

Patrons and Patriarchs: Regional Rulers and Chan Monks during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. By Benjamin Brose. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. Pp. xiv + 242. \$55.00.

The work under review, Benjamin Brose's *Patrons and Patriarchs: Regional Rulers and Chan Monks during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms* began as a Ph.D. dissertation at Stanford University. It represents a solid addition to scholarship in the field of Chinese Buddhism, particularly in the period known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, a period that covered the better part of the tenth century. This is an interesting and noteworthy period that historians of China have long noted as significant for a paradigm shift, the so-called Tang–Song transition (a.k.a. the Naitō hypothesis named after its leading proponent, Naitō Torajirō 内藤虎次郎). Modern scholars have placed increasing attention on this period.¹ As Buddhist scholars have moved beyond their preoccupation with the Tang and earlier developments, and made significant contributions to Song and Ming dynasty Buddhism, the Five Dynasties has also begun to fall into their purview. Yet, at this point, it is hardly more than a trickle. Aside from an earlier generation of Japanese scholars like Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, Abe Chōichi 阿部肇一, and Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄,² the only scholars who have worked in this period in depth are Dr. Brose and myself, though there are others whose works touch on aspects of it. Suffice it to say, there is much room for

¹ The list of works dealing with this period, many of them relatively recent, includes: Richard L. Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares: The Later Tang Reign of Emperor Mingzong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015); Glen Dudbridge, *A Portrait of Five Dynasties China: From the Memoirs of Wang Renyu (880–956)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Hung Hing Ming, *Ten States, Five Dynasties, One Great Emperor: How Emperor Taizu Unified China in the Song Dynasty* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2014); Johannes L. Kurz, *China's Southern Tang Dynasty, 937–976* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Peter Lorge, ed., *Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2011); Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, trans. Richard L. Davis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Edward H. Schafer, *The Empire of Min* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1954); Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China During the Five Dynasties* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1963; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967); Wang Hongjie, *Power and Politics in Tenth-Century China: The Former Shu Regime* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011).

² See especially Makita Tairyō, *Godai shūkyōshi kenkyū* 五代宗教史研究 (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1971); Abe Chōichi, *Chūgoku Zenshūshi no kenkyū: Seiji shakaishiteki kōsatsu* 中国禅宗史の研究:政治社会史的考察 (Tokyo: Seishin shobō, 1963; rev. ed., Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 1986); and Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-Godai Zenshūshi* 唐五代禅宗史 (Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 1985).

exploration in this fertile period, and Dr. Brose, in the work under review here, has provided a solid contribution to the history of this period, particularly as it pertains to the relationship between elite Chan Buddhist monks and the rulers who supported them.

The work is comprised of an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion. Following two, general orientation chapters, Chapter 1, “Disintegration: The Tang–Five Dynasties Transition,” and Chapter 2, “Improvisation: The Transformation of Regional Buddhist Cultures in Southern China,” Brose proceeds to the core of his analysis of Five Dynasties Period Buddhism, an exposé of the three southern kingdoms that had flourishing Buddhist cultures: Chapter 3, “Founding Fathers: The Kingdom of Min”; Chapter 4, “Filial Sons: the Southern Tang”; and Chapter 5, “Heirs and Ancestors: The Kingdom of Wuyue.” His final chapter, Chapter 6, “Reintegration: The North Prevails,” completes the brush strokes of the period that Brose wishes to convey, followed by a conclusion. The work also includes five appendices: (1) Members of Xuefeng Yicun’s Lineage Supported by the Royal Families of Min, the Southern Tang; and Wuyue, (2) Names and Reign Dates for the Rulers of Min, Wu, Southern Tang, and Wuyue; (3) Names and Reign Dates for the Rulers of Northern Dynasties; (4) Buddhist Texts Printed in the Kingdom of Wuyue; and (5) Members of Linji Yixuan’s Lineage Supported by Song Officials. The work also includes sections devoted to notes, a bibliography, and an index.

The narrative of Brose’s work is clearly set forth in his framework of disintegration, improvisation, founding fathers, filial sons, heirs and ancestors, and reintegration. The disintegration, improvisation, and reintegration aspects are somewhat obvious given the history of late Tang decline, the experimentation during the Five Dynasties based on the massive and monumental societal changes occurring, and Song reunification. One problem with this narrative is that it neatly codifies what we already, in retrospect have concluded, but does not take into account the experimental quality of early Song initiatives, that may have appeared to some as just another ill-fated attempt at unification by a powerful warlord. In fact, Song Taizu’s 宋太祖 initiative distinguished itself by turning from military power (*wu* 武) to the civilizing forces of culture (*wen* 文) for its basis, and this proved to be a winning formula that, despite evolving debates as to what constituted *wen*, gave rise to a long and prosperous period. However obvious this was to become, only later observers provided the neat and unproblematic narrative that retrospective history affords. Such seamless transition glosses over the real issues and problems that plagued participants on the ground. The “Founding Fathers,” “Filial Sons,” and “Heirs and Ancestors” trajectory provides a straightforward and accessible narrative for the flow of Buddhism during this period. One problem with this narrative is that it seems to contradict one other point that Brose champions—that of institutional continuity

in the face of disintegration, improvisation, and reintegration. Are institutions not affected by the forces of disintegration, improvisation, and reintegration as well? The fact of the wholesale destruction of the Tang aristocracy has been convincingly demonstrated by Nicholas Tackett, after a large proportion of them were physically eliminated during the three decades of extreme violence that followed Huang Chao's 黃巢 sack of the capital cities in 880.³ While Brose cites Tackett's research of this destruction, he seems unaware of the new forces it unleashed. For Brose, it may not be too much of an overstatement to suggest that the transition between Tang and Song was rather seamless, except for the creation of new networks and alliances that pretty much resumed old institutional structures. While the disruptive quality of the Tang–Song transition may be over blown, to suggest that it did not produce major upheavals and reorientations in Chinese society and religion (like Buddhism) flies in the face of virtually all other research on the period.

Another problem is that it focuses on the side of supportive, pro-Buddhist regimes, and fails to expose the reservoirs of anti-Buddhist sentiment that also percolated throughout the period outside the regions that Brose focuses on. As such, it sets up poorly the “Reintegration: The North Prevails” aspect of the story, although Brose does a good job at describing the complicated situations that Buddhists faced in the north during this period, and this is a significant contribution to our knowledge.

The work is rich in detail, and the combination of meticulous scholarship with an exhaustive examination of sources makes it a trove of information. Readers with even a passing interest in the period are certain to come away enriched and intrigued. There is inadequate space allotted here to do justice to this richness, and I will restrict my comments, which are on the whole positive, to exploring what I see as a few of the work's shortcomings.

The title, *Patrons and Patriarchs: Regional Rulers and Chan Monks during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms*, suggests broad coverage of the entire region during the Five Dynasties, but it is in reality devoted almost exclusively to three Buddhist kingdoms in the south and southeast: Min 閩 (Chapter 3), Southern Tang 南唐 (Chapter 4), and Wuyue 吳越 (Chapter 5). While these three kingdoms are undoubtedly important, even crucial to the development of Chan during this period, one wonders why more attempt was not made to account for Buddhist and Chan developments in other regions, especially in the north where anti-Buddhist policies were enacted (although this is remedied in the “Reintegration: the North Prevails” chapter, but done so as an afterword, so to speak, and not as an integral component of the period and its evolution), but also in the southwest, in the Former and Later

³ Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 93 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).

Shu 前/後蜀 kingdoms (Sichuan), which had been an active Buddhist region. Brose does delineate his scope in the opening pages, admitting that other parts of China also hosted large contingencies of Chan monks and that source material for these regions is relatively abundant. His contribution would have been much greater had he seen fit to include a broader spectrum of regions, as the three regions he has chosen are well represented in Japanese scholarship and have been discussed extensively.⁴

The Introduction clearly sets out the rationale for Brose's study. His decision to concentrate on the regions in question stems from three considerations: the royal families of these kingdoms supported large numbers of monks, often belonging to the same lineage; the cultural traditions of these three states played a formative role in creating Northern Song imperial culture; and the source material for monks from these kingdoms is relatively abundant. The rationale, however, does not provide an aim, and what is lacking in the framework is a strong argument. His primary goal is "to assess the effects of political, social, and economic forces on the development and distribution of Chan lineage networks and their traditions," and "is not intended as an intellectual history of Chan during this period" (p. 2). This is a worthy task, and Brose has done an admirable job of sleuthing through the sources to show the effect of these forces in developing the prosperity of certain Chan lineages. While it is noteworthy for its detail, it offers little in the way of new knowledge. The networks developed are dutifully charted, and while there are new details and perspectives offered, the existence of such networks was not unrecognized, nor were the political, social and economic forces that precipitated them.⁵ At this point, the story told is largely self-evident and has been made amply clear elsewhere. I would contend, further, that by ignoring the intellectual history of the period, Brose fails to take into account the role of human agency in the development of Chan, both on the part of Chan monks and the rulers and literati who patronized them. This is not to say that individuals are the determining factor in historical developments, but it is one thing to assert that, but quite another to deny any significance to their role in favour of a strict political and economic determinism. This seems to me a major oversight that leads to some questionable interpretations.

In place of the narrative of intellectual history, Brose tells a story of institutional continuity, of no major changes occurring in the Chan world during the period in question. The key texts of the period, framed against the background of forces that produced them and the individuals who compiled them, tell a more nuanced story. What Brose has added is an understanding of the comprehensive history of the

⁴ See especially Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁵ On this see Abe Chōichi, *Chūgoku Zenshūshi no kenkyū*.

period and this is indeed a worthwhile contribution. There is a great flaw, however, in taking the sources at face value, applying something akin to a data collecting approach (which is not bad, in itself, but needs to be accompanied by other, more critical apparatuses). What his comprehensive view replicates is the standard view made available through refracted sources that the tradition has provided, and this is a useful and necessary step in understanding the period. This approach fails to take into account sufficiently the specific issues that individuals and groups faced and the tensions that were evoked through individual textual sources: in short the dynamics between the networks examined, not just the existence of the networks themselves. In short, Brose comes down on the side of an institutional framework and refracted sources that predetermined smooth transitions in Chan that the tradition celebrates. My own view is that the period in question was ripe with tensions and difference of opinion, both among Chan practitioners and their literati supporters, and that it is only through burrowing deeply into the texts produced during the period (i.e., the intellectual history) that these tensions are revealed.⁶

Let me offer one poignant example. The literati scholar Yang Yi 楊億 played a significant role in shaping our intellectual understanding of Buddhism, especially Chan, in the period and regions in question, and his prefaces (yes, there are two of them) to the *Jingde Chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄, offer major insights into how Chan came to be understood in the Song dynasty. Initially a devotee of Fayuan 法眼 Chan faction masters, Yang Yi later came under the sway of Linji 臨濟 Chan influence at the Song court. His prefaces to the *Jingde Chuandeng lu* (the first one under the former title of the work, *Fozu tongcan ji* 佛祖同參集) reveal a major intellectual shift in the way Chan was conceived. As the *Fozu tongcan ji*, Chan is interpreted as a “common practice of the Buddhas and patriarchs,” while in the *Jingde Chuandeng lu* preface, Chan is regarded as *jiaowai biexiu* 教外別修 (a separate practice outside the teachings), a forerunner to Chan’s much heralded slogan as “a separate transmission outside the teachings” (*jiaowai biechuan* 教外別傳). This was a major intellectual reframing that cast wide shadows over our understanding of Chan both before and after the Song. While Brose is aware of Yang Yi and his role in editing the *Jingde Chuandeng lu* (pp. 10 and 127), he glosses over the magnitude

⁶ See my attempts to underscore the significance of debates over *wen* in the early Song period in Albert Welter, “A Buddhist Response to the Confucian Revival: Tsan-ning and the Debate over *Wen* in the Early Sung,” in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds. *Buddhism in the Sung*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 13 (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), pp. 21–61; and “The Buddhist School of Principle and the Early Song Intellectual Terrain,” in Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing Lu: A Special Transmission within the Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 203–21.

of his impact, preferring to reduce his role to a figure in an influential network. The sources themselves tell a different story. In a letter to a fellow literatus interested in Chan, contained in the *Tiansheng Guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄, Yang Yi tells of his “conversion” from Fayán to Linji style Chan, and his early tutelage came under Fayán masters. At that time, he learned the Chan of accommodation with Buddhist doctrinal and scriptural teachings which the compiler of the *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, Daoyuan 道原, suggested as the preferred Chan style in his work when it was initially submitted under the title *Fozu tongcan ji*. As Daoyuan hailed from the Wuyue region where Fayán style Chan was extensively promoted by prominent masters like Tiantai Deshao 天台德紹 and Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽, this is hardly surprising. But as Yang Yi’s letter continues, he tells of an inability to resolve perplexing doubts until a sudden awakening experience under Linji masters, indicating that his former understanding of Chan had been deficient, and that only with this new, sudden and abrupt turn, did he comprehend Chan’s true import. Yang Yi was no ordinary literatus. He was a leader among literati at the Song court, especially among those with sympathies to Chan and other Buddhist teachings. As such, his “conversion” represents a significant turning point in the fortunes of Chan, which rapidly saw prominent court supporters rally around Linji faction masters with connections at the Song court. Scholars like Brose who see Chan as only about lineage networks, where doctrine and teaching are inconsequential, miss the intellectual motivations behind Chan’s rise to prominence. Yang Yi speaks to a sharp break between differing Chan traditions rather than the smooth and harmonious picture that lineage and redacted texts document, a rupture which classic Chan “lamp histories” (*denglu* 燈錄) or transmission records tend to gloss over. It was the resolution of these tensions that produced the “classical” Chan of the Song and its uniquely Chan literary forms: *denglu*, *yulu* 語錄 (dialogue records), and *gong’an* 公案 (Japanese *kōan*) texts, none of which are much in evidence prior to the Five Dynasties. Institutional continuity, coupled with political patronage, are insufficient to explain these unique and unprecedented developments, and there is much going on beneath the surface of the redacted historical sources that Brose relies on and the comprehensive historical view he promotes.

In conclusion, Brose suggests that “[w]hile the geographic distributions and chronologies of these monks are relatively clear, the reasons for their success and their broader historical significance remain matters of speculation” (p. 133). Speculation on matters such as these should always be encouraged, but there are some compelling circumstances in evidence that lead in the direction of explanation. When the Song dynasty was initially established, emperors Taizu and Taizong 太宗 made it a priority to reconstitute *wen* learning by sponsoring several massive literary collection projects, including the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Records of the Taiping era),

Taiping yulan 太平御覽 (Imperial Readings of the Taiping era), *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (Finest Blossoms in the Garden of Literature), and *Cefu Yuanguai* 冊府元龜 (The Magic Mirror in the Palace of Books). As the dynasty progressed and learning inherited from the past had been recompiled, imperial motive was driven by a need to distinguish itself through uniquely Song literary forms. Under emperors Zhenzong 真宗 and Renzong 仁宗, the Song turned away from the mammoth literary projects that defined early commitment to *wen* in favour of a more innovative approach. Leading literati at the Song court were instrumental in shaping and defining Chan *denglu* and *yulu* as representative of this new approach. Again, we are here in the realm of human motivation, the subject of which intellectual history is good at untangling but institutional history is not.

As a result, Brose can claim some advancement of scholarship on Buddhism in the period, but the value of his work *Patrons and Patriarchs* may elicit different opinions, depending on perspective. Those interested in political, social, and economic forces as shapers of history will be satisfied with this volume. Those interested in intellectual history, like myself, will also be interested, but will find some key tools of analysis lacking.

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Quest for Power: European Imperialism and the Making of Chinese Statecraft. By Stephen R. Halsey. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. xi + 346. \$49.95/£36.95.

歷史著作主要分為兩類：或研究人所未言的新論題，或將人所熟悉的故事，換個方式說出來，本書應歸於後一類。在十九世紀中葉政治秩序局部分權的脈絡下，早前大多數二手文獻，沿襲傳統公認朝代積弱衰敗的支配論述，對晚清中國整個政治史的解釋，草草視作一系列政治、軍事、外交連續無間的崩解。對於晚清的改革，輕率地認定是空洞無物而不予重視。至於二十世紀的革命，則視之為與往昔的猝然決裂。作者重新解讀史料後，針對以上論點提出質疑。書中探討1850至1950年百年間，民族主義論者所描述為「世紀恥辱」時期，中國溶入全球政治秩序的創痛而外，更論證帝制晚期的中國國家建構為一個成功故事。作者力言十九世紀中葉後，歐洲帝國主義的持續威脅，開創十七世紀中葉以來中國國家建構最富革新的時期，導致近代中國軍事財政國家 (military-fiscal state) 的誕生，史家則低估其間中國政治制度所激發復原力及創造力的潛能。中國末代皇朝雖在1911年覆亡，但中國不但擺脫被