

# MONKS, RULERS, AND LITERATI

The Political Ascendancy  
of Chan Buddhism



ALBERT WELTER

# Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism

**Albert Welter**



## **Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism:**

**Monks, Rulers, and Literati : The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism** Asian Religions University of Winnipeg  
Albert Welter Professor, 2006-01-11 The Chan Zen in Japanese school began when in seventh century China a small religious community gathered around a Buddhist monk named Hongren Over the centuries Chan Buddhism grew from an obscure movement to an officially recognized and eventually dominant form of Buddhism in China and throughout East Asia It has reached international popularity its teachings disseminated across cultures far and wide In Monks Rulers and Literati Albert Welter presents for the first time in a comprehensive fashion in a Western work the story of the rise of Chan a story which has been obscured by myths about Zen Zen apologists in the twentieth century Welter argues sold the world on the story of Zen as a transcendental spiritualism untainted by political and institutional involvements In fact Welter shows that the opposite is true relationships between Chan monks and political rulers were crucial to Chan s success The book concentrates on an important but neglected period of Chan history the 10th and 11th centuries when monks and rulers created the so called Chan golden age and the classic principles of Chan identity Placing Chan s ascendancy into historical context Welter analyzes the social and political factors that facilitated Chan s success as a movement He then examines how this success was represented in the Chan narrative and the aims of those who shaped it Monks Rulers and Literati recovers a critical period of Zen s past deepening our understanding of how the movement came to flourish Welter s groundbreaking work is not only the most comprehensive history of the dominant strand of East Asian Buddhism but also an important corrective to many of the stereotypes about Zen Monks, Rulers, and Literati Albert Welter, 2006 Over the centuries Chan Buddhism has grown from an obscure movement to an officially recognised and eventually dominant form of Buddhism in China and East Asia In this book the author presents the story of the rise of Chan a story which has been obscured by myths about Zen

Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu Albert Welter, 2011-04-26 Yongming Yanshou ranks among the great thinkers of the Chinese and East Asian Buddhist traditions one whose legacy has endured for more than a thousand years Albert Welter offers new insight into the significance of Yanshou and his major work the Zongjing lu by showing their critical role in the contested Buddhist and intellectual territories of the Five Dynasties and early Song dynasty China Welter gives a comprehensive study of Yanshou s life showing how Yanshou s Buddhist identity has been and continues to be disputed He also provides an in depth examination of the Zongjing lu connecting it to Chan debates ongoing at the time of its writing This analysis includes a discussion of the seminal meaning of the term zong as the implicit truth of Chan and Buddhist teaching and a defining notion of Chan identity Particularly significant is an analysis of the long underappreciated significance of the Chan fragments in the Zongjing lu which constitute some of the earliest information about the teachings of Chan s early masters In light of Yanshou s advocacy of a morally based Chan Buddhist practice Welter also challenges the way Buddhism particularly Chan has frequently been criticized in Neo Confucianism as amoral and unprincipled Yongming

Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu concludes with an annotated translation of fascicle one of the Zongjing lu the first translation of the work into a Western language *Approaches to Chan, Sōn, and Zen Studies* Albert Welte, Steven Heine, Jin Y. Park, 2022-11-01 This volume focuses on Chinese Chan Buddhism and its spread across East Asia with special attention to its impacts on Korean S n and Japanese Zen Zen enthralled the scholarly world throughout much of the twentieth century and Zen Studies became a major academic discipline in its wake Interpreted through the lens of Japanese Zen and its reaction to events in the modern world Zen Studies incorporated a broad range of Zen related movements in the East Asian Buddhist world As broad as the scope of Zen Studies was however it was clearly rooted in a Japanese context and aspects of the Zen experience that did not fit modern Japanese Zen aspirations tended to be marginalized and ignored Approaches to Chan S n and Zen Studies acknowledges the move beyond Zen Studies to recognize the changing and growing parameters of the field The volume also examines the modern dynamics in each of these traditions **Reimagining Chan Buddhism**

Jimmy Yu, 2021-11-14 This book is the first socio intellectual history of the Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Zen a new lineage of Buddhism founded by the late Chinese Buddhist cleric Sheng Yen 1931 2009 arguably one of the most influential Chan masters in contemporary times The book challenges the received academic and popular image of Chan Buddhism as a meditation school that bypasses scriptural learning Using Sheng Yen's doctrinal classification Chn panjiao chart as an example the book shows Sheng Yen's Chan as a synthesis of both Indian and Chinese premodern forms of Buddhism and as the summum bonum of Han transmission of Chinese Buddhism Chn Hanchuan fojiao The book demonstrates how Sheng Yen's presentation of Chan was intimately related to the volatile social and political realities of his life the Communist takeover of China and the subsequent industrial boom that impacted Taiwanese society In short this book presents a historically and culturally embodied approach to the formation of Buddhist doctrine and practice Drawing on the works of postcolonial theories that integrate the role of the researcher into the research the book also offers a more integrated approach between emic and etic insider and outsider perspectives to research Advancing the field of Buddhist studies the book will be of interest to scholars of Buddhism in the modern period twentieth century religious history of China and Taiwan Chan Zen studies World Religions Asian civilizations and Modern Biographies **The History of Buddhism** Geoffrey C.

Goble, 2019-10-11 One of the world's most popular religions Buddhism is also one of the most misunderstood This reference overviews misconceptions related to Buddhism and reveals the truths behind the myths Buddhism is practiced by millions of adherents around the world Originating in ancient India it spread throughout Asia and then to the West and it exists in multiple traditions Despite its popularity it is also the subject of many misconceptions This book examines those misconceptions along with the historical truths behind the myths The book begins with an introduction that places Buddhism in its historical and cultural contexts This is followed by chapters on particular erroneous beliefs related to the religion Chapters explore whether Buddhism is a singular tradition if it is a religion or a philosophical system if it is rational and

scientific whether the Buddha was an ordinary human and other topics Each chapter summarizes the misconception and how it spread along with what we now believe to be the underlying truth behind the falsehood Quotations and excerpts from primary source documents provide evidence for the mistaken beliefs and the historical truths The book closes with a selected general bibliography

**The Linji Lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy** Albert Welter, 2008-02-28 The Linji lu or Record of Linji ranks among the most famous and influential texts of the Chan and Zen traditions Ostensibly containing the teachings of the Tang dynasty figure Linji Yixuan the text has generally been accepted at face value as reliable records of the teachings of this historical figure In this book Albert Welter offers the first systematic study of the Linji lu in a western language Welter places the Linji lu in its historical context showing how the text was manipulated over time by the Linji faction Rather than recording the teachings of the illustrious patriarch of legend the text reflects the motivations of Linji faction descendants in the Song dynasty 960-1279 The story of the Linji lu is not simply the story of one heroic figure Linji Yixuan but the story of an entire movement that sought validation through retrospective image making The success of this effort is seen in Chan's rise to prominence Drawing on the findings of Japanese scholars Welter moves beyond the minutiae of textual analysis to place the development of Linji lu within the broader forces shaping the development of the Chinese Records of Sayings literary genre as a whole

Zen Ritual Steven Heine, Dale S. Wright, 2008 When books about Zen Buddhism began appearing in Western languages just over a half century ago there was no interest whatsoever in the role of ritual in Zen Indeed what attracted Western readers' interest was the Zen rejection of ritual The famous Beat Zen writers were delighted by the Zen emphasis on spontaneity as opposed to planned repetitious action and wrote inspirationally about the demythologized anti-ritualized spirit of Zen Quotes from the great Zen masters supported this understanding of Zen and led to the fervor that fueled the opening of Zen centers throughout the West Once Western practitioners in these centers began to practice Zen seriously however they discovered that zazen Zen meditation is a ritualized practice supported by centuries-old ritual practices of East Asia Although initially in tension with the popular anti-ritual image of ancient Zen masters interest in Zen ritual has increased along with awareness of its fundamental role in the spirit of Zen Eventually Zen practitioners would form the idea of no-mind or the open and awakened state of mind in which ingrained habits of thinking give way to more receptive direct forms of experience This notion provides a perspective from which ritual could gain enormous respect as a vehicle to spiritual awakening and thus this volume seeks to emphasize the significance of ritual in Zen practice Containing 9 articles by prominent scholars about a variety of topics including Zen rituals kinhin and zazen this volume covers rituals from the early Chan period to modern Japan Each chapter covers key developments that occurred in the Linji Rinzai and Caodong Soto schools of China and Japan describing how Zen rituals mold the lives and characters of its practitioners shaping them in accordance with the ideal of Zen awakening This volume is a significant step towards placing these practices in a larger historical and analytical perspective

The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought

John Makeham, 2018-06-01 Zhu Xi 1130-1200 is the most influential Neo Confucian philosopher and arguably the most important Chinese philosopher of the past millennium both in terms of his legacy and for the sophistication of his systematic philosophy. *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought* combines in a single study two major areas of Chinese philosophy that are rarely tackled together: Chinese Buddhist philosophy and Zhu Xi's Neo Confucian philosophy. Despite Zhu Xi's importance as a philosopher, the role of Buddhist thought and philosophy in the construction of his systematic philosophy remains poorly understood. What aspects of Buddhism did he criticize and why? Was his engagement limited to criticism informed or otherwise, or did Zhu also appropriate and repurpose Buddhist ideas to develop his own thought? If Zhu's philosophical repertoire incorporated conceptual structures and problematics that are marked by a distinct Buddhist pedigree, what implications does this have for our understanding of his philosophical project? The five chapters that make up *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought* present a rich and complex portrait of the Buddhist roots of Zhu Xi's philosophical thought. The scholarship is meticulous, the analysis is rigorous, and the philosophical insights are fresh. Collectively, the chapters illuminate a greatly expanded range of the intellectual resources Zhu incorporated into his philosophical thought, demonstrating the vital role that models derived from Buddhism played in his philosophical repertoire. In doing so, they provide new perspectives on what Zhu Xi was trying to achieve as a philosopher by repurposing ideas from Buddhism. They also make significant and original contributions to our understanding of core concepts, debates, and conceptual structures that shaped the development of philosophy in East Asia over the past millennium. Chan Rhetoric of Uncertainty in the Blue Cliff Record Steven Heine, 2016 This book provides an innovative and critical analysis in light of Song dynasty 960-1127/9 Chinese cultural and intellectual historical trends of the Blue Cliff Record, the seminal Chan/Zen Buddhist collection of commentaries on one hundred gongan/koan cases which has long been celebrated for its intricate and articulate interpretative methods. *From Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen* Steven Heine, 2018 *From Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen* investigates the remarkable century that lasted from 1225 to 1325 during which the transformation of the Chinese Chan school of Buddhism into the Japanese Zen sect was successfully completed. Steven Heine reveals how this school of Buddhism, which started half a millennium earlier as a mystical utopian cult for reclusive monks, gained a broad following among influential lay followers in both China and Japan. *The A to Z of Buddhism* Carl Olson, 2009-09-02 In the early 21st century, Buddhism has become ubiquitous in America and other western nations, moving beyond the original Bodhi tree in India to become a major global religion. During its journey westward, it has changed, adapted to new cultures, and offered spiritual help to many people looking for answers to the problems of life. It is being studied in institutions of higher education, being practiced by many people, and having its literature translated and published. *The A to Z of Buddhism* covers and clarifies Buddhist concepts, significant figures, movements, schools, places, activities, and periods. This is done through a chronology, an introductory essay, a bibliography, and over 700 cross-referenced dictionary entries. **Patriarchs on Paper** Alan

Cole,2016-11-08 The truth of Chan Buddhism better known as Zen is regularly said to be beyond language and yet Chan authors medieval and modern produced an enormous quantity of literature over the centuries To make sense of this well known paradox Patriarchs on Paper explores several genres of Chan literature that appeared during the Tang and Song dynasties c 600 1300 including genealogies biographies dialogues poems monastic handbooks and koans Working through this diverse body of literature Alan Cole details how Chan authors developed several strategies to evoke images of a perfect Buddhism in which wonderfully simple masters transmitted Buddhism's final truth to one another suddenly and easily and of course independent of literature and the complexities of the Buddhist monastic system Chan literature then reveled in staging delightful images of a Buddhism free of Buddhism tempting the reader over and over with the possibility of finding behind the thick facade of real Buddhism with all its rules texts doctrines and institutional solidity an ethereal world of pure spirit Patriarchs on Paper charts the emergence of this kind of fantasy Buddhism and details how it interacted with more traditional forms of Chinese Buddhism in order to show how Chan's illustrious ancestors were created in literature in order to further a wide range of real world agendas

*Eminent Nuns* Beata Grant,2008-07-01 The seventeenth century is generally acknowledged as one of the most politically tumultuous but culturally creative periods of late imperial Chinese history Scholars have noted the profound effect on and literary responses to the fall of the Ming on the male literati elite Also of great interest is the remarkable emergence beginning in the late Ming of educated women as readers and more importantly writers Only recently beginning to be explored however are such seventeenth century religious phenomena as the reinvention of Chan Buddhism a concerted effort to revive what were believed to be the traditional teachings texts and practices of classical Chan And until now the role played by women in these religious developments has hardly been noted at all *Eminent Nuns* is an innovative interdisciplinary work that brings together several of these important seventeenth century trends Although Buddhist nuns have been a continuous presence in Chinese culture since early medieval times and the subject of numerous scholarly studies this book is one of the first not only to provide a detailed view of their activities at one particular moment in time but also to be based largely on the writings and self representations of Buddhist nuns themselves This perspective is made possible by the preservation of collections of discourse records yulu of seven officially designated female Chan masters in a seventeenth century printing of the Chinese Buddhist Canon rarely used in English language scholarship The collections contain records of religious sermons and exchanges letters prose pieces and poems as well as biographical and autobiographical accounts of various kinds Supplemental sources by Chan monks and male literati from the same region and period make a detailed re creation of the lives of these eminent nuns possible Beata Grant brings to her study background in Chinese literature Chinese Buddhism and Chinese women's studies She is able to place the seven women all of whom were active in Jiangnan in their historical religious and cultural contexts while allowing them through her skillful translations to speak in their own voices Together these women offer an important but until now virtually unexplored

perspective on seventeenth century China the history of female monasticism in China and the contribution of Buddhist nuns to the history of Chinese women's writing      **Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in the World of Wen** □ ,2023-05-30 Sheldon Pollock's work on the history of literary cultures in the Sanskrit Cosmopolis broke new ground in the theorization of historical processes of vernacularization and served as a wake up call for comparative approaches to such processes in other translocal cultural formations But are his characterizations of vernacularization in the Sinographic Sphere accurate and do his ideas and framework allow us to speak of a Sinographic Cosmopolis How do the special typology of sinographic writing and associated technologies of vernacular reading complicate comparisons between the Sanskrit and Latinate cosmopolis Such are the questions tackled in this volume Contributors are Daehoe Ahn Yufen Chang Wiebke Denecke Torquil Duthie Marion Eggert Greg Evon Hodus Hwang John Jorgensen Ross King David Lurie Alexey Lushchenko Si Nae Park John Phan Mareshi Saito and S William Wells      **Modern Chinese Religion I (2 vols.)** ,2014-12-04 A follow up to Early Chinese

Religion Brill 2009 10 Modern Chinese Religion focuses on the third period of paradigm shift in Chinese cultural and religious history from the Song to the Yuan 960 1368 AD As in the earlier periods political division gave urgency to the invention of new models that would then remain dominant for six centuries Defining religion as value systems in practice this multi disciplinary work shows the processes of rationalization and interiorization at work in the rituals self cultivation practices thought and iconography of elite forms of Buddhism Daoism and Confucianism as well as in medicine At the same time lay Buddhism Daoist exorcism and medium based local religion contributed each in its own way to the creation of modern popular religion With contributions by Juhn Ahn Bai Bin Chen Shuguo Patricia Ebrey Michael Fuller Mark Halperin Susan Huang Dieter Kuhn Nap yin Lau Fu shih Lin Pierre Marsone Matsumoto K ichi Joseph McDermott Tracy Miller Julia Murray Ong Chang Woei Fabien Simonis Dan Stevenson Curie Virag Michael Walsh Linda Walton Yokote Yutaka Zhang Zong

**Record of the Transmission of the Lamp** Daoyuan,2015-01-23 This compilation of Buddhist biographies teaching and transmission stories of Indian and Chinese Chan Japanese Zen masters from antiquity up to about the year 1008 CE is the first mature fruit of an already thousand year long spiritual marriage between two great world cultures with quite different ways of viewing the world The fertilisation of Chinese spirituality by Indian Buddhism fructified the whole of Asian culture The message of this work that Chan practice can enable a free participation in life's open ended play seems as necessary to our own time as it was to the restless times of 11th century Song China Volume I Books 1 3 is the first of a full translation of this work of thirty books      **Zen Masters** Steven Heine,Dale Wright,2010-04-22 Extending their successful series of

collections on Zen Buddhism Heine and Wright present a fifth volume on what may be the most important topic of all Zen Masters Following two volumes on Zen literature Zen Classics and The Zen Canon and two volumes on Zen practice The Koan and Zen Ritual they now propose a volume on the most significant product of the Zen tradition the Zen masters who have made this kind of Buddhism the most renowned in the world by emphasizing the role of eminent spiritual leaders and



their function in establishing centers forging lineages and creating literature and art Zen masters in China and later in Korea and Japan were among the cultural leaders of their times Stories about their comportment and powers circulated widely throughout East Asia In this volume ten leading Zen scholars focus on the image of the Zen master as it has been projected over the last millennium by the classic literature of this tradition Each chapter looks at a single prominent master Authors assess the master's personality and charisma his reported behavior and comportment his relationships with teachers rivals and disciplines lines of transmission primary teachings the practices he emphasized sayings and catch phrases associated with him his historical and social context representations and icons and enduring influences

*What Happened After Mañjuśrī Migrated to China?* Jinhua Chen, Guang Kuan, Hu Fo, 2022-02-23 The chapters in this book explore the transcultural multi ethnic and cross regional contexts and connections between the Buddhavaśāśtra Mount Wutai and the veneration of Mañjuśrī that contributed to the establishment and successive transformations of the cult centered on Mount Wutai and reduplications elsewhere The contributions reflect on the literature architecture iconography medicine society philosophy and several other aspects of the Wutai cult and its significant influence across several Asian cultures such as Chinese Japanese Tibetan Mongolian and Korean This book is a significant new contribution to the study of the Wutai cult and will be a great resource for academics researchers and advanced students of Religion Philosophy History Architecture Literature and Art The chapters in this book were originally published in the journal *Studies in Chinese Religions*

*Buddhist Historiography in China* John Kieschnick, 2022-07-29 Winner 2023 Toshihide Numata Book Award Numata Center for Buddhist Studies at the University of California Berkeley Since the early days of Buddhism in China monastics and laity alike have expressed a profound concern with the past In voluminous historical works they attempted to determine as precisely as possible the dates of events in the Buddha's life seeking to iron out discrepancies in varying accounts and pinpoint when he delivered which sermons Buddhist writers chronicled the history of the Dharma in China as well compiling biographies of eminent monks and nuns and detailing the rise and decline in the religion's fortunes under various rulers They searched for evidence of karma in the historical record and drew on prophecy to explain the past John Kieschnick provides an innovative expansive account of how Chinese Buddhists have sought to understand their history through a Buddhist lens Exploring a series of themes in mainstream Buddhist historiographical works from the fifth to the twentieth century he looks not so much for what they reveal about the people and events they describe as for what they tell us about their compilers understanding of history Kieschnick examines how Buddhist doctrines influenced the search for the underlying principles driving history the significance of genealogy in Buddhist writing and the transformation of Buddhist historiography in the twentieth century This book casts new light on the intellectual history of Chinese Buddhism and on Buddhists' understanding of the past

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## **Table of Contents Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism**

1. Understanding the eBook Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - The Rise of Digital Reading Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Exploring Different Genres
  - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
  - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
  - Popular eBook Platforms
  - Features to Look for in an Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Personalized Recommendations
  - Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism User Reviews and Ratings
  - Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism Free and Paid eBooks
  - Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism Public Domain eBooks
  - Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism eBook Subscription Services

- Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism Budget-Friendly Options
- 6. Navigating Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism eBook Formats
  - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
  - Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism Compatibility with Devices
  - Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism Enhanced eBook Features
- 7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
  - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Highlighting and Note-Taking Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Interactive Elements Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
- 8. Staying Engaged with Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Joining Online Reading Communities
  - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
  - Following Authors and Publishers Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
- 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Benefits of a Digital Library
  - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
- 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
  - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
  - Minimizing Distractions
  - Managing Screen Time
- 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Setting Reading Goals Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
- 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Monks Rulers And Literati The Political Ascendancy Of Chan Buddhism
  - Distinguishing Credible Sources
- 13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
  - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
  - Exploring Educational eBooks
- 14. Embracing eBook Trends

- Integration of Multimedia Elements
- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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