, but also to a simple form of mindfulness that attempts to unify meditation and wisdom. This practice is essentially that of non-abiding amidst *dharmas* and has much in common with the *pāramitā* of wisdom. As such it seems that the text reinterprets the *pāramitā* of wisdom as meditation. This practice, much like *wuwei* (non-action) and the *pāramitā* of wisdom, takes as its basis the inherent and natural condition of sentient beings. This same practice of non-abiding was also outlined as the *samādhi* of oneness, arguing that the meditation practice taught in the *Sutra* is performed continuously with the mind and in dynamic and static modes of physical behavior. Non-form and no-thought were also demonstrated to refer to this same practice of non-attachment amidst *dharmas*. All these ways of referring to and describing practice employed a two tiered approach in their explanations. The practices, which take the as-it-is-ness of things as their way of approaching and performing practice, are referred to with the same terms used at times by the

text when speaking of the original nature of things. Thus although there seems to be two topics referred to with the same term, it is seen in enlightenment that their difference is conventional and that the practice of intentionless non-abiding itself is simply a conventional realm expression of the true nature of things.

## Character Glossary

Pinyin	Characters
banruo zhi zhi	般若之智
<i>Baolin zhuan</i>	寶林傳
Baolin si	寶林寺
benjue	本覺
buzuoyi	不作意
chan	禪
chanding	禪定
<i>Daban niepan jing</i>	大般涅槃經
<i>Dacheng qixin lun</i>	大乘起信論
Dao	道
<i>Daode jing</i>	道德經
Daoxin	道心
Daosheng	道生
ding	定
dunjiao	頓教
dunwu	頓悟
erdi	二諦
fa	法
fo	佛

foxing	佛性
guan	觀
<i>Guanxin lun</i>	觀心論
Guifeng Tsungmi	圭峰宗密
Heze Shenhui	荷澤神會
Hongran	弘忍
Hongzhou	洪州
hui	慧
Huineng	慧能
jianwu	漸悟
jianxing	見性
<i>Jingang banrou boluomi jing</i>	金剛般若波羅蜜經
<i>Jingde chuan deng lu</i>	景德傳燈錄
kanxin	觀心
kong	空
<i>Lengjia aboduoluobao jing</i>	楞伽阿跋多羅寶經
<i>Lengjia shizi ji</i>	楞伽師資記
linian	離念
<i>Liuzu tanjing</i>	六祖壇經
Mazu Daoyi	馬祖道一
<i>Mohē zhiguan</i>	摩訶止觀

Nanzong

*Nanyang heshang dunjiao jie-  
tuo chanmen zhibiaoxing tanyu*

nianfo

niannian

*Rudao anxin yao fangbian famen*

sanxue

se

*Shenhui yulu*

Shenxiu

shidi

shijue

shizhong

shouxin

shouyi

*Wenshushili suoshuo banruo  
bolu mi jing*

*Wu fangbian*

wu

wuer

wunian

wuxiang

wuxin

南宗

南陽和尚頓教解脫  
禪門直了性增語

念佛

念念

入道安心要方便法門

三學

色

神會語錄

神秀

世諦

始覺

時中

守心

守一

文殊師利所說摩訶般若  
波羅蜜經

五方便

悟

無二

無念

無相

無心

wuwei	無爲
wuzhu	無住
xing zhu zuo wo	行住坐臥
<i>Xiuxin yao lun</i>	修心要論
xu	虛
yixiang	一相
yixiang sanmei	一相三昧
yixing sanmei	一行三昧
zhendi	真諦
zhenru	真如
zhi	智
zhi	止
zhiguan	止觀見
zhihui	智惠
Zhiyi	智顗
Zhuangzi	莊子
ziran	自然
zixing	自性
zuochan	坐禪

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