

One of the points of contention between Hu Shih and D. T. Suzuki in their famous exchange of views on Zen Buddhism that appeared in the pages of the April 1958 issue of this journal had to do with the interpretation of the meaning of the Chinese word *chih*<sup>a</sup> (first tone, Mathews #932). Hu cites the Ch’an historian Tsung-mi (780–841), who he said “was very fond of quoting Shen-hui’s dictum: ‘The one word “Knowledge” is the gateway to all mysteries’ (*chih chih i tzu chung miao chih men*<sup>b</sup>).”<sup>1</sup> He then goes on to claim: “That sentence best characterizes Shen-hui’s intellectualistic approach” (p. 15). In his reply to Hu, Suzuki rightly criticizes him for taking *chih* to mean intellectual knowledge. Suzuki argues, instead, that *chih* is what he calls “*prajñā*-intuition,” and that it is Hu’s failure to understand the true character of *prajñā*-intuition that inevitably dooms his account of Zen, despite its undeniable historical value, to missing the most important point.<sup>2</sup> Although Suzuki, in his impatience to correct Hu’s misunderstanding of Zen, never addresses the substantive historical issues raised by him, he is certainly justified in taking him to task for his explanation of Zen experience.

While Hu only mentions *chih* in a brief paragraph characterizing Shen-hui’s teaching as one of seven types of Ch’an enumerated by Tsung-mi,<sup>3</sup> Suzuki makes it the focal point of his reply. The context of the discussion, however, goes back to Tsung-mi’s claim that the single word *chih* sums up the essence of Shen-hui’s message. Whether Tsung-mi is correct in this claim and whether his explanation of the meaning of this term accords with how it was used by Shen-hui are questions which I plan to treat elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> But, whatever their answer, Suzuki’s explanation of this term clearly does not accord with how it was used by Tsung-mi. Rather, *chih*, for Tsung-mi, refers to the ever-present ground of awareness that underlies all sentient experience, whether deluded or enlightened. It is thus a far more comprehensive term than *prajñā*, which would be subsumed within it, as would also Hu’s intellectual knowledge. As we shall see, Tsung-mi is explicit in insisting that *chih* means neither wisdom (*chih*<sup>c</sup>, fourth tone, Mathews #933, a word which sometimes translates as the Sanskrit *prajñā*) nor discrimination (*fen-pieh*<sup>d</sup>). I will, accordingly, translate it as “Awareness” throughout this article.

Whatever its place in Shen-hui’s thought, *chih* surely is the gateway through which we can enter that of Tsung-mi. What I intend to do in the present article, then, is to set out Tsung-mi’s understanding of *chih* and, in so doing, show how it is integrally woven into the whole fabric of his thought. While I make no pretense of challenging Suzuki’s understanding of “Zen in itself,” I do call into question the reliability of his representation of the tradition as a historical phenomenon.

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Suzuki's account of *chih* as “*prajñā*-intuition” may be insightful as a discussion of *prajñā* or the phenomenology of Zen experience, but it is off the mark as an account of the meaning of *chih* in the context in which it was broached by Hu. What Shen-hui or Tsung-mi meant by *chih* can only be answered after we have first examined how the term is actually used by them, and this can only be done by looking at the available texts. An appeal to the authority of insight beyond the written word is simply beside the point. While Hu's efforts to explain Zen experience may seem naïve, Suzuki's efforts to deal with Zen as history fare no better. A discussion of what Tsung-mi meant by *chih* should reveal a dimension of the Ch'an tradition that was not only enormously important historically, but that was also largely neglected by Suzuki throughout the bulk of his English language writings on Zen, with the exception, perhaps, of his *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra*. Since this side of Ch'an has still to be fully appreciated, it is worth opening, once again, the discussion of “the single word ‘*chih*.’” In doing so, my primary purpose is not to criticize either D. T. Suzuki or Hu Shih, to whom the modern historical study of Ch'an is so deeply indebted. Rather, I have introduced this article by referring to their debate as a way of bringing into focus what Tsung-mi meant by *chih* and thereby illuminating the importance of a teaching central to Ch'an in the eighth and early ninth centuries. This teaching is that of Buddha-nature or, as it is known in its more technical expression, the *tathāgatagarbha*.

#### I. TSUNG-MI'S HISTORICAL EXPLANATION

“*Chih*” is one of a series of synonyms that Tsung-mi uses for the key term within his system of thought. Sometimes he uses it singly, and at other times it is in collocation with other words, such as “numinous Awareness” (*ling-chih*<sup>e</sup>), “numinous Awareness unobscured” (*ling-chih pu-mei*<sup>f</sup>), “ever-present Awareness” (*ch'ang-chih*<sup>g</sup>), and “empty tranquil Awareness” (*k'ung-chi [chih] chih*<sup>h</sup>). It is at once the ultimate source (*yüan*<sup>i</sup>) of both phenomenal reality and enlightenment and therefore also the fundamental basis and “object” of Ch'an. Tsung-mi identifies it with True Nature (*chen-hsing*<sup>j</sup>), Mind Ground (*hsin-ti*<sup>k</sup>), and *tathāgatagarbha* (*ju-lai-tsang*<sup>l</sup>). It is the axial principle of the highest level of Buddhist teaching, that which he refers to as the Teaching which Directly Reveals that the True Mind is the Nature (*hsien-shih chen-hsin chi hsing chiao*<sup>m</sup>) within the doctrinal framework that he articulates in the *Ch'an Preface*, and, in his analysis of the various Ch'an teachings within that work, it corresponds to that of Ho-tse Shen-hui, the champion of the cause of Hui-neng as the true Sixth Patriarch against the claims of the Northern Ch'an master Shen-hsiu. As he writes in the *Ch'an Chart*:

All dharmas are like a dream, as the various sages alike have explained. Thus deluded thoughts are intrinsically tranquil (*chi*) and sense objects are intrinsically empty (*k'ung*). The Mind which is empty and tranquil is numinously aware (*ling-chih*) and unobscured (*pu-mei*). This very Awareness which is empty and

tranquil is the empty tranquil Mind transmitted previously by Bodhidharma. Whether deluded or enlightened, the Mind is intrinsically aware in and of itself. It does not come into existence dependent upon conditions nor does it arise because of sense objects. When it is deluded, it is subject to defilements, but Awareness is not [these] defilements. When it is enlightened, it displays supernatural powers, but Awareness is not [these] supernatural powers. The single word “Awareness” is the source (*yüan*) of all mysteries. (ZZ 2/15/5. 436b14–18; K 317–318)<sup>5</sup>

Tsung-mi’s claim that the single word “*chih*” embodied the essence of Shen-hui’s teaching meant, for him, that it represented the animating insight of Buddhism itself, since, according to Ch’an myth, the teaching to which Shen-hui was heir stretched all the way back through an unbroken line of succession to the historical Buddha himself. As both a Ch’an Master committed to transmitting that tradition and a historian engaged in documenting its claims, Tsung-mi thus had to provide a historically plausible explanation for why the word “*chih*” had not been so used before Shen-hui. Such an explanation was essential precisely because Ch’an claimed to be a teaching whose authority lay outside the scriptures; consequently, its only recourse for asserting its legitimacy was historical. Thus, before examining what Tsung-mi meant by *chih*, we must first discuss its position within his vision of Ch’an history.

Tsung-mi himself noted that many Ch’an students of his day questioned the authenticity of Shen-hui’s teaching that the single word “*chih*” is the gate of all mysteries by pointing out that the term “*chih*” was never used by Bodhidharma, who, instead, used the term “Mind” (*hsin*) to designate the cardinal principle of Buddhism (*T* 48.406c22–23; K 170). That Bodhidharma did not use the word *chih*, and that Shen-hui did, was due, Tsung-mi argues, not to any difference in their message, but to their insightful ability to employ the means of teaching appropriate to the different historical situations in which they taught. As he writes in the *Ch’an Preface*:

It was only because [people] in China, being deluded about the Mind and attached to the written word, mistook the name for the essence that Bodhidharma skillfully distinguished between the written word and the transmission of Mind and, in making the name known (Mind is the name), silently pointed to the essence (Awareness is the essence). He illustrated it by using wall-gazing to have [his disciple Hui-k’o] cut off all conditioning (*yüan*). When he had cut off all conditioning, [Bodhidharma] asked, “Have you gotten rid of it or not?” He answered, “Even though I have cut off all thought, I have still not gotten rid of it.” [Bodhidharma then] asked, “What proof do you have to say that you haven’t gotten rid of it?” [Hui-K’o] answered, “It is utterly self-evident (*liao-liao tzu-chih*<sup>P</sup>); words could never get at it.” The Master thereupon sanctioned (*yin*<sup>A</sup>) him, saying, “Just this is the intrinsically pure Mind. Have no further doubts.” Had his response not been fitting, he then would have pointed out his error and had him meditate further. He never spoke the word “Awareness” before him, but simply waited for him to realize it for himself. Only after he had truly experienced it and intimately realized its essence did he sanction (*yin*) him, causing his remaining doubts to be cut off. He was thus said to transmit the Mind Seal (*hsin-yin*<sup>r</sup>) silently. The word “silently” merely means that he was silent about the word “Awareness;” it does not mean that he did not say anything at all. Such was the

transmission throughout the [first] six generations. When it came to the time of Ho-tse [Shen-hui, however,] other lineages were spreading contention. Even though he wanted to reach a silent understanding the situation would not allow it. Moreover, reflecting on Bodhidharma's prediction of the dangling thread (Bodhidharma had said, "The fate of my teaching will, after the sixth generation, be like a dangling thread.") and fearing that the cardinal principle would perish, he thus said that the single word "Awareness" is the gate (*men*) of all mysteries. (T 48.405b3–15; K 141)

As this passage makes clear, Tsung-mi uses the common Buddhist hermeneutical rubric of expedient means (*fang-pien*<sup>s</sup>, *upāya*) to account for the fact that the differences between the teachings of Bodhidharma and Shen-hui were merely apparent. When Bodhidharma arrived in China he had the perspicacity to realize that his Chinese students, being attached to the written word, would only misunderstand him if he taught them the single word "Awareness" (*chih*), which directly revealed the Mind itself. Recognizing the character of their attachments, he merely taught them its name, allowing them to realize its essence for themselves. In the time of Shen-hui, however, Ch'an had reached a state of crisis of such proportions that there was a very real danger that the essence of its teaching would be lost. Thus, in a desperate effort to put the tradition back on course, Shen-hui spoke, for the first time, the single word "Awareness." Such, at least, is the historical context that Tsung-mi introduces to account for the apparently novel character of Shen-hui's teaching that the single word "Awareness" is the gate of all mysteries.

## II. THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

While Tsung-mi's account, as history, is patently contrived, it is, nevertheless, typical of the kind of explanation found so frequently throughout the "Ch'an histories" of the eighth and ninth centuries. The very fact that Tsung-mi felt compelled, by the nature of Ch'an claims to legitimacy, to contrive such an explanation tells us something very important historically about the Ch'an of that period, even if its historical claims cannot be accepted at face value. Moreover, Tsung-mi's account takes on added significance when looked at within the context of his doctrinal agenda. Not only does it legitimate his particular interpretation of Ch'an, it also intimates how that interpretation is an integral facet of his understanding of Buddhism as a totality. That this is the case can be seen by considering the crucial philosophical distinction that he introduces in the passage just quoted—that between name (*ming*<sup>1</sup>) and essence (*t'i*<sup>u</sup>).

Tsung-mi emphasizes this distinction in another passage from the *Chan Preface*. He begins with an analogy, remarking that "water" is the name for that which has a certain set of properties: "when it settles, it becomes clear; when it is stirred up, it becomes turbid; when it is dammed up, it becomes still; when it is released, it flows; it is able to inundate all things and wash away all dirt." The ignorant are satisfied with knowing its name, but the wise want to know its essence, which, Tsung-mi then goes on to tell us, is wetness (*shih*<sup>v</sup>). "Mind," likewise, is merely the name for something with a certain set of properties: "when

it is deluded, it is defiled; when it is enlightened, it is pure; when it is neglected, it is ordinary (*fan*<sup>w</sup>); when it is cultivated, it is sagely (*sheng*<sup>x</sup>); it is able to produce all mundane and supermundane dharmas.” As in the analogy of water, the ignorant are satisfied with knowing its name, but the wise want to know its essence, and the essence of the Mind, of course, is Awareness (*chih*). As Tsung-mi comments, “[‘Awareness’] points to its essence. This word is right on the mark, no other would do.” Just as “‘water’ is [merely] a name, not water [itself], and wetness is water [itself], not a [mere] name,” so “‘Mind’ is [merely] a name, not the Mind [itself], and Awareness is the Mind [itself], not a [mere] name.” Moreover, just as one who understands the wet nature of water thereby also understands all of its various conditioned forms, so, too, one who understands Awareness thereby also understands all of the various conditioned forms that the Mind can assume (406c5–22; K 169–170).<sup>6</sup>

Tsung-mi’s distinction between name and essence emphasizes the fundamental qualitative difference between abstract and experiential understanding. *Chih* directly points to the Mind itself, rather than being a mere name representing it. The word that I have translated as “essence,” “*t’i*,” also has the sense of “the thing-in-itself” and, in the present case, connotes the direct experience of the Mind itself in contrast to the more abstract knowledge of its symbolic representation. “*Chih*” is thus a very special kind of word, and this point calls for a discussion of Tsung-mi’s interpretation of the nature and function of religious language within the context of his systematic classification of Buddhist doctrine.

As has already been mentioned, Tsung-mi maintains that the single word “*chih*” not only embodies the essence of Shen-hui’s teaching, but also that of the highest level of Buddhist teaching. The major characteristic of this teaching, as far as Tsung-mi is concerned, is that it is able to “manifest” (*hsien*<sup>n</sup>), “reveal” (*shih*<sup>z</sup>), or “directly point to” (*chih-chih*<sup>aa</sup>) the essence. Tsung-mi accordingly refers to it in the *Ch’an Preface* as “the Teaching which Directly Reveals (*hsien-shih*<sup>ab</sup>) that the True Mind is the Nature,” and his gloss on why he does so is illuminating.

Because [this category of teaching] directly points (*chih-chih*) to the fact that one’s very own Mind is the True Nature, revealing (*shih*) it neither in terms of the appearances of phenomena (*shih-hsiang*<sup>ac</sup>) nor in terms of the negation of phenomenal appearances (*p’o-hsiang*<sup>ad</sup>), it has “is the Nature” [in its name]. Because its intent is not hidden (*yin-mi*<sup>ae</sup>) by expedients, it is said to “reveal it directly.” (404b26–27; K 131)

In order to appreciate the scope of Tsung-mi’s comment, we must cast it within the doctrinal context within which it is set. Tsung-mi discusses three general types of Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings in the *Ch’an Preface*, each of which he also identifies with a particular brand of Ch’an teaching. The first and least profound corresponds to the type of Yogācāra represented by the Fa-hsiang tradition in China, that which, in Tsung-mi’s terminology, discusses phenomenal appearances (*shuo-hsiang*<sup>af</sup>); Tsung-mi further identifies it as the teaching embodied in

the Northern Ch'an Lineage. It is superseded by the that of Mādhyamika, which uses emptiness to deny the reality of phenomenal appearances (*p'o-hsiang*); Tsung-mi sees this teaching as providing the doctrinal basis of the Ox-Head Lineage. Both of these teachings are characterized as being of "hidden intent" (*mi-i<sup>ag</sup>*), because in neither is the Buddha's ultimate intent revealed. This is one way for Tsung-mi to claim that the first two levels of teaching are *neyārtha* (*pu-liao<sup>ah</sup>*), that is, not those of ultimate meaning. The second, however, is the more profound of the two because it does "intimate" (*mi-hsien<sup>ai</sup>*) it.

According to the true ultimate meaning, since deluded thoughts are intrinsically empty, there is nothing that can be negated. All things, being without defilement, are intrinsically the True Nature, and its Marvelous Functioning-in-accord-with-conditions is not only never interrupted, but also cannot be negated. It is only because a class of sentient beings clings to unreal phenomenal appearances, obscures their True Nature, and has difficulty attaining profound enlightenment that the Buddha provisionally negated everything without distinguishing between good and bad, tainted and pure, or the Nature and its phenomenal appearances. Although he regarded the True Nature and its Marvelous Functioning not to be nonexistent, because he provisionally said they were nonexistent, [these teachings] are designated as being of "hidden intent." Furthermore, though his intention lay in revealing the Nature, because his words thus negated phenomenal appearances and his intent was not expressed in words, they are referred to as "hidden." (407a7-9; K 121)

The third teaching is ultimate because, in contrast to the previous two, it does "directly reveal" (*hsien-shih*) the essence. It is therefore also "sudden" (*tun<sup>aj</sup>*) because it reveals the essence in its immediate reality, whereas the other two are "gradual" (*chien<sup>ak</sup>*) because they only offer a mediated access to the essence through a variety of expedients (*fang-pien*, *upāya*). It is also "sudden" in that it is the only teaching which makes it possible for one to realize the essence of the Mind directly, and such an experience by its very nature must be "sudden" because the Mind itself cannot be grasped through any symbolic mediation.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike those forms of Buddhism, particularly vocal within Ch'an, which held that only negative statements such as "there is nothing whatsoever to be attained" or "neither Mind nor Buddha" were ultimately true, Tsung-mi mounts a forceful argument for the ultimate value of positive religious assertions. Indeed, his contention that the exclusive use of apophatic discourse (*che-ch'üan<sup>al</sup>*) is not the final word in Ch'an is one of the major themes running through the *Ch'an Preface*. "Negation (*che<sup>am</sup>*)," he writes, "means denying what is not the case. Affirmation (*piao<sup>an</sup>*) means revealing (*hsien*) what is the case. . . . Affirmation directly reveals (*chih-shih*) the very essence itself (*tang-t'i<sup>ao</sup>*). . . . The terminology of the teaching tradition which [reveals] the Nature (*hsing-tsung<sup>ap</sup>*) makes use of both negation and affirmation. Exclusive negation is not yet complete (*wei-liao<sup>aq</sup>*, i.e., *neyārtha*) and only hits the mark when it is combined with affirmation" (406b18-c1; K 167).<sup>8</sup>

The passage discussed earlier on the distinction between name and essence concludes on a similar note. Tsung-mi remarks that the first two types of teaching

use negative modes of expression because they fear that words will only become a source of further attachment. As such, they are suited for beginners and those of shallow capacity. The teaching which reveals the Nature, by contrast, is geared to advanced students and those of superior ability: “Because it causes them to forget words and apprehend the essence, a single word directly reveals [the essence].” Tsung-mi then quotes, in his appended note, Bodhidharma as having said: “I directly reveal [the essence] by pointing to a single word” (406c29-407a3; K 170).

The third teaching, in which the essence is directly revealed, thus supersedes the previous two. On the one hand, the first two prepare the way for its apprehension. Since each teaching generically represents a certain level of understanding of the essence, Tsung-mi’s hierarchical arrangement of the teachings at the same time also describes the course of Buddhist practice by delineating the process of advancement through a graduated series of provisional levels of understanding until the ultimate one is finally reached. This is the gradual perspective. On the other hand, the third teaching is also sudden, and by this Tsung-mi means that it makes it possible for those of superior spiritual capacity to realize the essence directly as it is without having to progress through a succession of provisional stages. A person of superior spiritual capacity, moreover, is one who is able “to forget words and apprehend the essence,” and thus for such a person only a single word is necessary to reveal the essence in all of its immediacy.

Tsung-mi thus envisions a “two-track” path of spiritual progress: the first, the gradual, is suited for those of average or lesser capacity while the second, the sudden, is only for those of the highest. The third teaching, as the culmination of the gradual path, thus also has a gradual component, although it is its “sudden” character that Tsung-mi emphasizes. And it is its sudden character that enables the adept to circumvent the gradual path entirely and directly apprehend the Mind itself.

Tsung-mi’s arrangement of the teachings, insofar as it recapitulates the course of spiritual progress, is predicated upon his understanding of the nature and function of religious language. While he does not explicitly articulate a theory of religious language as such, one can, nevertheless, be extrapolated into the following general form. For the teachings which still only approximate the ultimate, the function of language is primarily to overcome the disastrous effects arising out of the confusion of names (*ming*) and essences (*t’i*), that is, language is turned against itself as the principal vehicle of reification. Such a misconception of language is inextricably a part of the basic dichotomizing mode of awareness which divides beings from their True nature. Apophatic language, by calling attention to the unconscious hold that the fundamental structures of language have in determining the forms of experience, thus plays a necessarily therapeutic role in dismantling the false premises upon which deluded thinking is based. Tsung-mi’s ranking of the provisional levels of teaching is accordingly done on a scale of their increasing use of negative modes of discourse, culminating with the

thoroughgoing apophasis of emptiness. Only after one has recognized the emptiness of words, their provisional and arbitrary character as dependent upon convention, can religious language take on a new and potent function. When names are no longer mistaken for essences, then they no longer provide a basis upon which an imaginary reality can be constructed and they are thus free to reveal the essence directly. Such positive use of language could be called, playing on Tsung-mi's own terminology, "revelatory" (*hsien-shih*)—not, of course, meaning by such a term a special kind of language that is sacred because revealed by a more exalted spiritual authority, but language which is able to reveal the essence directly (*hisen-shih*); in other words, language that is so efficacious that it is able, with only a single word, to bring about a direct insight into the very essence itself, at least in the case of persons of the highest spiritual caliber. The primary distinguishing characteristic of the Teaching which Reveals the Nature is that it makes use of such revelatory language. And the paradigm of such language, for Tsung-mi, is the single word "*chih*."

The problem with such a general formulation is that, in several places, Tsung-mi *seems* to be saying that "*chih*" and *only chih* can function as such a revelatory word, and, if that is his position, it raises serious philosophical difficulties for him. On the one hand, he would have to admit that "*chih*" could be mistaken for an ordinary word (or else why did Bodhidharma not utter it?) and so, like all words, must also be empty. Yet, on the other hand, he is stuck with Shen-hui's dictum about "the single word." Although he does not anticipate this problem, I think that, in order to maintain the overall consistency of his thought, he would, if confronted with it, have to acknowledge that such "revelatory" language could not be tied to a specific term. If Tsung-mi's understanding of religious language can be construed in this way, then he is saying something that should be relevant for those interested in the philosophical analysis of mysticism.

### III. THE MEANING OF *CHIH*

So far our discussion of the single word "*chih*" has shown that it is predicated upon Tsung-mi's understanding of the nature and function of religious language and that this understanding provides one of the primary rubrics in terms of which he evaluates the various Buddhist teachings and Ch'an traditions. It is thus no accident that Tsung-mi doctrinally identifies *chih* with the *tathāgatagarbha*, and it is worth noting in passing, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>9</sup> that the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine was important for Tsung-mi precisely because it provided an ontological basis for the use of kataphatic language.

In the *Ch'an Preface* Tsung-mi gives the following characterization of the Teaching which Directly Reveals that the True Mind is the Nature:

This teaching propounds that all sentient beings without exception have the empty, tranquil True Mind. From time without beginning it is the intrinsically pure, effulgent, unobscured, clear and bright ever-present Awareness (*ch'ang-*



*chih*). It will abide forever and never perish on into the infinite future. It is named Buddha-nature; it is also named *tathāgatagarbha* and Mind-Ground. (404b27-c3; K 131)<sup>10</sup>

Tsung-mi goes on to gloss what he means by “ever-present awareness” in a later part of this section (404c28-a12; K 131–132). After stating that it is not the awareness of realization (*cheng-chih*<sup>at</sup>), he says that the True Nature is nevertheless spoken of as aware to indicate that it is different from insentient nature.<sup>11</sup> However, Awareness is neither the mental activity of discrimination (*fen-pieh chih shih*<sup>as</sup>) nor wisdom (*chih*<sup>c</sup>, Mathews #933). For canonical authority he then refers to the Wen-ming (“The Bodhisattvas Ask for Clarification”) chapter of the *Avatamsaka* (see *T* 10.69a),<sup>12</sup> which he claims differentiates between Awareness (*chih*, Mathews #932) and wisdom (*chih*, Mathews #933), pointing out that “wisdom is not shared by the ordinary person (*fan*),” whereas “Awareness is possessed by both the sage (*sheng*) and the ordinary person.”<sup>13</sup> He first quotes Mañjuśrī’s answer to the bodhisattvas’ question, “What is the Wisdom of the realm of Buddhas?”

“The Wisdom of all Buddhas freely [penetrates] the three times without obstruction.” (Since there is nothing within the past, present, and future that is not utterly penetrated, [it is said to be] free and unobstructed.)

He then quotes Mañjuśrī’s answer to the question, “What is the Awareness of the realm of Buddhas?”

“It is not something that can be known by consciousness (*fei shih so neng shih*<sup>at</sup>)” (It cannot be known by consciousness. Consciousness falls within the category of discrimination. “Were it discriminated, it would not be True Awareness.” “True Awareness is only seen in no-thought.”) “nor is it an object of the mind (*i fei hsin ching chieh*<sup>au</sup>.)” (It cannot be known by wisdom. That is to say, if one were to realize it by means of wisdom, then it would fall within the category of an object which is realized, but since True Awareness is not an object, it cannot be realized by wisdom . . . .)<sup>14</sup>

What Tsung-mi thus means by “Awareness” is not a specific cognitive faculty, but the underlying ground of sentience which is always present in all sentient life. It is not some special kind of state of mind or spiritual insight, but the ground of both delusion and enlightenment, ignorance and wisdom, or, as he aptly terms it, the Mind Ground.

Tsung-mi’s use of “*chih*” to designate the *tathāgatagarbha*, and the specific meaning that it has for him in terms of “revelatory” language, gives a decided Ch’an twist to *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. At the same time, it also brings a scholastic dimension back into Ch’an, which the iconoclasm of Shen-hui’s attack on the Northern line of Ch’an had eclipsed. The reconciliation of Ch’an and the more scholastic teachings (*ch’an-chiao i-chih*<sup>av</sup>) was, of course, one of the major objectives to which Tsung-mi devoted the *Ch’an Preface*.

## IV. METAPHOR OF THE MIRROR

Tsung-mi's analysis of the True Mind in the *Ch'an Chart* sheds further light on what he means by ever-present Awareness.

The intrinsic essence of the True Mind (*chen-hsin tzu-t'i<sup>aw</sup>*) has two kinds of functioning: the first is the intrinsic functioning of the self-Nature (*tzu-hsing pen-yung<sup>ax</sup>*) and the second is its responsive functioning-inaccord-with-conditions (*sui-yüan ying-yung<sup>ay</sup>*). (437d4-5; K 336)<sup>15</sup>

Tsung-mi then proceeds to illustrate this statement with an analogy of a bronze mirror.<sup>16</sup>

The material substance of the bronze is the essence of the self-Nature (*tzu-hsing t'i<sup>az</sup>*); the luminous reflectivity (*ming<sup>ba</sup>*) of the bronze is the functioning of the self-Nature (*tzu-hsing yung<sup>bb</sup>*); and the images reflected by its luminous reflectivity are its functioning-inaccord-with-conditions (*sui-yüan yung<sup>bc</sup>*). The images are reflected in direct response to conditions. While the reflections may have thousands of variations, the luminous reflectivity is the ever-present luminous reflectivity of the self-nature. (437d5-7; K 336)

Tsung-mi goes on to explain this analogy: "The ever-present tranquility of the Mind is the essence of the self-Nature, and the ever-present Awareness of the Mind is the functioning of the self-Nature." The psychophysical functions of "speech, discrimination, bodily movement, and so forth are [examples of] its functioning-inaccord-with-conditions" (437d7-8; K 336). The metaphor could be represented diagrammatically as follows:

| MIRROR                | ONTOLOGY                             | MIND                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| bronze                | essence of self-Nature               | ever-present tranquility  |
| luminous reflectivity | functioning of self-Nature           | ever-present Awareness    |
| reflected images      | functioning-inaccord-with-conditions | psycho-physical functions |

This metaphor is worth analyzing in detail. Not only is it based on a more complex understanding of *chih* than that seen earlier in Tsung-mi's discussion of name and essence (wherein *chih* revealed the essence of the Mind rather than merely designating it), but it is also connected with the fundamental structuring ideas of his thought.

The analysis of the structure of the Mind upon which Tsung-mi's use of this metaphor is based derives from the *Awakening of Faith*, which discusses the Mind in terms of two aspects: the Mind as Suchness (*hsin chen-ju<sup>bd</sup>*) and the Mind which is Subject to Birth-and-Death (*hsin sheng-mieh<sup>be</sup>*). Following Fa-tsang, Tsung-mi characterizes these two aspects of the Mind as absolute (*pu-pien<sup>bf</sup>*,

literally, “unchanging”) and conditioned (*sui-yüan*<sup>bs</sup>). These two aspects of the Mind, in turn, trace back to the two different perspectives in terms of which the *tathāgatagarbha* was traditionally discussed: seen in its true form the *tathāgatagarbha* is none other than the Dharmakāya, which is intrinsically pure and devoid of all defilements; seen, however, through the deluded perception of sentient beings it appears to be defiled.

The absolute and conditioned aspects of the Mind, as Tsung-mi understands them, conform to the conceptual paradigm of essence (*t’i*<sup>u</sup>) and function (*yung*<sup>bh</sup>). What is interesting and unique about Tsung-mi’s analysis, however, is that he also views the absolute aspect of the Mind in terms of its essence and function. Accordingly, tranquility (*chi*) refers to the essence of the self-Nature of the Mind, and Awareness, to its functioning. As Tsung-mi writes, “‘Tranquil’ refers to the invariable steadfastness of the real essence, the principle of immovability and immutability. . . . Were there no essence of the True Mind, what could be said to be tranquil and what could be said to be immovable and immutable?” (*Yüan-chüeh ching lüeh-shu ch’ao*, at ZZ 1/15/2.97b8-10). Awareness is a “direct manifestation of the very essence itself” (*tang-t’i piao-hsien*<sup>bi</sup>) (97b11). “Tranquility is the Awareness which is tranquil, and Awareness is the tranquility which is aware. Tranquility is the essence of the self-Nature which is aware, and Awareness is the functioning of the self-Nature which is tranquil” (97b12-14). Tsung-mi then calls upon the authority of Shen-hui to clinch the point that the essence of the Mind and its functioning are only different modes of one another: “Ho-tse said, ‘The functioning of the essence is aware in and of itself and the essence of this Awareness is tranquil in and of itself. Although the terms are different, essence and function form a unity.’” (97b18-c1).<sup>17</sup>

The importance of Tsung-mi’s application of the essence/function (*t’i-yung*) paradigm to the absolute aspect of the Mind is that it allows him to distinguish between two different orders of functioning: the intrinsic functioning of the self-Nature and its responsive functioning-inaccord-with-conditions. The functioning of the self-Nature, like the luminous reflectivity of a mirror, is absolute in that it is ever-present and not contingent upon conditions: it exists in and of itself. It is in this sense that it is characterized as *pen*<sup>bj</sup>, “intrinsic,” in contrast to the functioning-inaccord-with-conditions, which is causally contingent and hence characterized as *ying*<sup>bk</sup>, “responsive.” Moreover, just as the luminous reflectivity of the mirror is able to reflect both pure and impure images without its intrinsically pure and luminous nature being affected, so too the Mind is able to respond to pure and impure conditioning without its intrinsically pure and enlightened nature being affected. The functioning-inaccord-with-conditions, on the other hand, is what could be called a second order functioning. It involves two levels of contingency. Not only do the psychophysical functions, like the reflected images in a mirror, only become activated in response to stimuli, they are also dependent upon the Mind as their ontological ground, just as images could not be reflected in the absence of a mirror. The psychophysical functions are thus, in an impor-

tant sense, epiphenomena (*mo*<sup>bl</sup>) of ever-present Awareness. The difference between these two kinds of functioning could thus be represented as follows:

| FUNCTIONING OF<br>SELF-NATURE | FUNCTIONING-IN-ACCORD-<br>WITH-CONDITIONS |
|-------------------------------|---|
| eternal                       | transient                                 |
| unchanging                    | variable                                  |
| unconditioned                 | conditioned                               |
| absolute                      | relative                                  |
| primary ( <i>pen</i> )        | derivative ( <i>mo</i> )                  |

These two different orders of functioning also reflect two different levels of “causality.” The first has to do with the sequence of causes and conditions whereby each thing or event arises or occurs contingent upon a series of other things or events, which, in turn, are contingent upon yet other things or events. In terms of Tsung-mi’s metaphor, the various images that are reflected in the mirror are contingent upon the different objects that appear before it, those objects themselves ultimately being contingent upon an infinite series of causes and conditions. It is just this order of contingency that is accounted for in the well-known Buddhist doctrine of conditioned origination (*yüan-ch’i*<sup>bm</sup>; *pratīyasa-mutpāda*). However, as the metaphor has already suggested, there is another kind of causality, one which makes the first possible. This is what, in the Hua-yen tradition that Tsung-mi inherited, is referred to as “Nature Origination” (*hsing-ch’i*<sup>bn</sup>). Quoting Fa-tsang (see *T* 45.639b20–21), Tsung-mi defines Nature Origination as “the arising of functioning based on the essence” (*Hua-yen ching hsing-yüan p’in shu ch’ao*, at *ZZ* 1/7/4.399c16–17). “Nature,” he explains, refers to the One Mind of the *Awakening of Faith*, “the pure Mind that is the ultimate source of Buddhas and sentient beings” (399b6 and c5). “Origination” refers to the manifestation of the manifold phenomena of the universe from the Nature, the process of phenomenal appearance (399c5–6). “Nature” means “the Nature of the essence” (*t’i-hsiang*<sup>bo</sup>), and “origination,” “the phenomenal appearance of the essence” (*t’i-hsiang*<sup>bp</sup>) (399b16–17). In addition to the essence/function paradigm, Tsung-mi defines Nature origination in terms of yet another polarity, that of Nature (*hsing*<sup>ba</sup>) and its phenomenal appearances (*hsiang*<sup>br</sup>), which is basic to the structure of his thought. Nature origination thus means that all phenomenal appearances are ultimately based upon the Nature, whereas conditioned origination connotes the relative interdependency of all phenomenal appearances. While each and every phenomenal appearance is conditioned by every other phenomenal appearance, it is simultaneously also grounded upon the Nature, which is its ultimate source.

The two different levels of causality could be visualized as a cone. The circular surface of the cone (the directrix) would represent the dimension of conditioned origination (*yüan-ch’i*), in which every point is connected with every other point in a causal series. Since the position of each point is conditioned by that of every

other point, each point could be said to be infinitely contingent. The individual points, moreover, represent the infinite variety of phenomenal appearances (*hsiang*). Each phenomenal appearance, however, in addition to being conditioned by all others, is also a manifestation of the Nature (*hsing*), which, in the image of the cone, would be represented by the vertex. Not only is each point on the directrix serially linked with every other point on the directrix, it is at the same time also linked with the vertex, just as all phenomenal appearances are simultaneously interdependent and a manifestation of the Nature, which is their ultimate ground. The direct and simultaneous linkage of each point of the directrix with the vertex represents the dimension of Nature origination (*hsing-ch'i*)—what, in the geometrical terminology of this image, is aptly termed the generatrix. (See drawing on page 269.)

The significance of Nature origination as a causal model is that phenomenal appearances only have reality insofar as they are manifestations of the Nature. When they are taken as real in themselves, they become the basis for deluded attachment. Only when they are seen as empty, as lacking any intrinsic reality, can they be seen as manifestations of the Nature and their ultimate reality be understood. The import of Nature origination is thus both ontological and soteriological: the ontological structure of reality that it describes is at once a soteriological map. And Awareness, as the functioning of self-Nature, occupies the nodal point in this model. Awareness is the ontological ground of phenomenal appearances, which only have reality as manifestations of the Nature. It is the underlying basis of all mental states. In this way enlightenment and delusion are only changing reflections on the surface of Awareness, *prajñā* and discrimination being only different phenomenal appearances. Suzuki's *prajñā*-intuition and Hu's intellectual knowledge thus belong to an entirely different order of reality than Awareness; they are modes of its responsive functioning-inaccord-with-conditions rather than the functioning of the self-Nature (see *Yüan-chüeh ching ta-shu ch'ao*, at ZZ 1/14/3.213b6–7). In the terms of the *Awakening of Faith*, from which Tsung-mi's interpretation of Nature origination derives, Awareness would correspond to intrinsic enlightenment (*pen-chüeh*<sup>bs</sup>). The "luminous reflectivity" in Tsung-mi's use of the metaphor of the mirror translates "*ming*," a word that doctrinally plays on *wu-ming*<sup>bt</sup>, ignorance (Sanskrit, *avidyā*), and hence serves as an appropriate metaphorical term for intrinsic enlightenment.

Awareness, as the functioning of the self-Nature, thus represents the dynamic, creative aspect of the Nature. It is therefore important to note that the word "*chih*" is primarily verbal, meaning "to know." Even when it is used nominally, as it is by Tsung-mi, its verbal force is still retained. That which "*chih*" refers to, then, is an activity rather than a thing. For this reason it is preferable to the word "Mind" (*hsin*), which, as a noun, is more apt to be reified. The English word "knowing," accordingly, might seem to be a better translation of "*chih*," as it more faithfully represents both the literal meaning and verbal character of the Chinese word. The problem with "knowing," as a translation, however, is that,

in English, the verb “to know” is transitive and demands an object. But Tsung-mi emphasizes the fact that “*chih*” is intransitive and does not demand an object. And “Awareness,” insofar as it is possible to be aware without necessarily being aware of *anything*, better expresses the intransitive character of “*chih*.”

#### V. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Tsung-mi introduced the metaphor of the mirror in the *Ch'an Chart* to make explicit the differences between the Ho-tse and Hung-chou lines of Southern Ch'an and to demonstrate the superiority of the former. This work was written at the behest of Tsung-mi's influential lay disciple P'ei Hsiu (?787–860) to clarify the historical filiations and essential teachings of four of the major Ch'an traditions of the day. While Tsung-mi accordingly deals with the Northern and Ox-Head lines of Ch'an in that work, he is most concerned with that of Hung-chou as representing the most serious challenge to the tradition with which he identified himself, that of Ho-tse Shen-hui. Since both the Northern and Ox-Head lineages claimed descent from the fifth and fourth patriarchs, respectively, and, by the 830s when he composed the *Ch'an Chart*, it had been generally accepted that Hui-neng had succeeded to the title of Sixth Patriarch, they represented collateral lines and thus, in terms of their historical filiation, did not pose a threat to the orthodoxy of the Southern Ch'an to which the Ho-tse lineage belonged. Hung-chou, however, also claimed descent from Hui-neng and thus boasted better credentials. Moreover, by the fourth decade of the ninth century the Northern and Ox-Head lines were no longer vital traditions within Ch'an. The Hung-chou line, however, inspired by the dynamic personality and teaching style of Ma-tsu Tao-i (709–788), had come to represent a new and ascendent force within Ch'an. Nor, in terms of their teachings, did the Northern and Ox-Head lines pose the same danger for Tsung-mi as did Hung-chou. Within the doctrinal analysis that he elaborated in his *Ch'an Preface*, the teaching of the Northern line of Ch'an was identified with the Fa-hsiang brand of Yogācāra and that of the Ox-Head line with Mādhyamika. The criticism that Tsung-mi had leveled against the first and second categories of Mahāyāna teachings in that work consequently applied to them as well. He had, however, placed the Hung-chou line together with that of Ho-tse under the rubric of the third and highest category of teaching.

Tsung-mi's emphasis on the single word “Awareness” as hallmark of Shen-hui's teaching singled out precisely that which for him most clearly distinguished the teaching of the Ho-tse line from the teachings of the contending Ch'an lines, which he considers in the *Ch'an Chart*. Moreover, the fact that his most detailed analysis of this crucial term occurs within a metaphor whose explicit purpose is to contrast the Ho-tse and the Hung-chou understanding of Ch'an suggests that one of the reasons that Tsung-mi fixed on this term was that it served not only to differentiate his brand of Ch'an from that of Hung-chou, but also to clarify exactly wherein it was superior.

To understand what was at stake for Tsung-mi, we must first examine his

perception of the import of the Hung-chou teaching. He presents the following characterization of it in the *Ch'an Chart*:

The arising of mental activity, the movement of thought, snapping the fingers, or moving the eyes, all actions and activities are the functioning of the entire essence of the Buddha-nature. Since there is no other kind of functioning, greed, anger, and folly, the performance of good and bad actions, and the experiencing of their pleasurable and painful consequences are all, in their entirety, Buddha-nature. . . . If one examines the nature of its essence thoroughly, he will see that ultimately it can neither be perceived nor realized just as the eye cannot see itself, etc. If one considers its responsive functioning, he will see that everything that he does is [the functioning of the Buddha-nature] and that there is nothing else that can either realize it or be realized. . . . One should not rouse the mind either to cut off evil or to cultivate the Way. Since the Way itself is the Mind, one cannot use the Mind to cultivate the Mind. Since evil is also the Mind, one cannot use the Mind to cut off the Mind. One who neither cuts off [evil] nor does [good] but freely accepts things as they come is called a liberated person. There is no dharma that can be clung to nor any Buddhahood that can be attained. . . . Simply allowing the mind to act spontaneously is cultivation. (435d4–6, 16–8, 436a4–7, 8–9; K 307)

In terms of the analysis of empty tranquil Awareness that Tsung-mi develops in his use of the metaphor of the mirror, the fault of the Hung-chou line is that it does not apprehend the functioning of the self-Nature, but merely that of its responsive functioning-inaccord-with-conditions (437d10–1; K 136). This is tantamount to saying that the Hung-chou teaching mistakes the reflections in the mirror for its luminous reflectivity. To put it in other terms, it mistakes the variegated and ever changing phenomenal appearances of the Nature for the Nature itself. As far as Tsung-mi is concerned, this is a dangerously antinomian view, for it does away with any basis for drawing moral distinctions between good and bad courses of action. Since it validates all the different activities that one engages in every day (436a11; K 308), it can be seen as undermining the purpose of religious practice. If the three poisons of greed, anger, and folly are nothing but the expression of Buddha-nature, what need is there to uproot them?

The force of this criticism is brought out in Tsung-mi's use of a variation of the metaphor of the mirror that he also employs in the *Ch'an Chart*. Here he uses a *mani* jewel<sup>18</sup> to represent the One Numinous Mind (*i-ling-hsin*<sup>bu</sup>); its perfectly pure, luminous reflectivity, empty tranquil Awareness; and its complete lack of coloration, the fact that this Awareness is intrinsically without any differentiated manifestations. "Because the essence [of the jewel] is luminously reflective, whenever it comes into contact with external objects, it is able to reflect all of their different colors." Likewise, "because the essence [of the Mind] is aware, whenever it comes into contact with conditions, it is able to differentiate them all into good and bad, pleasurable and unpleasurable, as well as produce the manifold variety of mundane and supermundane phenomena. This is its conditioned aspect (*sui-yüan-i*<sup>bv</sup>)." Tsung-mi continues, "Even though the [reflected] colors are themselves distinct, the luminously reflective jewel never changes." And he

comments, in his interpolated note, “Even though ignorance and wisdom, good and bad, are themselves distinct, and anguish and joy, love and hate arise and perish of themselves, the Mind which is capable of Awareness is never interrupted. This its absolute aspect (*pu-pien-i<sup>bw</sup>*)” (436c17–d3; K 322).

Tsung-mi then considers the case of when the *mani* jewel comes into contact with something black: its entire surface appears black, just as the intrinsically enlightened nature of the Mind appears totally obscured by the presence of ignorance (436d3–7; K 322). Tsung-mi claims that proponents of the Hung-chou line would maintain that the very blackness itself is the jewel and that its essence can never be seen. Because such people do not apprehend the luminously reflective jewel, when they see something black of similar size and shape, they misidentify it as the *mani* jewel. If, however, they were to see the *mani* jewel as it is in itself when it is not reflecting any colors at all, they would not be able to recognize it. Tsung-mi goes on to explain that the state in which the jewel is not reflecting any colors means “being without thoughts” (*wu so-nien<sup>bx</sup>*). When only its luminous reflectivity is in evidence, furthermore, this refers to “the absence of thought which is thoroughly aware in and of itself” (*liao-liao tzu-chih wu-nien<sup>by</sup>*) (436d13–337a4; K 326).<sup>19</sup>

Tsung-mi’s case rests upon his claim that the luminously reflective jewel can be seen in itself when it is not reflecting any colors. While it is unclear in phenomenological terms precisely in what such a direct perception of the Nature might consist, it is important to note that Tsung-mi connects such a perception with No-thought (*wu-nien<sup>bz</sup>*). We have already seen that earlier, in his quotation from the Wen-ming chapter of the *Avatamsaka*, he had quoted Ch’eng-kuan’s comment that “true Awareness can only be seen in no-thought” (*chen-chih wei wu-nien fang chien<sup>ca</sup>*). In addition to representing the method by which the Nature is directly apprehended, No-thought also represents the intrinsic condition of the Nature, which is devoid (*k’ung*) of all phenomenal appearances (*hsiang*), just as the *Awakening of Faith* characterizes the intrinsically enlightened Mind as being without thoughts. It is this ontological dimension of No-thought that is behind Tsung-mi’s characterization of Awareness as being “empty” in the phrase “empty tranquil Awareness.” Although Tsung-mi does not clarify further what he means by the practice of No-thought, what is important to note here is that it is his claim, that a direct perception of the Nature is not only possible but necessary, that distinguishes the Ho-tse line from that of Hung-chou—and such a direct perception of the Nature is what, for Tsung-mi, Sudden Enlightenment (*tun-wu<sup>cb</sup>*) is all about. Elsewhere he claims that the Hung-chou line, in contradistinction to that of Ho-tse, only has inferential knowledge (*pi-liang<sup>cc</sup>*; *anumāna*) but not direct perception (*hsien-liang<sup>cd</sup>*; *pratyakṣa*) of the Nature (437d11–2; K 336). And it is because it does not have a direct perception of it that it can mistake something else for the Nature. This means, for Tsung-mi, that followers of the Hung-chou line have no clear assurance that their insight is true and, accordingly, their practice of “simply allowing the mind to act spontaneously” can



become a rationalization for deluded activity. Tsung-mi thus not only charges them with failing to understand the meaning of Sudden Enlightenment, but also with not recognizing the necessity of the subsequent gradual cultivation, in which the deeply rooted habitual conditioning that keeps one from integrating his insight into the Nature throughout all dimensions of his personality and behavior is progressively extirpated (see 438a18–b3; K 341).

If Tsung-mi's emphasis on Awareness can be seen, at least in part, as a reaction against what he perceived as the overly radical character of other forms of Ch'an, then, given the centrality of Awareness within his thought as a whole, it further suggests that his reevaluation of some of the basic tenets of Hua-yen thought also had its impetus in his response to developments within the Ch'an of his day.<sup>20</sup> While Tsung-mi is noted for his infusion of Ch'an into Hua-yen, it might perhaps be more accurate to characterize him as a conservative Ch'an figure who adapted Hua-yen thought as a hedge against more extreme Ch'an movements of the late eight and early ninth centuries.<sup>21</sup> Certainly one of the reasons that Hua-yen appealed to Tsung-mi was that it provided an ontological rationale for Ch'an practice, and that was precisely wherein the Hung-chou teaching was lacking.

Despite Tsung-mi's efforts to uphold the orthodoxy of Shen-hui's line of Ch'an, it was the teaching and style of the Hung-chou line that triumphed historically. Tsung-mi was the fifth and last "patriarch" within the Ho-tse tradition. Shortly after his death in 841, the Hui-ch'ang Persecution sealed the demise of the Ho-tse line of Ch'an once and for all. After the persecution, his devoted disciple P'ei-hsiu became Prime Minister and labored to resurrect the fortunes of Buddhism. He also became a disciple of Huang-po Hsi-yün (d. 850?), a forceful master in the Hung-chou line and teacher of Lin-chi I-hsüan (d. 866). Huang-po's collected sermons and dialogues were recorded by none other than Tsung-mi's former disciple, P'ei Hsiu, a fact that can be taken as symbolizing the failure of the Ho-tse line to perpetuate itself as a living Ch'an tradition and the attendant shift towards a more radical form of Ch'an teaching.

The Rinzai (Chinese, Lin-chi) tradition of Japanese Zen developed out of the Hung-chou line of Chinese Ch'an. Thus it should perhaps be no surprise that the account that D. T. Suzuki, as a modern interpreter of that tradition, gives of "*chih*" does not reflect Tsung-mi's understanding of the term. Suzuki's position, however, represents only one of the possibilities that could have developed out of the various alternatives that were available in eighth- and ninth-century China. Even though Tsung-mi's portrayal of the Ch'an of that time is colored by his own sectarian filiation, it is valuable insofar as it gives us a far more textured understanding of the range of possibilities still open to the Ch'an of the latter T'ang than does the more doctrinaire account of Suzuki. While Tsung-mi's more ontological point of view did not prevail within Ch'an, it did, ironically, survive within Neo-Confucianism. Chu Hsi's criticism of the Buddhist understanding of "Nature" (*hsing*), for instance, merely recapitulates Tsung-mi's criticism of the Hung-chou line—but that is a topic for another paper.

## NOTES

The two texts of Tsung-mi from which I have drawn most heavily in writing this article are his *Preface to the Collected Writings on the Source of Ch'an* (*Ch'an-yüan chu-ch'üan-chi tu-hsü*) and *Chart of the Master-Disciple Succession of the Ch'an Gate Which Has Transmitted the Mind Ground In China* (*Chung-hua ch'uan-hsin-ti Ch'an-men shih-tzu ch'eng-hsi t'u*), which I refer to respectively throughout as the *Ch'an Preface* and *Ch'an Chart*. Both texts have been edited, annotated, and translated into modern Japanese by Kamata Shigeo in vol. 9 of the *Zen no goroku* series under the general editorship of Iriye Yoshitaka (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1971). In addition to the *Taishō* and *Zokuzōkyō* editions of the texts, I will refer to Kamata's edition as "K" in my citations from them. Tsung-mi's interpolated comments appear in parenthesis. In preparing my translation of the various passages that I quote from Tsung-mi I have consulted those previously done by other scholars. Jeffrey L. Broughton's 1975 Columbia University Ph.D. dissertation, "Kuei-feng Tsung-mi: The Convergence of Ch'an and the Teachings," includes a complete translation of the *Ch'an Preface*. Jan Yun-hua's "Tsung-mi: His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism" (*T'oung Pao* 58 (1972): 1–53) also contains translations of some of the passages to which I refer. The best of the translations I have consulted are those done by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., in his *The Korean Approach to Zen* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1983). I hereby acknowledge my debt to the efforts of these scholars. Nevertheless, all translations appearing within the article are my own. I would also like to thank Michael Sells and Alan Sponberg for their helpful comments on an early draft of this paper.

1. This famous sentence, of course, derives from the end of the first chapter of the *Lao Tzu*. It does not appear in any of Shen-hui's extant writings. It is quoted by Ch'eng-kuan, who attributes it to a Ch'an Master "south of the river" (*sui-nan*<sup>cc</sup>) without, however, specifying Shen-hui by name (*T* 36.262a5–6). To my knowledge, Tsung-mi is the first to attribute it explicitly to Shen-hui. I am not particularly fond of Hu Shih's translation, although, except for the all important term "*chih*," I will not quibble with it here, other than to point out that Tsung-mi seems to understand the word "*men*<sup>cf</sup>" to mean "the gate *from* which all mysteries (*miao*<sup>8</sup>) issue" (as indicated by his substitution of "*yüan*" for "*men*" in the passage from the *Ch'an Chart* quoted later) rather than "the gate *through* which we gain access to them," as Hu seems to understand it.

2. "Here *chih* means *prajñā*-intuition and not 'knowledge' in the ordinary sense. When *chih* is rendered—as it is by Hu Shih—as 'knowledge,' all is lost, not only Shen-hui and Hui-neng but also Zen itself" ("A Reply to Hu Shih," p. 28). While acknowledging that *prajñā*-intuition "defies being defined, for definition means ideation and objectification," Suzuki does, nevertheless, go on to characterize it as "the consciousness of the self, where there is no subject-object separation, but where subject is object and object is subject" (p.32).

3. See *Yüan-chieh ching ta-shu ch'ao*, at ZZ 1/14/3.277c–280a. Tsung-mi does not quote Shen-hui's famous dictum in his account of his teaching in this section of his subcommentary.

4. "*Chih*" does not seem to have the paramount importance or technical meaning for Shen-hui that it does for Tsung-mi. My impression is that Tsung-mi's understanding of "*chih*" owes more to Ch'eng-kuan's "*ling-chih pu-mei*" ("numinous Awareness unobscured"), with all of its *tathāgatagarbha* overtones, than it does to Shen-hui's use of the term.

5. My translation of the two sentences beginning with "When it is deluded" and ending with "but Awareness is not [these] supernormal powers" is based on an emendation. The ZZ text reads: "*Mei-shih fan-nao i chih fei fan-nao. Wu-shih shen-pien i chih, chih fei shen-pien*<sup>ch</sup>." The otherwise perfect symmetry of these two sentences demands that the first be emended, as Kamata does, to read "*Mei-shih fan-nao i chih, chih fei fan-nao*<sup>ci</sup>" to parallel the second, or that one of the two "*chih*" in the second sentence be deleted to parallel its single occurrence in the first. I have followed the latter reading, basing myself on Chinul's quotation of this passage in his *Pōpchip pyōrhaeng nok chōryo pyōngip sagi* (Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Kōrai hon: Zemmon satsuyō; Zengen shosenshū tojo; Hōjū betsuyō roku setsuyō* (Kyoto: Chūbun Shuppansha, 1974), p. 151): "*Mei-shih fan-nao chih fei fan-nao. Wu-shih shen-pien chih fei shen-pien*<sup>ci</sup>." This is also the same form in which the two sentences are quoted in Hsien-yen's *Hua-yen ching t'an-hsüan chüeh-shih*, at ZZ 1/11/5.437b8–9.

6. The parallel passage in the *Ch'an Preface*, at T 48.402c27–c2; K 95.

6. Tsung-mi's analogy is based on the famous metaphor of the water and waves from the *Awakening of Faith* (see T 32.576c). Tsung-mi uses this metaphor later on in the *Ch'an Chart* to illustrate sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation (see K 340–341; the passage is

missing from the ZZ text and Kamata has included it from Chinul's *Pōpchip pyōrhaeng nok chōryo pyōngip sagi*).

7. Tsung-mi's identification of the sudden teaching with kataphasis is unusual, if not unique. In the sudden/gradual debates, subitism was typically associated with apophasis (see my "The Sudden/Gradual Polarity: A Recurrent Theme in Chinese Thought," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 9 (1982): 471–486). I have discussed Tsung-mi's interpretation of the sudden teaching (*tun-chiao*) at length in "The Place of the Sudden Teaching within the Hua-yen Tradition: An Investigation of the Process of Doctrinal Change," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 6, no. 1 (1983): 31–60. For a discussion of Tsung-mi's explanation of sudden enlightenment (*tun-wu*), see my "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation," in Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *The Sudden/Gradual Polarity in Chinese Thought* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, forthcoming).

8. Tsung-mi makes the same point in the *Ch'an Chart*:

Question: According to what is set forth in the Mahāyāna scriptures, the Ch'an teachings of the various ancient and contemporary lineages, as well as Ho-tse [Shen-hui], the Nature (*li-hsing*) is in all cases the same: it is without birth and destruction, without construction and phenomenal appearance, without sage and ordinary person, without right and wrong; it can be neither realized nor expressed. If one just relies upon this as true, then what need is there to talk about numinous Awareness (*ling-chih*)?

Answer: These are all examples of negative discourse (*che-ch'uan*) and do not yet directly reveal the essence of the Mind. If I did not point to the direct revelation that this clear and bright ever-present Awareness which is unobscured is your own Mind at this very moment, what could I say is without construction and phenomenal appearance, etc? We thus know that the various teachings just say that it is this Awareness that is without birth and destruction, etc. Thus Ho-tse [Shen-hui] directly revealed the awareness and vision within the empty state of being without phenomenal appearances to enable people to apprehend it; then they would become aware (*ch'ieh*<sup>84</sup>) that it is their own mind that passes through lifetime after lifetime eternally uninterrupted until they attain Buddhahood. Moreover, Ho-tse summed up such expressions as unconstructed, nonabiding, inexpressible, etc., by simply speaking of the empty tranquil Awareness which includes them all. "Empty" means empty of all phenomenal appearances and is still a negative term. "Tranquil" just indicates the principle of the immutability of the True Nature and is not the same as nothingness. "Awareness" indicates the revelation of the very essence and is not the same as discrimination. These alone constitute the intrinsic essence of the True Mind. (437b7–18; K 332–333)

9. "Chinese Buddhist Hermeneutics: The Case of Hua-yen," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 51 (1983): 231–249.

10. Cf. the almost identical characterization in Tsung-mi's *Yüan jen lun*, at T 45.710a11–13.

11. Cf. Ch'eng-kuan's subcommentary, *Hua-yen ching sui-shu yen-i ch'ao*, at T 36.261b17.

12. The importance of this passage for Tsung-mi is indicated by the frequency with which he refers to it in passages which seek to clarify the significance of Awareness. See, for example, *Ch'an Chart*, 437c14 (K336); *Yüan-ch'ieh ching ta-shu ch'ao*, at ZZ 1/14/3.213b2–3; and *Yüan-ch'ieh ching lüeh-shu ch'ao*, at ZZ 1/15/2.97c3–4.

13. Tsung-mi makes the same point in the *Ch'an Preface*, 406b8–9 (K 163).

14. The two sentences in quotation marks within Tsung-mi's comment are taken from Ch'eng-kuan's commentary and subcommentary, respectively (see T 35.612b27 and T 36.261b22).

15. Tsung-mi draws the same distinction between these two types of functioning in his discussion of Awareness in his *Yüan-ch'ieh ching ta-shu ch'ao*, at ZZ 1/14/3.213b5–8; and *Yüan-ch'ieh ching lüeh-shu ch'ao*, at ZZ 1/15/2.97c5–9.

16. In the ninth century when Tsung-mi wrote, the metaphor of the mirror already had a long history within both Buddhism and the indigenous strands of Chinese thought, as Paul Demiéville and Alex Wayman have ably demonstrated. See "Le miroir spirituel," *Sinologica* 1 (1947): 112–137 (reprinted in *Choix d'études bouddiques* by E. J. Brill in 1973), and "The Mirror as a Pan-Buddhist Metaphor-Simile," *History of Religions* 13 (1974): 251–269. It is perhaps most well known in the famous exchange of verses that *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* ascribes to Hui-neng and Shen-hsiu in their contest for the Ch'an patriarchate (see the translation done by Philip B. Yampolsky (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 130 and 132).

17. Cf. the parallel passages in *Yüan-ch'ieh ching ta-shu ch'ao*, at ZZ 1/14/3.213c7–18.

18. Tsung-mi's analogy probably derives from the *Yüan-ch'ieh ching* passage at T 17.914c6. For his commentary on this passage see *Yüan-ch'ieh ching ta-shu*, at ZZ 1/14/2.145c11–d12; and *Yüan-ch'ieh*

*ching lüeh-shu*, at T 39.541c4–24. See also the passages immediately following the two referred to in note 15.

19. Tsung-mi also applies the metaphor to the Northern and Ox-Head lines. He maintains that proponents of the Northern line of Ch'an would hold that the true, luminously reflective nature of the jewel can only be seen after the blackness has been completely removed. He criticizes this view as based on the erroneous belief that the Nature and its phenomenal appearance are totally unrelated. In other words, it overlooks Nature origination, according to which phenomenal appearances are manifestations of the Nature (see 436d11–13; K 322). Proponents of the Ox-Head line of Ch'an, on the other hand, would hold that just as the blackness of the jewel is empty, so too must be the entire essence of the jewel. "Such people do not realize that precisely where it is altogether empty of the phenomenal appearance of color lies the jewel which is not empty." This view does not recognize the non-empty aspect of the *tathāgatagarbha*, which is tranquil (*chi*) and aware (*chih*) (see 437a4–11; K 327–328).

20. For example, it is well known that Tsung-mi valued *li-shih wu-ai*<sup>a1</sup> over *shih-shih wu-ai*<sup>cm</sup>. If *li* can be correlated with Nature (*hsing*) and *shih*, with phenomenal appearance (*hsiang*), then *li-shih wu-ai* could be correlated with Nature origination (*yüan-ch'i*). Just as Tsung-mi includes both within the highest category of teaching, so he also includes the Ho-tse and Hung-chou lines of Ch'an. The Ho-tse teaching, moreover, is based on Nature origination, and that of Hung-chou, with its emphasis on the responsive functioning of the Nature, would seem to correlate with conditioned origination.

21. Yanagida Seizan has shown how Tsung-mi's conservative Ch'an stance was a reaction against various radical developments in Szechwan. See his "The Li-tai fa-pao chi and the Ch'an Doctrine of Sudden Awakening," translated by Carl W. Bielefeldt, in Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet* (Berkeley, California: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1983), pp. 13–49. Ma-tsu, like Tsung-mi, came from Szechwan.

|   |          |    |       |    |      |
|---|----------|----|-------|----|------|
| a | 知        | z  | 示     | ay | 隨緣應用 |
| b | 知之一字衆妙之門 | aa | 直指    | az | 自性體  |
| c | 智        | ab | 顯示    | ba | 明    |
| d | 分別       | ac | 事相    | bb | 自性用  |
| e | 靈知       | ad | 破相    | bc | 隨緣用  |
| f | 靈知不昧     | ae | 隱密    | bd | 心眞如  |
| g | 常知       | af | 說相    | be | 心生滅  |
| h | 空寂〔之〕知   | ag | 密意    | bf | 不變   |
| i | 源        | ah | 不了    | bg | 隨緣   |
| j | 眞性       | ai | 密顯    | bh | 用    |
| k | 心地       | aj | 頓     | bi | 當體表顯 |
| l | 如來藏      | ak | 漸     | bj | 本    |
| m | 顯示眞心即性教  | al | 遮詮    | bk | 應    |
| n | 心        | am | 遮     | bl | 末    |
| o | 緣        | an | 表     | bm | 緣起   |
| p | 了了自知     | ao | 當體    | bn | 性起   |
| q | 印        | ap | 性宗    | bo | 體性   |
| r | 心印       | aq | 未了    | bp | 體相   |
| s | 方便       | ar | 證知    | bq | 性    |
| t | 名        | as | 分別之識  | br | 相    |
| u | 體        | at | 非識所能識 | bs | 本覺   |
| v | 濕        | au | 亦非心境界 | bt | 無明   |
| w | 凡        | av | 禪教一致  | bu | 一靈心  |
| x | 聖        | aw | 眞心自體  | bv | 隨緣義  |
| y | 顯        | ax | 自性本用  | bw | 不變義  |

- bx 無所念
- by 了了自知無念
- bz 無念
- ca 真知唯無念方見
- cb 頓悟
- cc 比量
- cd 顯量
- ce 水南

- cf 門
- cg 妙
- ch 迷時煩惱亦知非煩惱  
悟時神變亦知非神變
- ci 迷時煩惱亦知非煩惱
- cj 迷時煩惱知非煩惱  
悟時神變知非神變
- ck 覺
- cl 理事無礙
- cm 事事無礙

